

Readings

Scripture

¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, ³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. ...

¹⁰“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

- Psalm 46:1-3, 10 (*English Standard Version*)

Reflection

We are, not metaphorically but in very truth, a Divine work of art, something that God is making, and therefore something with which He will not be satisfied until it has a certain character. Here again we come up against what I have called the “intolerable compliment.” Over a sketch made idly to amuse a child, an artist may not take much trouble: he may be content to let it go even though it is not exactly as he meant it to be. But over the great picture of his life—the work which he loves, though in a different fashion, as intensely as a man loves a woman or a mother a child—he will take endless trouble—and would doubtless, thereby give endless trouble to the picture if it were sentient. One can imagine a sentient picture, after being rubbed and scraped and re-commenced for the tenth time, wishing that it were only a thumb-nail sketch whose making was over in a minute. In the same way, it is natural for us to wish that God had designed for us a less glorious and less arduous destiny; but then we are wishing not for more love but for less.

- C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

But oh God, tenderly, tenderly. The terrible thing is that a perfectly good God in this matter is hardly less formidable than a Cosmic Sadist. The more we believe that God hurts only to heal, the less we can believe that there is any use in begging for tenderness. A cruel man might be bribed — might grow tired of his vile sport. . . . But suppose that what you are up against is a surgeon whose intentions are wholly good. The kinder and more conscientious he is, the more inexorably he will go on cutting. If he yielded to our entreaties, if he stopped before the operation was complete, all the pain up to that point would have been useless. But is it incredible that such extremities of torture should be necessary for us? Well, take your choice. The tortures occur. If they are unnecessary, then there is no God or a bad one. If there is a good God, then these tortures are necessary. For no even moderately good Being could possibly inflict or permit them if they weren't. Either way, we're [in] for it . . . What do people mean when they say, “I am not afraid of God because I know he is good?” Have they never been to a dentist?

- C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*

Sermon Outline

Where is God in the Midst of Our Suffering? *Rooted Experience*
Psalm 46:1-3, 10 Stephen Baldwin

Where is God in the midst of our suffering? There are numerous ways that scripture speaks to this - three answers we will look at in the scripture. (Psalm 46:1-3, 10)

Our gracious Father teaches us to trust that...

He is present in the midst of our suffering. (Psalm 46:1)

He will calm our fears in the midst of suffering. (Psalm 46:2-3)

He will give us rest in the midst of our suffering... (Psalm 46:10)

Reflection Questions (excerpted from the *Rooted Experience*, used with permission)

- What are the “Why?” questions you’re dealing with at this time? How are your roots of faith dealing with them – growing stronger or weakening in doubt?
- Write about the most challenging “Why?” experience in your life. Was God a part of how you dealt with it? Did Christ-followers walk with you? If so, how did they help bring comfort?
- READ: Matthew 6:25-34, Matthew 14:22-33, and John 11:1-44
- In what areas of your life do you find it most difficult to trust in the Lord with all your heart, rather than leaning on your own intellect and strength? What current situations test your roots of trust?
- What sinful deterrents to trust do you struggle with the most – worry, doubt, fear, disbelief, self-centeredness, pride, past experiences of sin, cynicism or...?
- How do you plan, with God’s help, to actively strive to trust Him wholly? What are your specific prayer requests for the Holy Spirit regarding your trust issues and strength for your faith?