

# Be Still and Know God (Psalm 46)

I heard someone recently say, “If my soul had a mascot, it would be the hare from Alice in Wonderland, the one who hops around frantically singing, “I’m late, I’m late for a very important date/No time to say hello; goodbye, I’m late, I’m late, I’m late.” That’s a fitting way to sum up modern life: busy, distracted, frantic.

But it’s hard to avoid being busy, isn’t it? Often, we can’t help it. Sometimes life is just hectic. When you have little ones. Or your work ramps up. Or you family dramas. Often, we can’t help being busy. But there’s a difference between being busy - an outward condition. And the inward sense of feeling rushed and restless. You cannot have a lot on and still feel a sense of inner turmoil can’t you. Or you can be facing outer turmoil but still feel inner peace.

Psalm 46 paints a picture of peace in the midst of turmoil. God’s word to us today is: “Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the nations...” Let’s look at this psalm through this verse.

First, we’ll look at how it speaks to our human condition: restlessness. And then we’ll look at the solution: being still and knowing God is God and we are not: (his power, his presence, his promise.)

## 1. The Problem: Restlessness

Derek Kidner in his commentary says that this imperative “Be still” is not so much comfort for the harassed, but a rebuke to a restless and turbulent world. This psalm has been written in the midst of turmoil. Now we could speculate when it was in Israel’s history. Most likely it was when the Assyrian Armies were surrounding Israel during the reign of King Hezekiah. But I think the crisis is left unidentified for a reason: this psalm is meant to go beyond any local situation. The word of God is relevant for all peoples at all times.

The world was in turmoil then, and it is now! Check out verse 2 - “The earth trembles, the mountains topple, the seas roar and foam.” It’s a world facing natural disasters. Floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions. Nature is in turmoil, and nations are in turmoil: Check out verse 6, “Nations rage, kingdoms topple.” Wars, riots, kingdoms rising and kingdoms falling.

Humanity has ants in its pants. Collectively we can’t sit still, like a two year old who’s just eaten 15 easter eggs. Like the raging sea. Chaos. Madness. Our world is restless, and we are restless. The French Philosopher, Blaise Pascal said, “All man’s troubles come from not knowing how to sit still in our room.” You know there are some species of sharks that have to keep moving or they die. Humans are a bit like that, aren’t we? Existential sharks. Why is that? Why can’t we sit still? Why all the turmoil. Augustine nailed it when he said, “Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.” **People are restless because they aren’t right with God.** The world in turmoil because it doesn’t know God.

And we keep moving so we don’t have to think about it! Why? Because if you stay still for long enough you will realise

there's a gaping hole in your heart; a hole so big that nothing but God can fill it. Maybe you're here today, and you've been avoiding God. You don't yet know God. Why don't you hear and respond to His word to you: "Be still, and know that I am God..." God wants a relationship with you, and he has made a way through the death of Jesus on the cross. And the resurrection. There's a way for you to find rest. You can have a fresh start and be right with God. Christ can calm the raging sea of your heart and give you peace with God.

But is this just a word for the world? Or is God saying something to His church today? We Christians don't have ants in our pants, do we? We aren't restless... are we? We can sit still, can't we? Someone said our spiritual condition today is one of spiritual ADD. Let me ask you, how many times have you thought of or checked your smartphone during the service? Someone estimated we check our smartphones 81,000 times a year. Once every 4.3 minutes of our waking lives. Most people check their phones within minutes of waking! We are wasting precious time. Be still Christian and know God. We're like Martha on steroids. Going from one thing to the next. But not taking anything in! Martha lived two thousand years ago and she was still distracted and busy! The lesson from that story is: Martha was so distracted and busy **that she missed the importance of Christ's words for her own life**. What about you? Are you distracted and restless in your heart? Does God feel distant to you?

What if we connected with God like we connect online? I bet God wouldn't feel distant then! I reckon what's driving our frantic connection online, is our deeper yearning to connect with God. And that's what God wants, your heavenly Father wants to hang with you? The lifeblood of almost any strong relationship has two parts: time and undivided attention. So what would happen if we tried this: every time you feel the urge to connect on your phone

- connect via prayer to God. Jesus is on the mainline - tell him what you want. Line ain't never busy - tell what you want.

Be still! Know that God is God and we are not! How much difference would that make to our lives? Let's actually spend some time doing this now.

## 2. The Solution: Be still and Know God

The Psalm brings out three timeless truths about God. His power. His presence. His promise. They correspond to the three sections. Each being broken up with a SELAH. A silent pause - which we will also do.

So first of all, **be still and know the power of God.** The Psalm is bracketed by images capture the power of God. Check out verse 1, "God is our refuge and strength." And verse 11, "The Lord of Armies is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold." God has unlimited power. Power of nature. It is God's mighty power that causes the rain to fall, and the sun to rise. His power is shown in earthquakes, and tsunamis. Be still and know that God is in control of the climate not us. Why not go down to Red Head when the surf is pumping. And be still - stand in awe of Gods' power.

We were having our Hope Explored and someone commented that it was a comfort to know that Jesus Christ is the Mighty God. His power is on full display when he says, "Be still" to the wind and waves, and they obey Him. Christ has power of nature. Christ has power over nations. He makes wars cease throughout the earth. God raises up kings and causes them to fall. He turns the king's heart like channels of water. Be still, and know that God has power over international politics. Be still and know that God has power over the pandemic. **God has power to**

**raise those who are spiritually dead and put a new heart in them.** Be still and look at the cross. Christ has full power, he was in complete control. And died so that you can find refuge from the judgment to come. **Stand still and see the salvation of God.** Let's have a selah now (1 minute or so). You can only be still when you know the all-powerful God. Because you can rest in the fact that he has saved you completely, and he will carry you safely into glory...come hell or high water.

(b) **Be still and know the presence of God.** I love how the KJV puts it, "God is our refuge and strength, **a very present** help in times of trouble." God is with His people. He always has been. He always will. Where do you turn in times of trouble? The Lord of armies is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. And then we are given this image of the stream. Check out verse 4, "There is a river its streams delight the city of God, the holy dwelling place. God is within her, she shall not be toppled." There are two words for river in Hebrew. This one means a perennial stream. A river that continues to flow - no matter what. In Christ we have the constant, steady stream of the Holy Spirit with us don't we. At all times, and in all circumstances. Something we need to hear again and again. Jesus said, I am with you even to the end of the age.

Christ sends us the Comforter. He comes and makes his home within us. God is always present with his people. Be still for the presence of the Lord - the holy one is here. God is here now. Christ is in our midst. Be present in his presence. Stop thinking about morning tea.

God didn't call you because he was bit short on helpers. He needed someone to fill the rosters. No, he called you because he loves you. And wants to hang with you. And wants communion with you. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Let's do another selah.

(C) **Be still and know the promise of God.** Check out verse 10 again: “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” Here is a timely word for the church. Particularly for evangelicals. Evangelicals are known for their activism. We so busy serving, running programs, doing evangelism. You know the goal of the Christian life isn’t evangelism but knowing God. We run around like chooks with our heads cut off, thinking it’s up to us to save the world. And then getting discouraged when nothing seems to happens! Let’s apply our Calvinism here. WE believe in the sovereignty of God in salvation in our world. Do we believe that? Or are we pragmatic arminians? Be still and know that God **WILL** be exalted among the nations. Not might be exalted, but WILL be exalted. It’s sure. It’s certain. It’s not up to us! Salvation belongs to the LORD. The angel said about Jesus, “Call him Jesus because he **WILL** save his people from their sins.” Not might but WILL. And again in John 6 - “All that the Father gives me WILL come to me, and the one who come to me **I WILL never** cast out...” And again, “My sheep hear my voice, I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they **WILL never** perish.” later in John, “When I am lifted up, I WILL draw all me unto me...” The elect are being gathered in from the four corners of the earth.

**I WILL** build my church and the gates of hell won’t prevail. God is with her - she will never be toppled. Let’s be still and know God will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of Armies is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.  
Amen.

