

Be still and know ...

Sunday 13 March 2011

John 16 : 33

- Jesus prepared his disciples that they would have troubles (also called tribulations, trials, sorrow and oppression)
- We are guaranteed to have troubles in this life / in this Age.

Psalm 46 : 1-10

- Starts off with scenes of great turmoil and trouble
- Maybe you feel like your life is like and you see no way out of it
- In the midst of all this confusion and troubles, God encourages the Psalmist to be still and to know that he is God and that he is far bigger than his worries and troubles
- In the midst of our troubles we too can "be still and know."

1. Be still and know that God is NEAR

Psalm 34 : 17-18

- Do you feel broken-hearted or crushed in spirit ? God is close to you.

Psalm 139 : 1-16

- God has been near us since we were formed in our mother's womb.
- Because he is near, we can afford to relax and not worry.

Isaiah 40 : 28-31

- God brings strength to the weary and power to the weak.
- Is your life situation draining you ? Do you feel weary ?
- God will give your strength. How ? By being near. He is not a distant God – He is involved and near.

God has not changed from the Old to the New testament ...

Phil 4 : 4 – 7

- We do not have to be anxious about everything happening in our lives
- Our gentleness can be evident. Why ? Because the Lord is near

James 4 : 8

- When we submit to God's will and draw near to Him, He promises he will come near to us

John 14 : 18-20, 23-23

- If you are a child of God through submitting to His will, God lives in you
- God lives in you, he is not distant. He is so near that He has made his home in you

Acts 17 : 26-27

- Even those who are not sons or daughters of God, have God close to them
- God is near to everyone, making it as easy as possible for all people to reach out to Him and to know Him

But it is not enough to know that God is near to us. The world and its ways are also near to us, temptations are near to us, our troubles are near and Satan himself is near.

1. Be still and know that God is ABLE

God is able to take away our situations and he is also able to give us the strength to endure our situations. We usually want God to work in that way, but that is not the only way He works. Sometimes, giving us strength to endure our troubles is part of His plan rather than taking our troubles away.

Mark 9 : 49

- In Biblical times, salting was associated with purifying
- Before sacrifices could be made to God in the temple, they needed to be salted. Salting was part of the process of ensuring the sacrifices would be acceptable to God
- And in those days, fire was associated with trials and tribulations
- We all need trials and troubles to refine us, to make us rely on God and to become more holy

So God does not promise us easy lives free from financial worries and sickness, he does not promise us perfect upbringings and perfect relationships, He does not promise that our walk with Him will be easy and without challenges. He may decide to take our troubles away, but he does not promise that. But He does promise us that He will help us to endure our troubles.

Examples of the ability of God :

Genesis 18 : 10 – 14, 20 : 1-2

- Having a child at such an advanced age is impossible from a human perspective, but nothing is too hard for God

Jeremiah 32 : 26 - 27

- Israel has been devastated by her own sin and has been defeated by their enemies
- But God says he will restore her to her glory days –that isn't too difficult for Him

Is your situation too difficult for God to remove or to give you strength to endure through ?

Mathew 19 : 25-26

- This rich young ruler though he was ready to follow Jesus, but when challenged by Jesus to change his attitude to his wealth he walked away
- Entering the Kingdom of God was impossible for him, but through God all things are possible

God is in the business of doing the impossible. Throughout the Bible, God tells us to be still and know that he is near and that he is able.

Philippians 4 : 11-13

- Paul knew that God was near and able
- God did not change all of Paul's situations but He did give him the strength to endure his difficulties
- Paul had many troubles of his own and God did not take them all away
- He had a thorn in his flesh (2 Cor 12) which was probably a chronic illness that God did not take away to help him from becoming conceited and dependent on God

Romans 5 : 3-4

- Sufferings produce perseverance, character, and helps us keep focused on the hope of the Resurrection

We can pray that God will take away our troubles, and he may very well answer those prayers. But maybe our troubles are there for a reason. In that case, we can rely on God to help us endure our situations.

Ephesians 3 : 20-21

- Many of you came to church this morning with difficult, challenging life situations
- Maybe concerning your health, your relationship with your husband, the behaviour of your children, the state of your relationship with God or with His people. You may feel deep sorrow or shame about something, you may be fearful for the future
- Regardless of how desperate your situation is, you can leave here today at peace knowing that God is near and that God is able. **Be still and know ...**