



TASTE AND SEE

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Solid ground

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble. (Ps. 46:1)*

If you drive through the Crowsnest Pass in southern Alberta you will be treated to some of the most beautiful scenery imaginable: rugged mountains, pristine forests, and clear lakes are on every side.

But there is one stretch of the drive that stands apart from the rest. As the highway snakes between the towns of Bellevue and Blairmore, you suddenly find yourself driving through a debris field of massive boulders - some of them the size of small houses. The rocks cover three square kilometers on both sides of the highway and are 14 meters thick.

This is the site of the Frank Slide, the deadliest landslide in Canada's history. The town of Frank was a small coal mining community in the 1900s, sitting at the base of Turtle Mountain. On April 29, 1903 at 4:10 am, a section of limestone 1 km wide, 425 m high, and 150 m thick broke away from the face of the mountain with a deafening roar. It took less than two minutes for the eastern edge of town to be obliterated and buried under 110 million tonnes of rock.

**In just one hundred seconds, the world shifted and
people's lives were changed forever.**

I think of the Frank Slide every time I read Ps. 46:

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.*

*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. (vv. 1-3)*

The psalmist is describing a crisis of some sort. We don't know if it was a personal tragedy or a national calamity but, whatever it was, it was huge and disruptive.

He uses "Frank Slide language" to describe it - the earth gave way, the mountains fell, the waters roared. Likely none of us have endured a landslide, but we can all relate to those moments when the ground shifts under our feet and we lose our solid footing.

The doctor calls and says you need to come in to discuss the test results

Your boss asks for a meeting the day after you've heard rumours of cutbacks and layoffs.

Your spouse says they are tired of trying to make it work.

Everything can change in a moment.

So what do we do when the earth gives way and we're left looking for solid ground?

Psalms 46 begins and ends with words that have comforted God's people for centuries. They do this by reminding us who is with us in the crisis and what that means for us.

First, the beginning:

*God is our refuge and strength,
An ever-present help in trouble. (v. 1)*

When we experience trouble and distress, we may find ourselves wondering "Where are you, God?" Psalm 46 answers that question definitively: he is right there in the midst of it - and the mess of it - with us. God does not stand far off, aloof.

Rather, he draws near, offering refuge and strength.

I saw this so clearly when Melanie's mom was diagnosed with cancer fourteen years ago.

The night before she was to begin aggressive and painful radiation treatments, the Lord met her while she was laying in her bed. His message washed over her in waves: "I love you and I'm taking care of you. I love you and I'm taking care of you." Tears streamed down her face as she lay there, overwhelmed by the love of a God who is ever-present in trouble. The ground had shifted but her faith was solid.

That leads us to the ending of the psalm:

*Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. (v. 10)*

The psalm celebrates God's triumph over any and every power that dares to stand against him. He is all powerful . . . and he is with us! Not only that - He is *for* us. That means that, even when the earth is shaking, we do not have to.

We can be still.

Isn't that amazing? The psalm that begins with the world in turmoil ends with God's people at peace. The mountains may quake, but we can be still.

Whatever you are facing today, you are not facing it alone. Know that God is with you, and he is enough.

Further Reading:

Psalm 46

Key Verse:

*"The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress." (v. 11)*

Calibrating Prayer:

Lord, when the ground shifts under my feet and I'm not sure what I can trust, remind me that I can trust you. Thank you for being ever-present in my trouble, even when it does not feel like it. Help me to be still and to know that you are God . . . still.