

# Series Overview: March Madness

**The Theme:** The world often feels like a "sudden death" tournament. We face unexpected upsets, high-pressure clocks, and a "madness" that threatens to overwhelm our peace. However, for the believer, the "Bracket of Heaven" is already set. This series is designed to move us from the anxiety of the "unknown" to the authority of the **Sovereign God**, who is not moved by the chaos but has already orchestrated the victory.

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## Week 1: The Full Court Press

### *Finding Peace Under Pressure*

#### **The Exegesis: Psalm 46:1–3, 10**

In basketball, a **Full Court Press** is a defensive strategy designed to disrupt the opponent's rhythm. It creates a sense of urgency, forces mistakes, and triggers panic. The enemy of our souls uses the "madness" of life—financial strain, health scares, or global unrest—to apply a spiritual press.

#### **1. God as our "Defensive Anchor" (v. 1-2)**

- *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*
- The Hebrew word for refuge (*machaseh*) implies a shelter from a storm. Notice it doesn't say God *provides* a refuge; it says He **is** the refuge. When the press is on, we don't run to a plan; we run to a Person. Because He is "very present," the pressure doesn't have to result in a turnover.

#### **2. The Madness of the Earth (v. 2-3)**

- *"Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea..."*
- The Psalmist describes the ultimate "upset"—the very ground beneath us shaking. This represents systemic chaos. Even when the "foundations" of our lives (jobs, relationships, health) seem to be failing, the believer's standing is not based on the "court" we play on, but the God we play for.

#### **3. The Strategy of Stillness (v. 10)**

- *"Be still, and know that I am God."*
- In the heat of a press, the natural instinct is to move faster. But God's strategy is the opposite. To "be still" (*raphah*) literally means to "let go" or "slacken." It is a command to

stop trying to out-manuever the chaos and instead recognize His sovereignty. Knowing He is God is the "timeout" we need to regain our perspective.

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## 5 Discussion Questions for Comprehension

1. **Identify the Press:** What area of your life currently feels like a "Full Court Press" (where you feel trapped, rushed, or pressured to make a move)?
  2. **The Nature of Refuge:** Psalm 46 says God is a *very present* help. How does knowing God is "in the game" with you change how you handle stress compared to someone who thinks He is watching from the bleachers?
  3. **The "Fear" Factor:** Verse 2 says "Therefore we will not fear." Does "not fearing" mean the pressure goes away, or does it mean something else? How do we practice fearlessness in the middle of a crisis?
  4. **The Power of Stillness:** Why is "being still" so difficult when things are chaotic? What is one practical way you can "slacken your grip" on a situation this week?
  5. **Exalting the Coach:** Verse 10 says God will be exalted among the nations. How can your calm response to chaos serve as a witness to those who don't know the Sovereign God?
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## The Call to Action: "The 60-Second Timeout"

This week, whenever you feel the "madness" rising or the pressure of a situation tightening, you are challenged to take a **60-second spiritual timeout**. \* **Stop** what you are doing.

- **Silence** your phone/thoughts.
- **Declare** out loud: *"God, You are my refuge. I am still, and I know that You are God."*

Refuse to "throw the ball away" in panic. Trust the plan of the Sovereign God.