

## ***Fortress (Psalm 46) Song Story***

At the onset of the global pandemic, many of us were looking for creative ways to order our days. The sudden forced pockets of time where you couldn't go anywhere or do anything outside of the home seemed to provide opportunities to accomplish things you may not have had time to do otherwise.

One of my objectives during the lockdown in March 2020 was to spend some focused time on music. First, I dusted off some of my classical music from years gone by. Second, I spent time working on songwriting. The latter practice often begins with me sitting down at the piano with a particular passage of Scripture set before me or on my mind. After reading the passage and meditating on it, I began to play. I like to refer to this process as *emoting*, which is basically playing what I feel based upon what I've read. Sometimes it turns into something and sometimes it doesn't. However, it always helps me to sit in the text a little longer.

In light of all that was taking place in our world, I resolved to memorize Psalm 46. This chapter quickly became a place of solace and encouragement. I decided to take each section at a time and try to sing it to help me remember it. I labored for about an hour at a time trying to capture the feel of the text and sing the words as translated in the English Standard Version Bible while staying within the same meter. The first section of the chapter seemed to come fairly easy.

Each section of the Psalm was marked with a *Selah*. This musical marking seems to symbolize the end of a phrase leading the reader or singer to pause. I felt like an instrumental portion between sections with moving notes would capture the idea of foaming waters or flowing rivers. The moving notes within a minor key create tension and lack of resolve to which the violin contributes greatly.

The second section proved to be a bit more challenging. There were simply more words to try to fit within the general framework from the first section. However, before long, the three sections were complete. The musical ending to follow the call to "Be still and know" that God is sovereign over all and our strong fortress seemed necessary to pause before again combining the movement of notes, yet with a major resolution. The goal was to express the hope and peace which are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ the Son. The resolve to major, for me, reiterates the message, "It is finished."

Then, after all the work, I discovered that I had successfully memorized the entire Psalm! May this song serve as a helpful Scripture memory tool, a means of grace to your soul, as well as point you to our Savior Jesus Christ.