

OUR GOD IS A TOWERING STRONGHOLD

[Psalm 46:1](#) “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

Travelers maintain that the Grand Canyon of the Colorado river is the world’s greatest natural wonder, and not without reason. At first sight one is not aware of what is actually being seen. It takes quite a while before the majesty and awesome beauty of the Canyon begins to make itself felt. Even then the realization that we are only getting a limited glimpse of its overwhelming grandeur begins to dawn upon our minds.



This Psalm has a somewhat similar effect upon us. The first reading gives us the impression of pious phrases and thoughts, but we are not conscious, at first, of its full impact. After meditating on this Psalm for a while, the power and majesty of it strikes us with a force which lifts the soul to the highest heavens. We begin to feel a new surge of life and strength coursing through the veins and an exhilaration which is hard to explain. Down through the centuries the children of God have found here a source of power and strength that has lifted them up far above the troubles and sorrows of life.

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1. HE IS OUR REFUGE

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generationseven from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” ([Ps. 90](#))

God always was and always will be a mighty Fortress. Everything else in creation changes, but God, NEVER. Midst the shifting sands of time, He alone remains as the one Stronghold that is “tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time.” Generations may come and go, but God remains, as always, “our refuge and strength.”

Our towering Stronghold is the Triune God, and no other. Out of love the Father created us to share His goodness and to bask in the sunshine of His grace and mercy. Love means sharing with the one who is loved, and love motivated the Father to create the world so that we creatures might see and feel His overwhelming goodness. Because of His love for us the Son of God came into this world to become one of us and bear our sins as our Substitute for the whole human race. He is the great “Rock of Ages, cleft for me.” Through faith in Him we are promised and given eternal life by the grace of God. The Holy Ghost out of love for us brings us to faith in Christ and keeps us with Him. The Spirit of God makes us holy and helps us to walk through life in a manner pleasing to our Lord. Without the Holy Spirit we would feel no power in this Psalm and we would be unable to say with confident trust, “God is our refuge and strength.”



Our trust in the towering Stronghold is given even greater encouragement when we learn that He is always available and accessible, “A very present help in trouble.” He never refused anyone who came to Him for refuge. Jesus said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” ([John 6:37](#)). The drawbridge is always down in our fortified Castle, and the gates are never closed for all who seek refuge in trouble. The thief on the cross, the woman taken in adultery, the jailor at Phillipi, the publicans and sinners will all testify to that; they sought and found refuge and salvation with the Lord.

2. HE IS OUR STRENGTH

The Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth is the source of all power and strength in creation. Standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, a sense of humility and insignificance gradually settles upon a person. How can we even think of comparing our frailties and weaknesses with the Might of God. Yet He is our strength. Looking up at the starry sky, a feeling of awe overtakes us contemplating the strength of Him who brought it all into being.

Our Psalm breathes forth the love of God to us in every word. He is the Almighty, but His real strength for us lies in His intense love to us. "For God so loved the world," ([John 3:16](#)) and "God is love" ([1 John 4:16](#)) give us the real refuge and strength. We certainly would not want to flee to a God who hates us, just the opposite. A baby runs to the arms of its mother for refuge, here it is secure in the love of the mother. We have that same attitude toward God because He loves us.

The Lord draws us to Him like a gigantic magnet by His love for us in Jesus. "We love him, because he first loved us" ([1 John 4:19](#)) Through the Holy Spirit God's love gives us great confidence and we cry out with St. Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?.....For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, not height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Rom 8](#)). With the Psalmist we further sing out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. ([Ps 73:25](#))

In our towering Stronghold Abraham found the strength to offer up his son; David found the courage to fight the giant; the three men received from Him the fortitude to endure the fiery furnace; Daniel found heroic bravery to face the lions. When we read [Hebrews 11](#) we learn how all the great Confessors of the faith received their sustaining power from the Fortress of strength and power.

How can we flee for refuge to the Lord? What should we do? [Proverbs 18:10](#) tells us, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Calling upon the name of the Lord in prayer we find immediate refuge and safety. The experience of every true believer will bear out the truth of this Proverb. "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" ([Ps. 50:15](#)) is the sure promise of the holy Trinity.

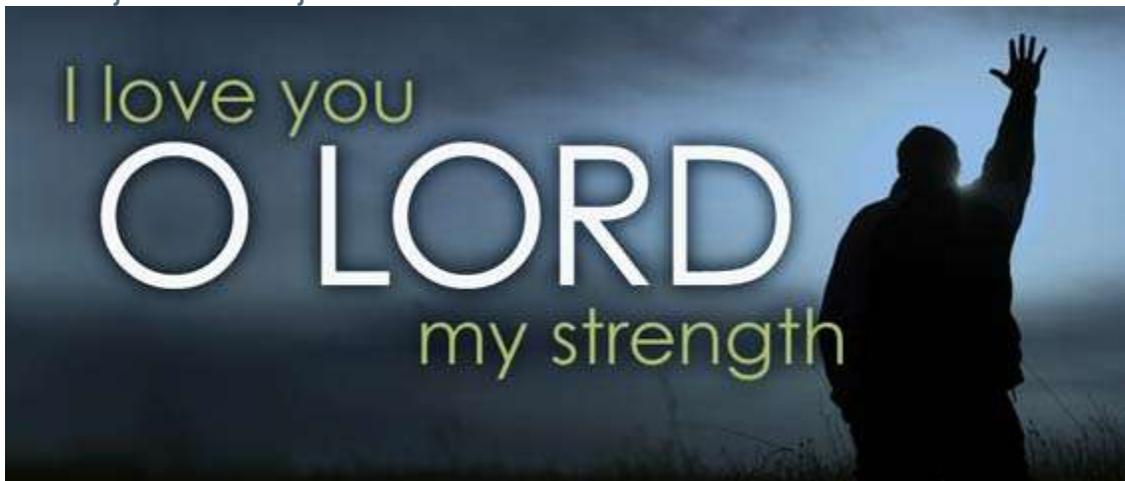
Luther explained the first commandment in these words, “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.” Our Psalm is a beautiful paraphrase of the first commandment.

May the holy Trinity always be our Rock and Fortress, our Refuge and Strength, our towering Stronghold. May we always be able to say, “Other refuge have I none; Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.”

“This is my Psalm,” said Luther, and he based his powerful hymn upon it. With utmost confidence every true child of God throughout the ages will join Luther in his mighty hymn and sing;

“A mighty Fortress is our God, A trusty Shield and Weapon; He helps us free from ev’ry need That hath us now o’ertaken.”

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! AMEN.



PRAYER. O holy and blessed Trinity, Thou hast won my heart and confidence with Thy marvelous love in Christ. Truly Thou art my Rock of Defence in all life’s battles. Thou art my Refuge and Strength in every trouble. I love Thee Lord with all my heart, I love Thee because Thou didst love me first in Jesus and hast redeemed me. Thou great Three in One, the only true God, world without end. AMEN.