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**Pastor Charles Billingsley**

 **Plugged In: Keep Calm and Carry On: Overcoming Fear with Faith**

**Scripture: Psalm 46**

Summary: In this sermon, the first in a series entitled *Plugged In*, Pastor Charles Billingsley focuses on Psalm 46, and how to overcome our fears with faith.

Thank you, Jason. Thank you, Adam. And I think we ought to thank that boy, Nathan Norman, for the faith that he shows—for the faith that he shows in the face of fear itself. With all the uncertainty, all the anxiety, all the worry. I called his parents last night. I talked to his dad, Bobby, and I said, “This boy is amazing.” He said, “I’m telling you,” he said, “he makes my faith look so weak.”

It is such a beautiful example of what God calls us to have—childlike faith, simple yet so profound. I thank God for that boy. His mom, I’ll tell you this, his mom told a story just a few weeks ago. He was in his kitchen and he was standing there next to his mom, and she could tell he wanted to say something but he wasn’t saying anything. So she just looked at him and said, “Nathan, are you wanting to say something?” He said, “Yeah, I just wanted to tell you one thing.” And she said, “What is it?”

He said, “Well, I just wanted to tell you that I’ve stopped praying to Jesus to heal me.” He said, “I just don’t think I should pray that anymore.” She said, “Well then, what are you praying for?” He said, “Well, I’ve just started praying that Jesus would use this cancer to change more lives.”

That blesses me to know that this boy’s heart is so pure for the Lord, and his faith is so real.

We are beginning this series called *Plugged In: Me*, *We, and TRBC*, and Jonathan graciously asked me if I would talk to you about being plugged in from a personal perspective. Plugging in to the Lord. So I just want to talk to you a little bit today about overcoming our fears with faith. So let me ask you this: When fear comes knocking at your door, does faith answer?

Fear came knocking at the door of England in 1939. They were right at the brink of World War II. Hitler and his regime had taken power. They were taking over nation after nation, and it was an imminent moment where Hitler and the Nazis would finally attack Britain head on. And so the people of England were nervous, they were scared, they were frightened—and, well, they should have been.

So the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, decided with his cabinet that they would do everything they could. So they printed three posters. They wanted to place these posters in areas of high population—train stations, bus stations, things like that—and they would display these posters with encouraging messages for the people.

The first poster said: Your Courage, Your Cheerfulness, Your Resolution Will Bring Us Victory. The second one said: Freedom is in Peril. Defend it with All Your Might. And they placed these posters all over the nation. The third poster they printed but they never distributed, and the reason is because they were holding it back for times of great crisis; they felt like this was the strongest message, and yet they didn’t want to just throw it out there. They wanted to hold it back for the moment of greatest crisis, and it was a poster that read: Keep Calm and Carry On with the Symbol of King George VI on top.

And it was not until sixty years later (they printed 2 1/2 million of these posters but they never distributed them) that Mary and Stuart Manley were shopping for their bookstore (they had a bookstore in Northeast England called Barter Books) and they were shopping for some used books to put in their bookstore to sell. They bought a box of old, used books, got it home to their store, opened it up, and underneath those books they found a few of these posters that no one had ever seen.

And so they decided for fun, why don’t we just display one underneath our cash register? So they put it out, and one by one, customers began to come in and ask about this poster, and they wanted one. So they began to print copies, and they began to sell hundreds and hundreds of copies of the poster that said, Keep Calm and Carry On. And now sixteen years later, you can’t go anywhere in England without seeing that phrase, Keep Calm and Carry On.

And it’s kind of become a national phenomenon; no one can really understand why, but I think it’s simply the message is not only calming, but it’s a symbol of pride to the people of that great nation of the resolve that they had and the courage that they had facing Hitler’s regime. It’s also a daily reminder that cooler heads will prevail.

Well, in much the same way, I want to look at a verse of scripture, Psalm 46:10, and I think that this phrase really can become a mantra for us to live by each and every day. I would love for us to be able to look back at our lives and know that we have truly walked with God, so let me just ask you again: When fear comes knocking at your door, will faith answer?

Let me give you a little background as we look at Psalm 46. Psalms 46, 47, and 48 are a trio of psalms that were all written of the same time period. Actually, probably within days of each other; and here’s what happened. It’s a very incredible story. In 701 BC, King Sennacherib, the king of the Assyrians, had his Syrian army right at the base of the walls of Jerusalem and he was about to attack.

King Hezekiah, the king of the Israelites, was frightened. He was nervous and he was afraid for the lives of his people, because they had no way of defeating this Assyrian army. Sennacherib’s army was the greatest in the world at that time, and here he was. And he was even sending in notes through the wall throughout the days leading up to it, telling the people of Israel, “You’re going to die. Your God is dead,” and all of these kinds of things. And he was threatening and taunting them. And so King Hezekiah prayed; the people of Israel prayed. They were sitting ducks, to all intents and purposes.

Then the night before the battle, God moved. He sent an angel. You can find it in history books and you can read it in 2 Kings. This one angel wiped out the entire Assyrian army in one night, 185,000 soldiers. Wiped them all out. So you can just imagine the thrill and the relief of these sons of Korah who woke up the next morning and stood on the walls of Jerusalem and looked out at this wasteland with all these dead soldiers or the Assyrian army and realized there was no way anybody could do this; this had to have been the hand of God. And it was. It was an angel that killed them all.

And as a result of that moment, God saving Israel once again, they wrote this song of praise. And so these three psalms, 46, 47, and 48, are all songs of praise as a result of that moment in 701 BC. Now with that background, let’s look closely at Psalm 46.

Verse one, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” I’m sure you’ve heard that verse before. “Therefore, we will not fear, and even though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah.”

Now every time you see that word *selah* in the book of Psalms, just know that it means “pause, reflect on this, think about this for a moment.” Or I like what one of my pastors said. He said it really means “There. What do you think of that?” I like that. And these first three verses really are about the power of God over all of nature.

But now look at verse 4, “There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her. She shall not be moved; God shall help her just at the break of dawn. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.” What do you think of that?

I like verses 4 through 7 because it’s a direct reference to the power of God in saving the city of God, which is Jerusalem. But do you see that little phrase in verse 4, “There is a river”? Let me tell you something for those of you who have never been to Jerusalem, there is not a river that flows through the city. This is a river much bigger and much more powerful than a river of water. This is a direct reference to the presence and the power and the grace and the mercy of a living God. And I might just remind you this morning that that river is still flowing, not just in that city, but in every city, because God’s people are everywhere. And that river is flowing in this room right here and right now, and it never stops, it never ceases, and it’s getting stronger day by day. Amen?

So now listen to this. Verse 8, “Come, behold the works of the Lord, who has made desolations in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots in the fire.”

That’s a direct reference to the chariots of Sennacherib’s army. And then we get to verse 10, and it’s not just about God anymore; this verse is straight from God Himself. Listen to the voice of God. In fact, read this verse with me. This is your memory verse for the week, by the way. Memorize it; dwell on it; think on it. Verse 10, read it with me, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” There, what do you think of that? I like that, don’t you?

So it’s a wonderful hymn of praise, celebrating God’s power and His presence and His protection. But I can just hear some of you thinking, because I’ve done this myself, *That’s great. That’s really wonderful. Nice little poem. Nice little hymn of praise. What does it have to do with me? I don’t see God killing 185,000 warriors anymore.*

Some of you might be thinking this. Some of you might be thinking that the God that we worship is all from the past and He’s not doing anything anymore. Let me just tell you as a big reminder: God is not dead. He is active and He is moving and He is moving in our midst even now. He is still doing miraculous things not only to protect His people of Israel, but to protect the people of His church.

You hear stories all the time about it. You can read about it online. But I want to tell you about one that is really amazing to me. It happened August 3, 2014, not long ago. Just about twenty-four months ago, we were in this war again. Israel is fighting against Hamas. You probably remember this. Every day we’d see in the news these missiles that Hamas was shooting from Gaza over into Israel, and it seems like every one of them would either fall on wasteland or be shot out of the air.

And it’s because Israel has an amazing system called the Iron Dome, in which they intercept these missiles. It’s phenomenal, because it only takes about seventeen seconds for one missile from Syria to reach Israel—seventeen seconds—so they have to be immediate, they have to be amazingly quick at their response, and the Iron Dome does that.

Well, on one such occasion, August 3, 2014, the Iron Dome failed. I want you to read the words of the young Iron Dome battery commander who witnessed an amazing moment that can only be attributed to the power of God. These are his words, an Iron Dome battery commander.

“A missile was fired from Gaza. Iron Dome precisely calculated its trajectory. We know where these missiles are going to land to a radius of about two hundred meters, and this particular missile was going to hit either the Azrieli Towers or the Kera [which is Israel’s equivalent of the Pentagon] or it was going to hit a central Tel Aviv railway station. All these buildings are within two hundred meters of each other, and we knew that hundreds were going to die.

We fired the first interceptor, and it missed. We fired the second interceptor, and it missed. Now this is very rare, and I was in total shock. At this point, we had just four seconds, just four seconds until the missile landed. We had already notified emergency services to converge on the target location and had warned of a mass casualty incident. And then suddenly Iron Dome, which calculates wind speeds, among other things, Iron Dome showed a major wind coming from the east, a strong wind so strong that it sent the missile into the sea, and we were all stunned, and I stood up and I shouted, ‘There is a God!’ I witnessed this miracle with my own eyes. I was not told and it was not reported to me. I saw the hand of God send that missile into the sea.”

Now I don’t know about you, but I think that shows just one of many examples that the God we worship today is living and active and powerful and has a desire for us to know Him.

So let’s look at this verse a little closer, Psalm 46:10. We’ll take it one word at a time. We’re going to start with this one. *Be*. That’s a good word. Not very big, but it means a lot. There is another word that says *do*. And I think a lot of us understand the word *do* better than we understand the word *be*, because we are just so active at trying to do things.

We watched the Olympics the last two weeks. It’s all about doing action. It’s all about winning the gold and striving for greatness, and that’s a good thing. There’s nothing wrong with doing great things. But every once in a while, I think it’s good if we just sit and learn how to be. Doing is about what; being is about who; and there are times and seasons for both.

I really think the joy of the Christian life is not necessarily getting to the end of it in glory. And all of that is going to be wonderful when we get to the end of our lives and we enter heaven. All of that is going to be wonderful and powerful and amazing, and it’s going to be for eternity. But for right now, I really believe the real victory and the joy in the Christian life is not just looking to the end, but being in the present, right here, right now, and growing in Him. It’s the process that can be such a joy in your life.

But you need to understand that there’s a difference between activity and productivity. I could stand right here and run in circles all day long, and I’d be very active, but I wouldn’t be going anywhere, right? Pastor Jonathan said just a few weeks ago, and I wrote this down; I love this. He said, “Living life in a whirlwind rarely leads to accomplishment.” You want the redneck version of that? “The most active chicken in the barnyard is the one with its head cut off.” I can’t actually verify that, because I haven’t actually seen it, but that’s what I hear.

So we need to decide what kind of a man or a woman we’re going to be before we decide what we are going to do. And once you determine who you are going to be, it will determine what you’re going to do. So why don’t we just think about spending a little more time just being?

Now I said earlier that all of life carries with it this rhythm where there is a time to do and a time to be, and we need to determine both. Imagine all day with no night. Imagine all winter and no summer. Imagine music with no rests. It would just be one constant tone. What makes the music so great is the rests between the notes. That’s what we’re talking about here today, the rest between the activities.

So let’s look a little closer at the next phrase, *be still*. I graduated from high school and was going off to college, Samford University. I approached my worship pastor and said, “Hey, Rick, any advice for me before I go to college?” He thought for a minute and said, “Yeah. Find a place, find a time, and stick with it, where you go and you get alone with God. Don’t miss that time. It will prove to be the most important time you spend in college.”

So I found a place underneath a light post on the far tennis court at Samford University, kind of away from everything, and I discovered at about 10 o’clock at night everybody was done playing tennis and it was just me and the Bible and a bunch of gnats flying around my head. I would do this night after night. And I’m going to tell you right now; it’s because of those moments that I feel like I finally really came to know God. It was in the stillness.

And so I had to learn the hard way to get away from all the stuff and get still before the Lord. And that word *still* in the Hebrew, is the word *rapha*. That word really means not “be still,” but “cease striving.” It means to stop fighting. It really means to let go, like a warrior would drop his weapon or like a boxer would drop his hands in a fight. It means to let go of your striving, stop your fighting, and be still.

See, God isn’t just asking us to be quiet here; He’s commanding us in an imperative voice to let go of everything that is capturing our attention away from Him. He’s firmly requesting our undivided attention, much like a teacher stands in front of her classroom and says, “Students, stop talking. Put down your pencils and listen to me.” That’s exactly the picture God paints for us in this little phrase, *be still*.

Remember, this is a psalm about war. We have just witnessed a great victory of God conquering Assyria’s army with no one else’s help; just God and His one angel. And so this is a psalm about war. In other words, God is saying that fighting is a bunch of nonsense. “What stupidity these nations to think they can defeat the God of Israel. Israelites, sit down. Let me handle this one.” And that’s exactly what He did.

And that’s God’s message to us today. Be still, stop your fighting, but realize that we are at war every day against something. For those of you who have never met Christ, I’m telling you there is a war for your soul going on right now. For those of you who are children of the King, you know that the Lord lives inside of your life, there is still a war going on for your attention, for your affection, each and every day of your life. For those of you fighting addictions, every day you wake up you face a battle of whether or not you are going to fall once again.

Every moment of every day is a battle for your attention and for your affection. That’s why it’s so important that we learn to practice this discipline of solitude in our lives. It’s important that we learn how to get away from everything, to turn the noise off. Walk away from the Netflix just a little bit. Maybe you could go without the binge watching for just a while. The Kardashians can wait. They are going to be okay, I promise you. And perhaps we can just walk away from our cell phones for a little bit.

I love the words of Rick Warren. He said do these three things: Detach daily. In other words, get away. Fifteen, twenty, thirty minutes. Just get away from everything. Turn it all off. Turn the noise off and detach from the world so you can attach, plug in to the things of God. And then he said withdraw weekly. I like that too. Take an hour or two. Just get away. And do it every week. And then he said abandon annually. Maybe take a day or two, three, whatever it takes, to get away from everything and just go on a fast from this social media and everything else that we’re a part of and just detach, withdraw, and abandon yourself.

The reason we have such a hard time doing this is simply because we don’t manage our time very wisely, do we? I was reading a book by Dave Ramsey called *EntreLeadership*. It’s a wonderful book. You really should read it. In fact, anything Dave Ramsey writes, you should probably get your hands on, because it’s great stuff. And Dave Ramsey wrote in his book this little chapter about how we spend our time, so as an example, he divided how we spend our time into four quadrants. I thought I might share them with you, because I think they are very poignant, and I think they are very interesting.

The first one is things that are important and urgent. Those are things that are really crazy important, like a medical emergency, like catching a plane, like business deadlines. These things can’t wait; that’s the way it is and it’s got to happen now. The next way we spend our time is things that are important, but not urgent. These are things like relationships, spiritual growth, major projects that don’t have a time deadline of the next day. Things that are important, but we’ve got a little time.

The third is things that are not important but urgent. These are not life-altering events, but they’re still important. Maybe your yard is two-feet high and you’re getting letters from the neighbors. Those things are important, but they are not urgent, because you’re going to get in trouble with your neighborhood home people. They are going to put signs in our yard or something. Who knows? They might even toilet-paper your house. Things like dinner reservations; those kinds of moments that are not necessarily important, but they are urgent.

And then the last is things that are not important and not urgent. Things like video games, social media, watching TV—on and on this list goes Pastor Jonathan said just two weeks ago that the average American spends 15 1/2 hours a day in media consumption. From the minute we wake up, we’re looking at our phones, we’re looking at our iPads, we’re watching a TV screen, we’re going all through this stuff. Even driving on the road we’re listening to radio. All of that is media consumption. And out of that 15 1/2 hours, 4.7 of those hours is spent on social media alone. Maybe we just need a little revamping, a little prioritizing of how we spend our time.

So if this is where we spend our time, and we probably shouldn’t be, where do you think we should spend most of our time? Right there. Things that are not urgent but are important. So we have a little time to make decisions, to think, so that we can do what we are supposed to do.

So being still allows our faith to permeate deeper in our souls and the Holy Spirit to speak clearly to us. If we want to conquer or overcome our fears with faith, then the first step is to be still. The second step is to know. Be still and know. Now this is the Hebrew word *yada*. I know some of you are *Seinfeld* watchers in here from a couple of years back, and all the time on that show, Seinfeld and his buddies would say, *Yada, yada, yada*. Well, that means, “And so on and so on and so on, but that’s not what this word means.

This word, I looked it up in the Hebrew. You know what it means? “To know.” It’s a pretty good translation. Be still and know. But it’s not just knowing in a casual sense. It’s much deeper than that. God is commanding us to know Him, which tells me one thing very important. If God commands me in the imperative voice to know Him, then it’s going to be—you better be certain that He’s going to allow us ways in which we can know Him. If He asks us to know Him, if He tells us to know Him, then rest assured, Christian, He will allow you to do so, and He wants you to do so. He’s provided ways for us to do so—one is by getting alone; the other one is getting into His Word. If God asks us to know Him I promise you, He will help you get to know Him.

So this word *know*, *yada*, carries with it the idea of intimate knowledge that comes from relationship and experience at the deepest of levels. I compare it to a man married to a woman for fifty years. They know each other. And I’m not just talking about physically; I’m talking about intellectually, about spiritually, about practically. I’m talking about emotionally. God is inviting you and me to know Him that intimately.

So let me ask you this: Do you know God like this? I would daresay most of us don’t. I know in studying for this message I’ve been so convicted because I want to know God more. So here’s the question I really have for you: Is it the desire of your heart to know God like this? You can. He promises that. Jeremiah 29 is a promise of God. He says, “And you will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.”

That sounds like a pretty earnest search to me, not something that can be casually done. But when you search for God, you will find Him. You will find Him. So do you yada God, know Him, or is all of this just yada, yada, yada to you?

There’s a huge amount of confidence that we gain in our lives when we really know something or someone, when we feel like we really know what something is about. And you know what? Most all the fear we face is really, ultimately, based on the unknown expectations, results, outcomes, locations, endings—all fears based on the unknown. And you know what? There is a lot of fear out there, isn’t there?

This week I did a little research, and I started looking at phobias. Some people say there are up to two thousand different kinds of phobias. I personally counted over six hundred on line. Took me a while, but I found over six hundred different types of phobias—everything from the well-known like *arachnophobia*, the fear of what? Spiders. How about this one, *acrophobia*? You know what acrophobia is? The fear of heights. How many of you have ever heard of *claustrophobia*? The fear of tight spaces.

Then there are some other ones that are not quite so well known. It’s really fun to read about these. How about this one: *arithmophobia*; the fear of numbers. I think my son has that; that’s why he hates math class. Or how about this one: *barophobia*. This one, I just can’t get over this one. Barophobia is the fear of gravity. That’s a tough one. It’s just hard to get away from gravity.

And then there’s one called *phobophobia*. Phobophobia is not the fear of photos. I thought that’s what that might be. No. Phobophobia is the fear of phobias. You are literally afraid of being afraid. And this is a very real phobia in the lives of many people. It really is. But here is my personal favorite. After reading all these phobias, I found one that just blew my mind. I thought this was the greatest phobia I’ve ever read about.

I tried for two days to pronounce this, and I think I finally had it down on Thursday night. Then Friday I got up and I couldn’t do it again. But it’s *Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia*. Something like that. You know what that is? Check it out. [The fear of long words] I love that. It’s true.

There’s a fear for everything. We all have them, and every once in a while, those fears will paralyze us. I was a fifth-grader, and I was living in Beaverton, Oregon, and we had moved into this house where my room was down in the basement and my parents’ room was right above me. But it was really dark in that basement, so I would sleep every night with the light on in the hallway. And my bed sat here, and in the right corner of my room was the doorway, but then to my left was my dresser and mirror and all my colognes and stuff I would put on.

So I’m lying there one night and I’m dead asleep and all of a sudden I hear a noise and it wakes me up. I lay here like, *what was that*? I slowly sat up, but I was laying on my left side, so as I sat up I looked into the mirror to see what was going on in the hallway, and when I did, this arm raised up like this with a knife in its hand, and I just sat there staring at that mirror going, ooooh!

I lowered slowly back into my bed, and as I did, that arm went slowly down. I raised up again, and when I did, that arm with that knife in its hand raised back up. And I thought, *this man is following every move I’m making!* So I lowered back down and he lowered his hand back down.

And at this point I’m absolutely convinced, that there is a man in the hallway with dark black clothing on and a knife in his hand, and he’s watching every move that I make. And I was literally paralyzed by fear. And you might think, *why didn’t you just look into the hallway?* Because I was too afraid to do that. *Well, why didn’t you get up and go out into the hallway and see who’s out there?* Can’t do that, because there’s a bogeyman underneath my bed also, and he’s going to grab my ankle. I couldn’t move.

I was totally freaked out, so all I could do was muster up enough courage to call my parents, “Mom! Dad!” And I yelled loud and they heard me. “Dad!” I figured I needed Dad because somebody needs to take out the dude in the hallway. And I heard him get up and make his way down the stairs. And the closer he got to my room, the braver I felt, and I was actually starting to feel sorry for the dude in the hallway, because my dad was big and powerful.

And you know what? When there’s power present, fear goes away. So my dad was suddenly present in the doorway of my room. I was so elated to see him, but I was freaked out and said, “There’s a guy in the hallway with the knife. Don’t you see him?” He said, “No, there’s no guy in the hallway. There’s no knife.” I said, “Well, every time I raise up in my bed, he raises his arm with his knife. And then when I lower down, he lowers his knife again. He’s out there!”

So my dad walked in and he sat down on my bed and he looked at my mirror for a while, where I had been looking, and he studied it. Then he lowered down and he raised back up, and he noticed that there was a shadow being cast from the light in the hallway across this very bottle of cologne—I still have it—but that shadow, when I raised up, it looked like there was a man with a knife in his hand. And my dad noticed it too. He said, “Yeah, well let’s do this, son,” and made some adjustments, and when he did, the dude in the hallway went away! I was so happy. And I still have this bottle just to remind me of the terror that I faced that night. The fear of that shadow paralyzed me.

Let me ask you something: Is some sort of fear gripping your life right now? What are you afraid of? We have to remember that when we are walking through a valley of shadows that all shadows are cast by a light. You don’t have shadows unless they are caused by a light. In my room, that shadow in the mirror scared me so bad not because of this bottle of cologne, but because the light was on in the hallway. Had I just turned to my right and looked into the hallway, I would have realized there was no man and no knife, but fear kept me from doing so. I couldn’t stop staring at the mirror.

 So the next time you find yourself in the valley of the shadows, turn towards the light. Listen to this work from *Evita*, “Shadows cannot see themselves in the mirror of the sun So let me just ask you again: when fear knocks at your door, will your faith answer? Or will you open the door to allow doubt and frustration and worry to drive you into a life consumed by your fears?

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” So keep your face toward the Son—the S-O-N—He is the light. And learn to dwell in His secret place. Know that you are under the shadow of His wings. I love the words from Paul, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able.”

So what is this secret place that the Bible talks about? Well, it’s His presence, that river. It’s the presence of God. Be still, rapha. Stop striving. Stop your fighting. Let go of your weapons. Lay your hands down and know intimately, spiritually, practically, emotionally, really know God. And here’s what He says, “Be still and know that I am God.” That word for God is Elohim. It means “creator and judge over all of the universe.”

There is another phrase in this verse that I love more than any other, and it’s that phrase *I am*. The name of Yahweh. That name is not used in a proper sense in this verse. He does not say, “I am.” He says, “I am Elohim.” But all throughout Scripture we see these *I am* statements from God. It starts in Exodus, where Moses is talking to God in the burning bush and God says, “Tell the people of Israel that I am who I am has sent you.” In other words, I am creator of all that there is, and I always will be, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. You tell them that I Am has sent you to rescue them.”

Now that phrase I Am, is such a massive blessing to my life. It is the most powerful name in all the world, because it’s the name that is above every name, and it’s a name that is always, always, always present. I love that. So let me just give you a few things to remember this name by, the name I Am, the name of Yahweh.

The God of the past is always the God of our present. Remember this: the God who spoke to Moses in the burning bush is the same God who can speak to you in your living room or in any place right here and right now. Also remember that God owns the past. God is always present, and God holds your future. So when you woke up this morning, He still is. When you get out of bed in the morning tomorrow, He still is. When doubt and worry consume you, remember, He still is. When you get a doctor’s report or that phone call that turns your world upside down, remember, He still is.

When we watch the news and we see all the terrible stories of the terrorists and the horrific disease and the deceit that is going on all over the place, remember, He still is. Come November, if your candidate loses or wins, doesn’t matter, He still is. When worry and doubt fill your heart, your mind, your soul and you wonder where to turn and you don’t even know what to do, don’t forget: He still is. He is ever-present, He is ever-sure, He is omniscient, He is omnipresent, He is omnipotent, all-powerful. He is creator, sustainer, provider, ruler, master, king, fortress refuge, and it’s not our job to question Him; it’s our job to seek Him and it’s our job to know Him. He is God, the great I Am, creator and just over the universe, and He holds us firmly in His hands and He says to you and me, “You can know me if you seek me and find me.”

Let me paint the picture one more way for you. It was the summer of 1986. My family and I were on vacation in the Florida Keys. We had this little 19-foot motorboat that we loved to take out in the ocean, but a storm came up so we were like, “Outta here!” So we went back to shore and we sat in a little restaurant that was adjacent to a Coast Guard station. While we’re sitting there eating, lights from the Coast Guard station started going off, sirens started going off, and suddenly a boat from the Coast Guard station heads out to sea in a big hurry.

After a few hours, we learned the story, because we were curious what had happened. It turns out there was a scuba-diving expedition that was out to sea the same time we were, and they got caught in this same storm. Well, there were several families aboard and they had women and small children, and all the men from the expedition had dived into a rather deep diving expedition, sixty, eighty feet deep.

So with no way to communicate with the divers, the captain had to make a decision: do I stay out here or do I risk the safety of these women and children? He decided it was best to take the boat back to shore with those kids. So he went back to shore. On his way back in, he called the Coast Guard and told them where they were and said, “Go out there and rescue those divers.”

Well, you can imagine the shock when those divers surfaced and there was no boat there to pick them up, and then you can imagine their relief when they saw the Coast Guard coming to get them. But here’s the amazing thing about that story to me. It wasn’t until the divers surfaced that they even knew they were in a storm. It’s because they were so deep they were unaffected by the cause of the storm.

My prayer for you and for me is that we would live lives so close to Jesus that no matter what storm comes our way, no matter what chaos is going on all around us, that we are sort of like those scuba divers. We are in the storm, but we are not being affected by it.

Will we have peace in our hearts amidst a very stormy world because we are plugged deeply into a relationship with Jesus? I’d love to see all of us in this crazy world keep calm and carry on with the calmness and the serenity of those divers in that deep water, even though that storm howled above them. And maybe we can get to the point where we can sing the words of this song not just as an expression, but really out of experience with the living God, “And I will call upon your name to keep my eyes above the waves. When oceans rise, my soul will rest in your embrace, for I am yours and you are mine.”

Stop fighting. Cease Striving. Be still. And trust Him. Worship Him. Live for Him. Know Him.

Keywords: Psalm 46, fear, faith, be still, know God, stop fighting, cease striving, trust God, faith overcomes fear, God is our refuge