Home Is Where Our Heart Is

(by Jamey Hinds)

***“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them”*** (**Hebrews 11:13-16**).

Despite what many people may say they believe, words are very powerful. And one of the most powerful words in our language is “home.” Foreigners living in a strange land often do what they can to make where they’re living a lot like “home.” They’ll fly their country’s flag, cook meals which especially remind them of their homeland, and may do their utmost to retain the language of their home.

As Christians, we’re not yet home. ***“Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself”*** (**Philippians 3:20-21**). As Jesus testified before Pilate, ***“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm”*** (**John 18:36**).

And so we ***“look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells”*** (**2 Peter 3:13**). What does it mean for us to be looking for or waiting for new heavens and a new earth? It is more like waiting for a desired event rather than something we dread—as if we were waiting for a loved one to return home from an extended journey: we don’t just sit around and twiddle our thumbs, we prepare the house and ourselves for their impending arrival.

Jesus taught, ***“Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks”*** (**Luke 12:33-36**).

We prepare ourselves for the Lord’s coming by living in accordance with His new covenant laws — ***“Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness”*** (**2 Peter 3:11**). ***“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you’”*** (**Matthew 28:18-20**).

***“Beloved, now we are God’s children, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. … No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him”*** (**1 John 2:2-3, 6**; and see **Colossians 3:1-5**). Where is our heart? Answering this question honestly reveals where our eternal treasure is.

Great Verses of The Bible: Psalm 46:1

(by Ken Weliever)

In 1517 Martin Luther was just an obscure, unknown Catholic priest. Until he decided to challenge the teachings of the Catholic Church when he nailed his 95 theses on the church house door in Wittenberg, Germany.  Luther challenged the church on 95 points where he felt they were Scripturally wrong. This opposition meant a charge of heresy and certain excommunication. It could have resulted in torture and death.

For the next 10 years Luther led a Reformation protesting the teaching and practices of Catholicism. While leading this crusade, he suffered a series of serious health problems that affected him physically and emotionally. Extreme Dizziness. Heart problems. Intestinal complication. And depression.

During this time the black plague struck Germany. Luther watched many friends die an awful death. Then his year old son became seriously ill. While experiencing so many problems, **Psalm 46** became Luther’s favorite source of solace. It is one of the great Psalms of the Bible that offers comfort and consolation. The very first verse offers a great promise:

**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.**

GOD IS OUR REFUGE: A refuge is a place of safety and security from danger. We can find shelter in God in times of trouble, trial and temptation. When heartache overwhelms us like a flood God’s love, mercy and goodness are a guard to our spirits. They sustain us and offer sanctuary in a sinful world. A world with senseless evil and unmitigated malice.

GOD IS OUR STRENGTH: We need not only refuge for shelter and safety, but strength to take up life’s tasks once the storm has passed. When we experience sickness and sorrow in our lives, it is debilitating. When death invades our home, it can drain our energy and emotion. It leaves us empty. Hollow. And hurt. In times like that we need mental, emotional and physical strength. We need spiritual strength.

To people who were enduring an extreme hardship, God made this promise through His prophet: ***“Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand”*** (**Isaiah 41:10**)

GOD IS OUR HELP: God will not fail us when we need Him. The Psalmist emphasized this fact when he wrote God is our Help. Our present help. Our very present help. Friends may forsake us. Family may neglect us. But God is there to protect us. Encourage us. Help us. An unknown poet put it this way:

***Speak to Him, thou, for He heareth And spirit with spirit can meet.* *Closer is He than breathing.* *And nearer than hands and feet.***

God’s help literally reached to earth from heaven when He sent Jesus to die for our sins. Make no mistake, God loves you. Cares for you. And desires to help you. **Psalm 46** was Martin Luther’s inspiration for writing the famous Hymn, A Mighty Fortress is our God.

***A mighty Fortress is our God, A Bulwark never failing;***

***Our Helper He amid the flood Of mortal ills prevailing:***

***For still our ancient foe Doth seek to work us woe;***

***His craft and power are great, And, armed with cruel hate,***

***On earth is not his equal.***

The truth of this hymn rooted in **Psalm 46:1** continues to offer us refuge, strength and help in our times of trouble.