

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Reformation Sunday – October 27, 2024

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.

*Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea.”*

–Psalm 46:1-2–

There is a common perception that the phrase “fear not” occurs 365 times in the Bible thus conveying the message that there is a “fear not” for each day of the year. While this is a nice sentiment, it is not true. A much better approach is to see the context in which the words “fear not” occur.

In Psalm 46, we are given the message that we will not fear. The reason we have not to fear is because of the abiding presence of the Lord our God. Much like the little girl who goes running to Daddy because she fears the “monsters” under the bed, God is near to us in circumstances that can certainly cause us to be afraid.

God is near when the tsunami warnings ring out. God is near when the earth shakes to the point of bringing down homes, buildings, etc. God is near when the warnings are issued that tornados have formed and are cutting through communities. God is near when individuals are confronted with the pain of a terminal diagnoses. Throughout this psalm we are assured of the Lord’s presence in circumstances over which we have no control.

The lack of control is something that many people fear. The lack of control is closely related to how we view the future, and the unknown associated with our future. Such fear plays into the hands of sin, death, and the devil. It was the devil that wanted Jesus to satisfy himself, glorify himself, and take control. Instead, Jesus stayed true to the nearness of the Father in refuting such temptation with the Scriptures, in his day those being the Old Testament.

No matter what our fears may be, they do not change the truth that God chooses to be near his people. Even as we walk through the “valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me” (Ps. 23:4). We need not fear the accuser, for it is Jesus who sets us free. Because of the dwelling of Jesus with humanity (see John 1:14), who took on flesh, suffered, died, and rose from the dead, “you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36).

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