

● **WARM UP**

A mother, wishing to encourage her son's progress at the piano, bought tickets to a performance by the great Polish pianist, Ignace Paderewski. When the evening arrived, they found their seats near the front of the concert hall and eyed the majestic Steinway waiting on the stage. Soon the mother found a friend to talk to, and the boy slipped away.

At eight o'clock, the lights in the auditorium began to dim, the spotlights came on, and only then did they notice the boy - up on the piano bench, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star". His mother gasped in shock and embarrassment but before she could retrieve her son, the master himself appeared on the stage and quickly moved to the keyboard.

He whispered gently to the boy, "Don't quit. Keep playing". Leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in the bass part. Soon his right arm reached around the other side and improvised a delightful obligato. Together, the old master and the young novice held the crowd mesmerised with their blended and beautiful music.

● **READ** Psalm 46:1-3

● **BACKGROUND**

In this passage we read that God is two things:

- Refuge
- Strength

In English the word "refuge" often implies a place of shelter to run to, to escape trouble. The Hebrew word here can also be translated "hope" or "trust". There are many times when people can try and use God for escapism, that is, when some difficulties arise they just want to escape the problem.

This passage however combines "hope" and "strength". In the New Testament we are taught that through the Holy Spirit we are not those looking for escape but rather we can become overcomers or conquerors.

The psalmist is saying we can trust God to strengthen us.

Jesus had a favourite name for the Holy Spirit and many English translations say "helper". Others use the word "strengthener".

● **QUESTIONS**

- 1 How do you see the Holy Spirit as active in your circumstances, helping you?
- 2 How have you learned to make room for the Holy Spirit in your life?

3 What are the biggest challenges to you trusting in the help of God?

4 What is one way that your thought life can affect the way you see the Holy Spirit as your helper?

● **CONSIDER THIS**

"I place no hope in my strength, nor in my works: but all my confidence is in God, my protector, who never abandons those who have put all their hope and thought in him."

Francois Rabelais



What is God saying to me?

● **LET'S PRAY**

● **REAL LIFE STORIES OF GOD'S POWER**



I came to a meeting about two years ago. I had had a very sore back for quite a few months. It hurt whenever I worked. After the meeting I got home and the pain was sort of halved and in a few days it had completely gone. My back has been a lot stronger and better and the pain has never come back. Stephen