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Reflection for March 24



Psalm 46:1-3, 11

“God is our refuge and strength, a help always near in times of great trouble. That’s why we won’t be afraid when the world falls apart, when the mountains crumble into the center of the sea, when its waters roar and rage, when the mountains shake because of its surging waves . . .

“The Lord of heavenly forces is with us! The God of Jacob is our place of safety.”

When our World Changes

By Scott Carlson

This Psalm took on a new meaning for me in July of 2007. Some may be aware that my daughter, Whitney, passed away in July 2007. Her death was devastating to me (and our entire family). On the morning that we were to hold the visitation for her, this psalm appeared as a part of my devotions for the day. It so accurately summed up a part of how I was feeling on that day.

The world I had known, had fallen apart. It was such a momentous change for me, it felt like the mountains of strength had crumbled around me. I felt the waters of life roaring and raging and surging around me.

And in the midst of all of the changes that had been unleashed with Whitney’s death, there were also signs of the presence of God. Many people from the church I was serving at the time traveled out of state to be with us, in the place that my daughter had died (North Dakota). Many of my clergy colleagues and friends dropped what they were doing in their busy ministries and traveled out to be with us for my daughter’s funeral service.

When we returned to Wisconsin to face a life that had changed, we were surrounded by a church that actually became the church to us. We were loved, over the next several years, by friends, by family, by church, as we lived in to the new normal. I discovered through this tragedy, that, indeed, “The Lord of heavenly forces is with us!”

As we walk into these very uncertain days of the coronavirus pandemic, it is clear the land in which we walk is changing rapidly. The world we have known has changed and fallen apart. There is fear abounding around us . . . I see it . . . I hear it.

Yet I also know, because I have learned, that even now, God is in the midst of this tragedy working to bring about something new. I saw it in the hopeful worship services I experienced (online) on Sunday. I hear it in the reports of what is being done to bring about new therapies that may someday soon, begin to fight this disease. I see it when I see people reaching out (in healthy, social distancing ways) to their neighbors and others who may be vulnerable.

My prayer is that together, in the midst of the changing landscape that produces fear, that we can remember that even now, God is with us. God is in our midst. May God give us the courage to keep giving our fears to God. May God guide us to help lead our church to deeper levels of faith, trust and commitment.

Prayer:

Loving God, you hold us and this world in your hand. Let me never forget that. Thank you for all who are working to fight this pandemic. Give us the courage, the faith and the hope we need. In the hope Jesus offers us, Amen.