

Moravian Women's Association
Devotional Paper September 2026

Be still and know

Let's begin by reading **Psalm 46** which contains the verse which is the root of our new theme – ***Be still and know***

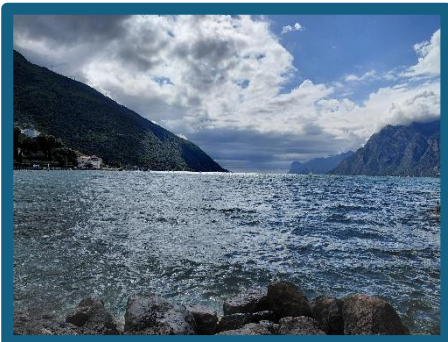
You can read the Psalm in any Bible but I have sent out the more poetic NRSVue version.

We are undoubtedly living in troubled times. This Summer we have seen heatwaves leading to wildfires, possible train derailments and increased deaths in the already unwell. We perhaps fear for the future of our earthly home. There has been unrest and violence and there seems to be almost constant anger; perhaps we fear for the future stability of our country. Everything seems to be in turmoil. Perhaps all this is causing you fear and anxiety, it does me. Psalm 46, therefore is the Psalm for us!

It was written during a troubled time when Israel was under attack from invaders and was used many years later in worship to reassure an anxious people who were uncertain of their identity that God was present with them and could be trusted.

But exactly who is the God who is present with the people? And why can God be trusted?

Psalm 46 answers this question by describing a God who can be trusted because God is in control. God is the God of all.



The Psalm begins by describing the natural world in turmoil; mountains shake, the sea roars. Mountains were seen as earthly pillars that held up the sky, so it's really not good if they are shaking and unstable! This is a description of cosmic chaos!

The Psalm then switches to a calmer natural scene – to the city of God where there is a flowing river, rather than foaming seas. A river was often an image used to indicate God's presence. The Psalmist's imagery told the people he wrote for and it tells us – God is present in God's city; God is the God of all creation; God is in control. You need not be afraid.



The Psalmist now turns our attention to political and national disturbance, telling us that we need not fear; God is also in control of these situations: *'He makes wars to*

cease ... he breaks the bow and shatters the spear...' (v.9). God will bring an end to war.

When I first read this Psalm, I was puzzled by verse eight which tells us that God will bring 'desolations' to the earth. 'Desolations' didn't sound very hopeful to me and the word didn't seem to fit with the imagery of war-ending weapon destruction which comes immediately after. But, when you think about it, for those in power, for whom warmongering, hatred and division is their way of life; ending war will be a desolation. It will be the end of their world as they know it. A very unwelcome complete transformation of their lives will be required!

And then we reach verse 10, our verse: 'Be still, and know that I am God!'



Perhaps in our heads we read this in a calm manner, as an invitation to us to put everything down, to sit still quietly and to listen to God's voice and of course we certainly need to do that.

However, there is an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence, so God's voice might not have been so quiet and calming especially when you read the follow-up sentences: 'I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the earth.' 'Be still and know that I am God' can also be read as a challenge – a challenge to nations and powerful people to stop thinking that they are so great, to stop thinking that they can do just exactly what they want.

Psalm 46 provides some God-given words to calm our fears and anxieties. It tells us of the limitless power of God over creation and over everything that humanity is capable of that is contrary to God's will. And that is a God we can know and trust.

For Discussion:

Where do you go and what do you do to 'Be still and know that I am God!'?

Psalm 46 describes a world that is 'not here yet;' we still have war and division and turmoil. 'Be still and know that I am God' challenges us to try to change the world we do have. How can we 'model' this 'not here yet' world in our own lives, our congregations, our communities?

Does knowing God as an all-powerful God provide you with comfort? Does it provoke some fear? Or a mixture of both?