



# LESSON 19: A REFUGE FOR THE REFUGEE

## PSALM 16 & 46

### INTRODUCTION

Someone has wisely said that all prayer can be condensed down to one word. *Help!* **Psalm 16** opens with a similar request, "Keep me safe, O God." Why did David pray this and why do we still pray it? Because we all know from experience that much of our world, for many people, is not a safe place. Personal, political, physical and spiritual dangers are a reality of life.

Martin Luther realized this when he wrote the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" which is based on **Psalm 46**. He expressed the danger he saw with these words:

*A mighty fortress is our God,  
a bulwark never failing;  
Our helper he amid the flood,  
of mortal ills prevailing.  
For still our ancient foe  
doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great,  
and armed with cruel hate,  
on earth is not his equal.*

In spite of our perilous existence, **Psalms 16 and 46** are *Songs of Trust and Confidence*. God is our refuge and fortress, the psalmist declares. We have nothing to fear. He will keep us safe! The LORD Almighty is *with* us! (**Psalm 46:7,11**)

### DISCUSSION STARTER

- Think of a time you were overwhelmed by fear. How did you cope?
- What makes it so scary to experience a natural disaster such as a tornado, hurricane or earthquake?

### PREPARATION

1. Before you read **Psalms 16 & 46**, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth (John 16:13). We have been using the prayer, *Holy Spirit, think through me until your ideas become my ideas*, or King David's prayer, *Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your law*.
2. Read **both Psalms** slowly and thoughtfully in at least two translations. As you read and reread, mark any words or phrases that are meaningful to you and put a question mark by anything that you don't understand.
3. What common themes do you see in **Psalms 16 and 46**?
4. How would you describe the mood of each of these psalms? What frame of mind does the psalmist seem to have at the time each psalm was written?

## QUESTIONS

### PSALM 16

5. From **16:1-4**, write a brief character description of a godly person who loves God.
6. A *refuge* is a protected place from something threatening, harmful or unpleasant. How can God be our refuge?

What specific things do you do to take refuge in God?

- ♥ What are some things you want to be kept safe from? What is threatening you right now?
  - ♥ What pictures come to mind when you think of a *refuge*?
7. In **16:2**, notice the difference in the words **LORD** and **Lord**. *LORD* is the proper name for God meaning *The Lord God Jehovah*; the title *Lord* means *Master or Ruler*. What kind of Master does David see God as?
    - ♥ In what areas of your life can you confidently say, "LORD, you are my Lord" and in what areas might you hesitate to say this?
    - ♥ Is there anything in your life that you consider "good" that doesn't include God?
    - ♥ What are some "bad" things in your life right now? How are they related to God?
  8. Read **16:3** in the New Living Translation. What is David's reaction to other God lovers?

Why do you think he feels this way about them?

- ♥ Who are some godly people around you who are your true heroes? Why do you see them as heroes?
  - ♥ How can you delight in or take pleasure in other God lovers?
  - ♥ How can you be a pleasure or delight to other God lovers?
9. What happens to those who don't make God their Master? **16:4**

What sorrows might someone experience as a result of following after other gods?

- ♥ What are some false gods that are common in our culture?
  - ♥ What "gods" are you tempted to pursue? What sorrows do they bring?
  - ♥ Why do you think that David doesn't even want to "speak the names" of the false gods? What do you do to keep false gods at a distance? How does **1 John 2:15-17** relate to what David is saying?
10. List the specific privileges that David says are his because he has made the LORD his Lord. **16:5-8**

11. Read **16:5-6** in all four translations. How would you restate these benefits so that they are meaningful in our culture?

- ♥ Share with your group some specific ways God has done these things for you.
- ♥ What does the word "inheritance" indicate about our relationship to God? **16:6**

12. How does what the Apostle Paul said in **Acts 17:24-28** relate to **Psalm 16:5-6**?

13. What two specific things does David do in response to God's goodness? **16:7-8**

- ♥ How are some ways our hearts can instruct us in the night? **16:7**
- ♥ What are some specific ways you can *set the Lord always before you*? (**16:8**) Why is this important?

14. In **16:9-11**, what reasons does David give for his heart being glad, his tongue rejoicing and his body resting secure?

- ♥ King David died and was buried. What then, did David mean in **16:10** concerning himself?
- ♥ Unless Jesus returns in the next 75 years, we will all die and our bodies will decay. What hope does **16:10** hold for us? **John 11:20-27**.
- ♥ How were David's words in **16:10** prophetic? **Acts 2:25-28**

15. Which of the three blessings given us in **16:11** is most important or meaningful to you? Why?

- ♥ If **16:11** was the only scripture you had access to, what would you conclude from it about heaven?

#### PSALM 46

16. Read **46:1,7,11** in all four translations. Write down everything you learn about God from these verses.

17. Why did the psalmist decide not to be afraid? **46:2**

- ♥ What images does the word fortress bring to mind? How has God been like a fortress to you?
- ♥ Is there a difference between God helping us when we are in trouble and God being with us in trouble? Why or why not?

18. What are the devastating circumstances the psalmist mentions that can cause us great fear? **46:2-3, 6**

- ♥ Could **46:2-3, 6** portray any crisis in life right now? How are you responding to the crisis?

- ♥ What are some things in our world that truly make you fearful? How do you cope?
  - ♥ Since God is with us in the midst of trouble, how should we respond differently than those who don't know God?
  - ♥ What advice would you offer a friend that is overwhelmed by fear or anxiety?
19. How do the waters of **46:2-3** compare with the waters of verse **46:4**?

- ♥ If roaring and foaming water is a metaphor for catastrophe, what might a river be a metaphor for? (**Psalm 65:9; Isaiah 43:19-21**)
20. The "city of God" (**46:4**) is a metaphor for the people of God or the community of God lovers. What do you learn about the relationship of God to his people in **46:4-6**?

- ♥ What do you learn about *your* relationship to God in **46:4-6**?
  - ♥ How do you feel God's presence in your life?
  - ♥ What connection do you see between **46:4-6** and **Revelation 21:1-4** and **22:1-5**? What do these passages have in common?
21. What invitation does the psalmist extend in **46:8**?

What do God's actions in **46:8-9** reveal about God's character?

- ♥ Describe how the facts of **46:6, 8-10** make you feel. How do these verses affect your worldview?
22. According to **46:10a**, how does one accept the invitation extended in **46:8**?

How would you explain to someone how to do this? How often should it be done?

- ♥ Is **46:10** a command or a suggestion? Who is speaking in this verse? Does acknowledging the identity of the speaker of these words change their impact on you?
- ♥ Listen to what God says in **46:10b**. How does your heart respond to these words?

### **RESPONSE:**

Obey the command of **46:10a** for **5-10** minutes. Do not pray, but rather *still yourself completely* and meditate on *knowing* that God *is* God. In the space below, write a description of your experience and any insights you gained or anything you heard God say.