

# A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Music and Words by Martin Luther, a paraphrase of Psalm 46, 1529

Sing along with The Master's Seminary Chorus of Grace Community Church @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=De1rRCr-Ano>

C G Em Am D G

A mighty Fortress is our God;

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

A Bul-wark ne-ver fail - - - - -ing.

C G Em Am D G

Our Helper He a - midst the flood;

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

Of mor-tal ills prevai - - - - -ling.

C Am D<sup>5</sup> D<sup>sus4/A</sup> D G

For still our an - - - cient foe,

C G D<sup>5</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> Am

Doth seek to work us woe;

Em Am E<sup>sus4</sup> D G

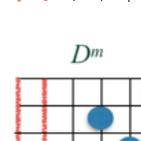
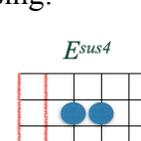
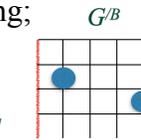
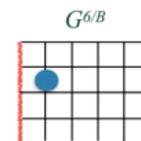
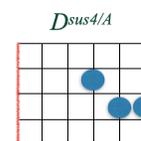
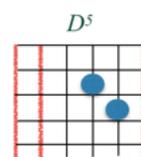
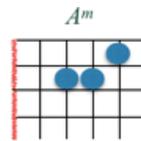
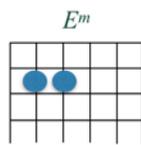
His craft and pow'r are great,

F G<sup>6/B</sup> Am Dm E

And armed with cru-el hate,

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

On earth is not his e - - - - -qual.



C G Em Am D G

And though this world, with de - vils filled,

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

Should threaten to un-do us;

C G Em Am D G

We will not fear, for God hath willed,

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

His truth to tri-umph through us:

C Am D<sup>5</sup> D<sup>sus4/A</sup> D G

The prince of dark - - ness grim,

C G D<sup>5</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> Am

We tremble not for him;

Em Am E<sup>sus4</sup> D G

His rage we can endure,

F G<sup>6/B</sup> Am Dm E

For lo, his doom is sure,

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

One lit - - tle word shall fell him.

Key ~ C<sup>maj</sup>  
Tempo ~ 100bpm  
Time ~ 4/4

C G Em Am D G

Did we in our own strength confide,

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

Our stri - ving would be lo - - - - -sing;

C G Em Am D G

Were not the right Man on our side,

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

The Man of God's own cho - - - - -osing:

C Am D<sup>5</sup> D<sup>sus4/A</sup> D G

Doth ask who that may be?

C G D<sup>5</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> Am

Christ Jesus, it is He;

Em Am E<sup>sus4</sup> D G

Lord Sabaoth His Name,

F G<sup>6/B</sup> Am Dm E

From age to age the same,

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

And He must win the bat - - - - -tle.

C G Em Am D G

That word above all earthly powers,

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

No thanks to them a - bi - - - - -deth;

C G Em Am D G

The Spirit and the gifts are ours;

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

Through Him who with us si - - - - -deth:

C Am D<sup>5</sup> D<sup>sus4/A</sup> D G

Let goods and kin - - dred go,

C G D<sup>5</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> Am

His mortal life al - so;

Em Am E<sup>sus4</sup> D G

The bo - dy they may kill;

F G<sup>6/B</sup> Am Dm E

God's truth a - - - bi - deth still,

C G<sup>6/B</sup> Am G A G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> G<sup>6/B</sup> C

His Kingdom is for-e - - - - -ver.

**Sabaoth:** the transliteration of the Hebrew word tsebha'oth, meaning "hosts," "armies" (Romans 9:29; James 5:4). In the LXX, the Hebrew word is rendered by "Almighty." (Revelation 4:8; Isaiah 6:3). It may designate Jehovah as God of the armies of earth, God of the armies of the stars, or God of the unseen armies of angels; or perhaps it may include all these ideas. *Easton's Bible Dictionary*

# History

"**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**" (German: "**Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott**") is one of the best known hymns by the reformer Martin Luther, a prolific hymnodist. Luther



wrote the words and composed the melody sometime between 1527

and 1529. It has been translated into English at least seventy times and also into many other languages. The words are a paraphrase of **Psalm 46**.



It has been called the "Battle Hymn of the Reformation" for the effect it had supporting the Reformers' cause. John Julian records four theories of its origin:

- Heinrich Heine: it was sung by Luther and his companions as they entered Worms on April 16, 1521 for the Diet;
- K.F.T. Schneider: it was a tribute to Luther's friend Leonhard Kaiser, who was executed on August 16, 1527;
- Jean-Henri Merle d'Aubigne: it was sung by the German Lutheran princes as they entered Augsburg for the Diet in 1530 at which the Augsburg Confession was presented; and
- the view that it was composed in connection with the Diet of Speyer (1529) at which the German Lutheran princes lodged their protest to Emperor Charles V, who wanted to enforce his Edict of Worms (1521).

Alternatively, John M. Merriman writes that the hymn "began as a martial song to inspire soldiers against the Ottoman forces" during the Ottoman wars in Europe. Tradition states that King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden had it played as his forces went to battle in the Thirty Years' War. In the late 1800s the song also became an anthem of the early Swedish socialist movement.

The hymn is now a suggested hymn for Catholic Masses, appearing in the second edition of the Catholic Book of Worship, published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, though this is not without controversy.

[hymnody.org](http://hymnody.org), [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ein_feste_Burg_ist_unser_Gott)

## *Other Translations and Verses*

A mighty fortress is our God;  
A sword and shield victorious.  
He breaks the cruel oppressor's rod,  
And wins salvation glorious.  
The old satanic foe,  
Has sworn to work us woe;  
With craft and dreadful might,  
He arms himself to fight.  
On earth he has no equal.

No strength of ours can match his might;  
We would be lost rejected.  
But now a champion comes to fight,  
Whom God Himself elected.  
You ask who this may be;  
The Lord of hosts is He;  
Christ Jesus mighty Lord;  
God's only Son adored;  
He holds the field victorious.

Though hordes of devils fill the land,  
All threat'ning to devour us.  
We tremble not unmoved we stand;  
They cannot overpower us.  
Let this world's tyrant rage,  
In battle we'll engage.  
His might is doomed to fail;  
God's judgment must prevail;  
One little word subdues him.

God's Word forever shall abide;  
No thanks to foes who fear it.  
For God Himself fights by our side,  
With weapons of the Spirit.  
Were they to take our house;  
Goods honor child or spouse;  
Though life be wrenched away;  
They cannot win the day;  
The Kingdom's ours forever.

A mighty fortress is our God;  
A trusty shield and weapon.  
He helps us free from every need;  
That hath us now o'ertaken.  
The old evil foe,  
Now means deadly woe.  
Deep guile and great might,  
Are his dread arms in fight.  
On earth is not his equal.

With might of ours can naught be done;  
Soon were our loss effected.  
But for us fights the valiant One,  
Whom God Himself elected.  
Ask ye Who is this;  
Jesus Christ it is;  
Of sabaoth Lord;  
And there's none other God.  
He holds the field forever.

Though devils all the world should fill,  
All eager to devour us.  
We tremble not we fear no ill.  
They shall not overpower us.  
This world's prince may still ;  
Scowl fierce as he will.  
He can harm us none;  
He's judged the deed is done.  
One little word can fell him.

The Word they still shall let remain;  
Nor any thanks have for it.  
He's by our side upon the plain,  
With His good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life;  
Goods fame child and wife.  
Though these all be gone;  
Our vict'ry has been won.  
The Kingdom ours remaineth.