

'Be still and know that I am God'

It has certainly been a tough time over recent weeks but for so many the 'novelty' of how things have changed may really be wearing very thin. How are you doing? How are you coping?

Using psalm 46 I want us to look through 'spiritual glasses' – three different spiritual lenses to encourage us in these times.

Firstly 'put on' the glasses that help you see how it really is right now.

Not the problems of life but see the reality of God

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

You are not alone. I am not alone. You may have loving family, friends and neighbours, or perhaps you may feel very isolated but whoever else there is in your life- most importantly right now know *God is here*. God is always there. Always present.

We face the worst not with fear or a cynical resignation to our fate but with the sense that God is there with us and for us

*2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
3 though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.*

These verses use descriptive language to convey catastrophic events - the world collapsing into itself- but even at life's worst God stands with us.

But we want to put the second pair of glasses on – that looks into the past

*8 Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
9 He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.*

The pages of history have some real tough times in it- but God has always been there and has brought his people through those times. He has done it and so that give us confidence He will do it.

So, we come to the final pair of glasses – a future long-term perspective

*10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
11 The LORD Almighty is with us;*

God will be seen to be God. The fullness of God's light and love will be obvious and worldwide one day - it really will be happy ever after. But that perspective helps us now. Our confidence, our ability to be positive and to move forward with peace and joy in the pain is to be rooted not in our view of ourselves or our circumstances but in our view of God.

10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;

Stop and pause. That's not about simply knowing facts about God, it's about relating to God. Focus on the living God who is Father Son and Holy Spirit- God who is real and loving and has in the past been there for people, is with us now in these times, and promises the most glorious future.

These times are turning our lives and lifestyles upside down. Well God will turn the turmoil upside down and bring transformation.

Right now, it's very easy to make God too small.

And we can look inwards and downwards- only focus on ourselves and be crushed and defeated by life as it is. There is a right sense in which in real pain we might have questions and struggles and cry out to the Lord.

But we are not just to look inward and downward. We are to look upwards and outwards - lifting our gaze to the Lord which helps us look out into his world with fresh eyes of love, hope and care

Read Psalm 46. I've not quoted every verse here but do read it. It will sharpen your spiritual perspective and give spiritual confidence.

Where is your focus now? Focus on God.

"Be still, and know that I am God"

His hope giving, loving presence will change your perspective and when we know more of God then we know more peace and hope and life.

AMEN