

LIFE-CHANGING
BIBLE
VERSES
YOU SHOULD
KNOW

ERWIN & REBECCA
LUTZER



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ADVERSITY

Psalm 46:1—*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

1 Peter 1:6-7—*In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

When we think back to the devastating earthquake in Haiti that killed nearly 200,000 people, many images come to mind, but one image that stands out well above the others is that of a young mother being interviewed on television as she held a baby in her arms.

“I lost my son...he died in the rubble.”

“Did you get to bury him?”

“No, no chance; his body was crushed in the rubble; I just had to throw him away.”

Just then the camera zeroed in on her backpack as she prepared to board a bus. Stuffed in a side pocket was a Bible. As she boarded the bus she could be heard, speaking to no one in particular, saying, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble...” Her voice trailed off as she disappeared from view.

When the report was over we just kept staring at the television for a while, pushing back tears and letting what we’d just seen sink into our souls. A dead child with no chance to plan a funeral and pay respects

to her precious little one, a baby in her arms, and she was boarding a bus that was going she knew not where. Yet she still expressed belief; she still trusted that God is her refuge and strength.

Faith in adversity!

This mother—God bless her—began quoting Psalm 46, which was written as a praise song after God spared the city of Jerusalem from an invasion by Assyrians who were threatening to annihilate the inhabitants. In the midst of a harrowing escape, the Israelites found God to be an unshakable pillar.

God is our refuge. A refuge is a safe place you can run to for shelter when life's storms are swirling around you. No wonder this dear mother found solace in this psalm, which continues, "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging" (verses 2-3).

Yes, the mountains did give way and fall into the heart of the sea, but God is unaffected by the fluctuation on events of earth; He is always there, solid, unmoved. When the mountains are shaking and the ground beneath you is quaking, run to God, and He will meet you. Yes, even when our world falls apart in the aftermath of a horrendous natural disaster, God is unchanging and remains with us.

In the midst of the devastation, God is our source of supply. The psalm continues, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells" (verse 4). Most likely that refers to a tunnel that had been built some time earlier to bring water into the city in case it was ever besieged. The people of Jerusalem saw this provision as God giving them specific help at their time of their need.

Then the psalm gives us a command: "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (verse 10). Let us cease striving and let God be God. Even in adversity He is there; or perhaps we should say *especially in adversity* He is there!

Adversity should not drive us away from God; rather, it should

drive us into His arms. He is there for the grieving mother, and for the family that has experienced indescribable loss. The psalm ends, “The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress” (verse 11).

God wants to be believed. And our faith is more precious to Him than gold, which perishes. When we continue to trust Him even when there appears to be no reason to do so—and we go on believing God’s bare Word, our faith will “result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Peter 1:7).

Reverend Henry F. Lyte was a pastor in Scotland who battled tuberculosis most of his life. On his final Sunday, September 4, 1847, amid many tears the congregation sang a song he himself had composed, “Abide with Me.” It spoke of the unchanging God in an ever-changing world:

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day;
Earth’s joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heav’n’s morning breaks, and earth’s vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

The young mother in Haiti—who was clutching an undernourished baby in her arms and had no time to mourn the tragic death of her son—found solace in the God who was still beside her when the earth gave way. “God is our refuge and strength,” she said amid her grief and uncertainty of the future.

In times of adversity, our faith can hold fast. And God is both honored and pleased.

Taking God's Word to Heart

1. Reflect on the account of the Haitian mother who tragically lost her son. How has Psalm 46 been a source of strength for you during adversity? What other Scripture passages do you turn to for help in difficult times?
2. What does it mean to you that God is your refuge? In life's journey, why is God's unchangeable nature a source of strength for us?
3. Recall an instance when God provided timely help for a specific need. What did that experience teach or confirm for you about God's character?
4. What are some ways God has used adversity to shape your life?
5. Why is God honored and pleased when we exercise faith in times of adversity?