Reformation Sunday
October 25th, 2026
Pastor Matthew Ude

JEHOVAH IS OUR GOD

In the year 728 BC there was a young man by the name of Hezekiah. He was 25 years old, and his father had just died. He was the new king of Judah. Hezekiah was one of the rarest people in history a king who was faithful to his people and the Lord His God.

> **2Ki 18:5-6** 5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6 For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses.

But the challenges that faced Hezekiah were seemingly insurmountable. Judah at this time had been reduced to a tiny kingdom and even that was under the control of the Assyrians. Not only that but his own people had largely forgotten the Lord many worshiped Asherah and Baal, and those who did claim to worship the Lord were worshiping the bronze serpent.

Against intense anger and pressure from his own people Hezekiah destroyed the false idols, even the bronze serpent. He restored the temple and taught the people the correct way to worship the Lord. He fought against the philistines and regained much of the territory that belonged to Judah. He rebelled against the Assyrians, not out of pride, but because the Lord told him too.

Then the Assyrians came. Their great armies attacked and conquered city after city. All that Hezekiah had worked so hard for was gone. All of Judah was conquered by the Assyrians. All the houses of worship that Hezekiah had built for the Lord were torn down. And the land that Hezekiah had fought so hard to win was now in the hands of the Assyrians. Only Jerusalem itself remained and it was now surrounded by a vast army. This was an army that had defeated all the other great nations including Egypt.

Hezekiah did a thing that few of us have learned to do even though our problems are far less. He took the letter which the King of Assyria had written, and he placed it before the altar of the Lord. He put his trust in the Lord.

Many believe it was this event that prompted the writing of Psalm 46. Surrounded by his enemies Hezekiah found strength and refuge in the Lord God who dwells in the midst of his people.

Some 2,000 years later a young monk faced even more difficult circumstances. He was determined to preach the truth of God's word in a day and age in which it had been mostly lost. Everyone opposed him. The emperor sought to kill him. The leaders of the church and all the

universities of his day ridiculed him. Even his closest friends often opposed him. At one point Luther was forced to cast out of the church one of his closest friends who was even the god father to one of his children.

In this difficult task Luther often turned to this very psalm. Psalm 46 was one of his favorites. He set it to music and sang it often with his family. We have it now in the form of the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

#262:1 A Mighty Fortress

> **V1-3 God *is* our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. [2] Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; [3] *Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled, *Though* the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah**

Notice the three-fold description of Jehovah. He is a refuge, a strength, and a present help in trouble. The psalmist is going to expand on all three of these adjectives throughout the Psalm. In the first third he is described as that resolute refuge. A place where we are safe no matter how bad it gets. In the second third of the Psalm, he describes the God who dwells with his people, a constant companion, and in the last third the great might and fierce strength of the Lord of Hosts, who is a steadfast strength.

What could be more terrifying than the picture the psalmist paints here? The earth is falling away beneath us. The waters are piling up above us, a giant tidal wave that is about to come crashing down. The mountains themselves are crushed beneath the anger of the waters.

Yet the Psalmist stands in the middle of this utter destruction and calmly drinks his morning coffee. What does it matter to him if the Assyrian army surrounds Jerusalem, if all Europe is seeking to destroy him, or if all the power of the earth is set against him? The Lord is his refuge and strength.

He is our resolute refuge – Luther translated this a mighty strong fortress. This is a place where we can rest and sleep. Walls that are impenetrable surround us. Nothing can harm us.

> **Rom 8:31,32,38, 39 NKJ** If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? [32] He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things . . . [38] For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, [39] nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#262:2 A Mighty Fortress

> **V 4-7 [4] *There is* a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy *place* of the tabernacle of the Most High. [5] God *is* in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. [6] The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. [7] The LORD of hosts *is* with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge.**

Jehovah is our constant companion who dwells in the midst of his people.

In the middle of Jerusalem was an underground spring carrying fresh water into the city. Even though the city was surrounded Hezekiah had an abundant supply of fresh water to refresh and give strength to weary soldiers. Even more important to Hezekiah was the fact that the temple of the Lord and the ark His covenant was there in the midst of Jerusalem. This is the place where Hezekiah prayed to the Lord and heard the promises of the Lord and his soul was refreshed. God was there in the midst of his people, dwelling with them. *If Hezekiah was trapped at least he was trapped in the city of God.*

The Lord no longer dwells on the ark between the wings of the cherubim. Now he is Immanuel, the God who became man and dwelt among us. He dwells now with us through his word.

The word of God is the river that refreshes the people of God. How many believers there are who found peace in the word of God even as the earth melts around them? How many who in their old age forget even the names of their own children but still find peace and joy in the promises of God in Psalm 23 or the Lord's Prayer.

#262:3 A Mighty Fortress

> **v 8-11 [8] Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth. [9] He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire. [10] Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! [11] The LORD of hosts *is* with us; The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah**

Jehovah is our steadfast strength. He strengthens the weary arms. He lifts up the drooping head. He wins the battle.

Both Hezekiah and Luther saw the strength and mighty works of the Lord. Although Jerusalem was surrounded by a massive army, the angel of the Lord came in the night and struck and killed 185,000 of the Assyrians. When the Assyrians woke in the morning, they ran in fear and returned to Ninevah and the king of Assyria was killed.

Luther also saw the mighty work of the Lord. Although all Europe raged against him, yet no one was able to lay a hand upon him. He saw it at Augsburg. There at Augsburg it was not Luther

who stood before the emperor but the princes of Germany. Luther was greatly afraid that they would give in to the demands of the emperor. Yet even though the emperor raged against the princes, they did not back down but remained firm in a true confession of God and his word. They did not give in to the emperor, nor did they use at as excuse to rebel against him. They kept the fourth commandment and honored the emperor as God's representative and still remained firm in their confession of Jesus Christ.

The miracle that happened there in Augsburg cannot be overly emphasized. The nations raged against the "city" that is the people of God. But God was in the midst of them and they were not moved.

> **Mat 16:18** and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The Lord "**makes wars cease**," but this is not the Lord's version of a peace mission. The Lord isn't going out and spreading love and peace throughout the world. No, He is the Lord of Sabaoth, the Lord who calls his armies of angels. "**He makes desolation**." He is the fire and the hurricane. He destroys all that stand against him. The war ends because there is nothing left of his enemies. Their greatest weapons, the bow, the spear, the chariot, the height of war technology of those days, these things are useless before him. He crushes them in his wrath.

Yet the people of God are "still." In the midst of all of this activity the people of God have nothing to do. The word for "be still" here is used for those who are lazy and idle, a soldier who has nothing to do. He stabs his sword in the ground and eats his lunch. He sits on a rock and watches as the Lord utterly destroys all who previously raged against him.

Sit still and see the marvelous things our God has done. He destroyed the armies of Assyria. He restored the truth of God's word when it was almost gone from the world. He has preserved that word among us to this day. He will continue to preserve His word and His truth. But most important when we were lost in our own sin, he sent His Son who died for us and through him gave us the forgiveness of our sins.

These are the works of the Lord. They are marvelous in our sight. Rejoice in the Lord and in His word and take refuge in Him.

Amen.

#262:4 A Mighty Fortress