

My Dear Loved Ones of the First Baptist Church of Gallipolis, OH:

This week marks the seventh week of us entering upon our separation from one another due to the Covid-19, and it marks a new series for us to embark upon.

Psalm 46:1 - "God is our refuge and strength, / A very present help in trouble."

Notice that the psalmist begins with God. At every new beginning, and the beginning of this day / week, put God there. The Name "God" means "Strong One." Remember that there is the Strong One (God) Who is at work in all of this crisis.

God is a refuge to go to to protect us from the difficulties of life. He is this refuge and promises to be just that. Do you run to Him, though, for refuge? It's been said that many people who claim to be Christians are "practical atheists." In other words, many claim to be Christians, but in how we live, there's not much that separates us and atheists, especially in how we handle the difficulties of life. Do you handle things differently than the world around you? Is your addiction, anger, bitterness, fear, stress (pressure) and worry (anxiety) handled in such a way that the unsaved world around you notices that you do indeed have a refuge in God? Or do you basically handle your difficulties the exact same way as the world around?

Not only is God a protection, but He is also a provision of strength for the journey. He promises to provide grace for every difficulty (1 Co 10:13; 2 Co 9:8; 12:7-10). We have to run to Him, though, to get this strength. Do you need strength today? You have to run to the source of strength: God Himself.

Also notice that God has not spent all of His protection and provision on Abraham, David, and Paul, but the Strong One is "our" refuge and strength. He promises to help you! The Strong One was this for the undeserving David who committed adultery, but David had turned from his own way back to following the Lord. The Strong One was a protection and provision for Old Testament Israel wandering through the wilderness, even though they were quite undeserving. You may think that the Strong One can be a strength for someone else, a "super-Christian," but not for you. That's not the experience of David, who had sinned. He, and all Biblical characters, recognized his own unworthiness, but that didn't keep David from running to the Strong One for protection and provision.

God is also a very present help in time of trouble. What good is help if they aren't there when you need them most? God promises to help His people just when you need Him the most. Loved ones, take that promise to the bank of prayer with you. Claim that the Strong One will give His strength, His protection, His provision and His help just when you need Him most.

The old hymn says, "Jesus is near to comfort and cheer, / Just when I need Him most."

Praying for you today, my loved ones.