



## Week 26: Psalms 41-50

### Study Guide for the week of June 22-28

#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, meditate on Ps 46:10.

Our world is noisy and busy and too often we allow the noise to drown out God's voice. The phrase "be still" or "be silent" reminds us of our need to relax and meditate and listen for God's voice. Read Ps 46 and list all God's characteristics that are mentioned. Now add those characteristics that come to your mind. Ponder these characteristics of God so you may know him more.

When we read verse 10 in context with verses 8 and 9, we realize the phrase "be still" also means "Stop, throw down your weapons." In other words, depend on God instead of yourself. List those areas or things in your life you want to continue to control. Can you protect those things from an earthquake registering 10 on the Richter scale? From a Category 5 hurricane? From social, political, economic, or military forces? Can God?

End your time of reflection by reciting verse 11 several times.

#### Discussion starters

1. In Ps 42:1-2, the author expresses a deep longing. What have you deeply longed for in your life – beyond fame and fortune? Did you feel forgotten by God? You aren't alone; read about Elijah's waiting in 1 Kg 19:4-14; read about Jeremiah's waiting in Jer 37:11-16. Remember the years Moses waited, from the time he fled Egypt as a young man to the time he returned decades later (likely in his later 70s). Ps 42:7 is translated in the NIV and NRSV as "deep calls to deep." Bernard of Clairvaux understood this as "The deep of my profound misery calls to the deep of Your infinite mercy." Can you live with confidence in God's character at the same time as you are exasperated with what seems like his inaction? Why or why not?
2. Reread Ps 44:1. How important is it to remember history? For those who aren't thrilled by history, note the lack of dates to memorize in the Psalm! What big ideas or events did the psalmist remember (Ps 44:1-8)? How does the tone of the psalm change beginning with Ps 44:9? How is the psalmist's present different from his ancestors' past? Is this the cry of one who believes God is able or unable to act in the present as he has acted in the past?
3. Ps 46 emphasizes the assurance God is present like Ps 23, though now we notice this assurance is for all God's people (our) and not just for the individual (my). What cosmic threat is occurring in Ps 46:2-3? What human threat is occurring in Ps 46:6? For the psalmist, this is the worst-case scenario for the world falling apart. What is your worst-case scenario? Notice the refrain in verse 7 and 11. How does the psalmist view the worst-case scenario? How should we?
4. Reread Ps 48:1-3. These verses remind us of the sacredness of space. Has our culture lost the sense of the sacredness of space? Why or why not? Jerusalem symbolized God's presence and the psalmist knew "No one can enter [Jerusalem] and go away unchanged." Read Acts 17:6. Can one encounter Jesus and go away unchanged? Why or why not? Has your entire worldview been changed by Jesus? What parts remain unchanged?

#### Bible verse to memorize: Ps 46:10-11