

The Lord Is Our Helper

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea (Psalm 46:1, 2)

Introduction: The word “troubles” in this passage comes from the Hebrew word tsarah. Strong’s dictionary gives the following definition: “tightness (that is, figuratively trouble); transitively a female rival: - adversary, adversity, affliction, anguish, distress, tribulation, trouble.”

Notice that the Bible, unlike what some ministers claim, does not teach us that problems are our “friends” nor are they a “blessing in disguise.” The Bible says that problems are “adversaries” and we are to seek help and relief from them.

God wants to help us. He wants to intervene in our situations. But God wants to go a step beyond just helping us in times of trouble. He wants to be our HELPER (Psalm 30:10). He does not want to be the occasional intervener when we are stuck and have no other recourse. He wants the “Helper” position to be a full time position in our lives.

The Septuagint (the Old Testament translated into the Greek before the birth of Christ) uses the Greek word *thlipsis* which, according to the Strong’s dictionary means “pressure (literally or figuratively): - afflicted, (-tion), anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble.” It is the same word used for “tribulation” in Rev. 2:9-10 in reference to the work of the devil (also in John 16:33).

I. Knowing the character of God as revealed by The Holy Spirit – Our Helper, the One called alongside to help (John 14:26)

1. *But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you. (Amplified Bible)*
2. *Gospel of John*, by F. B. Meyer:
 - There is no adequate translation for the word Paraclete. It may be rendered Comforter, Helper, Advocate, Interpreter; but no one word suffices. The Greek simply means one whom you call to your side, in a battle, or a law-court, to assist you by word or act. Such a One is Christ; such a One is the Holy Spirit. He is a definite Person whom you can call to, and lean on, and work with. (p. 235)
3. *The Other Comforter: Practical Studies on the Holy Spirit*, by Theodore H. Epp:
 - “The word ‘comforter,’ as used by the Lord Jesus to describe the Holy Spirit, is rich in meaning. It refers to ‘one called alongside to help.’ He is called alongside us to assist, to bring comfort where it is needed.... (p. 8)
 - It also refers to one who is identified with our interests. Beyond being an attorney to plead our case. He identifies with our interests and completely undertakes our cause. This Comforter, or advocate, will see us through all our difficulties. He is our personal agent who transacts all spiritual business for us. (pp. 8, 9)

- The Holy Spirit is the other Comforter, or Advocate, who takes all that Christ has done and all that Christ has procured for us and makes it a reality within us. (p. 11)

4. *The Holy Spirit: Power from on High*, by Albert B. Simpson

- The Greek word is *Paraclete*, and it literally means “A God at hand, One by our side, One that we may call upon in every emergency.” The Latin word, advocate, has the same meaning, “One that we call upon or call to us, One ever within call.” In this connection, the Holy Spirit is represented to us as the present and all-sufficient God. Of course, there is comfort, infinite comfort in all this; but the primary idea is not so much spiritual enjoyment, as practical efficiency and sufficiency for every occasion and emergency that arises.
- This is just what the Holy Spirit is—God for everything. God at hand under all circumstances and equal to all demands. (p. 353)

II. What kind of help are you looking for from the Lord?

1. Do you need help in dealing with temptation?

- *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* (Heb. 2:18)
- *For He Himself having been tempted in what He suffered, He is able to help the ones being tempted.* (Analytical-Literal Translation)
- *For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favor to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].* (Heb. 4:15, 16; Amplified Bible)

2. Do you need help in praying?

- *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. **And** we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* (Rom. 8:26-28)
- *So to the Spirit assists us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray aright, but the Spirit pleads for us with sighs that are beyond words, and He who searches the human heart knows what is in the mind of the Spirit, since the Spirit pleads before God for the saints. We know also that those who love God, those who have been called in terms of his purpose, **have his aid and interest in everything*** (Romans 8:26-28; The James Moffatt Translation)
- **Martin Luther:** The Greek text has the singular “works together” (sunergei), which is more fitting, since the reference is to the Holy Ghost; for this is the (Apostle’s) meaning: We must not be surprised that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, since He works together with God’s saints in all they do. That is the true exposition of the statement: “He maketh intercession for the saints.” In this (intercession) He works together with us, as He

works together with us in all other things. – **Martin Luther**, Commentary on Romans, trans. J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1954), pp. 111-116.

- Unfortunately, so many people have taught that God is the one bringing negative situations in our lives and have cited Romans 8:28 as proof of this. Moffat understands, and it can be seen from the context, that Romans 8:28 is teaching that the Spirit is come to supply His aid and interest in everything. It is not teaching that God is the one ordaining bad things to happen to us for some mysterious “good.”

III. Pray. Cry Out to the Lord for His help:

1. The history of some godly kings who relied on God as their helper provide examples for us.

Let's start with Asa:

- *And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: **help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.** (2 Chron. 14:11)*
- Notice that God is so connected with His people that if we call on Him for help and He does not, then He suffers defeat with us.
- God is so powerful that it really is nothing for Him to help when we call out to Him in sincere trusting prayer. However, as stated in our exposition of Romans 8:28, it is done in cooperation with God:
- *And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, **while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.** (2 Chron. 15:1, 2)*
- This idea of cooperation with God to accomplish His will is a concept taught throughout the Scriptures (Deut. 31:16-17; Josh. 24:20; 1 Chron. 28:9; Hos. 6:1-2; Zech. 1:3; Mal. 3:7; Matt. 16:19; 18:18-20; Mark 16:9; John 20:23; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; James 4:8)

2. The Psalmist shows how vital our prayer and our positive confession is

- *I will say of the LORD, He is my **refuge** and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. **He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.** (Psalm 91:2, 14-16)*
- Notice that both Psalm 46 and Psalm 91 refers to God as our “Refuge.” A “refuge” is “Shelter or protection from danger or distress.” God cannot be the one who gives you distress and then shelter you from it or it would be Him protecting you from Himself, which doesn't make sense.
- The word “troubles” in the above passage is the same word translated “troubles” in Psalm 46.

3. Jehoshaphat also knew how to cry out to the Lord for help and get it:

- *And Judah gathered themselves together, **to ask help of the LORD:** even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD. (2 Chron. 20:4)*
- *If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and **cry unto thee***

*in our affliction, **then** thou wilt hear and help.* (2 Chron. 20:9)

- We must cry out to the Lord in our affliction. The word *affliction* in this passage is the exact same Hebrew word used in Psalm 46.
- Notice that Jehoshaphat did not waste a lot of time trying figure out whether God sent this trouble on him for some good reason. He did not try to figure out whether this was God or the devil. He simply appealed to God for help in his trouble.
- In this passage, Jehoshaphat was claiming a promise from God as prayed by Solomon (2 Chron. 6:28-30; 1 Kings 8:33-37)
- Notice the “then” in this passage. Here is another Scripture demonstrating the need for divine cooperation with God. If we are not getting God’s help, it is often because we have failed to ask Him for it.

4. We see this example in Hezekiah and Isaiah:

- *Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; **but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles.** And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.* (2 Chron. 32:7, 8)
- Of course, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, just like the devil, attempted to bring fear into the hearts of the people by undermining the words of Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:10-16)
- Sennacherib also had the audacity to speak and rail against the Living God. This could have caused Hezekiah to give up, but he and Isaiah continued to pray and God intervened in their situation (2 Chron. 32:20-23)

IV. When praying, make sure that you claim God's promises of help and assistance.

1. In order to appropriate God's promises for help, we are required to exercise a basic trust in Him:
 - *But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble. **And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.*** (Psalm 37:39, 40)
2. If we truly believe that God is our helper, our confession concerning this should be a positive faith-filled one:
 - *So that we may boldly say, **The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*** (Heb. 13:6)
 - *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea* (Psalm 46:1, 2)

V. The Reason that so many of God’s people do not receive His Help

1. Failure to receive help from God is often due to a failure to pray:

- Failure to seek the Lord for help results in our shame and a lack of success (Isa. 30:1-3; 31:1, 2; Jer. 10:21)
- This is what happened to Asa later in his life. At the end of his life he failed to seek the Lord's help and died as a result of it (2 Chron. 16:12, 13)

- One cannot sit back and expect the Lord to help if they refuse to petition Him for it. God often waits to be invited into our situations before He intervenes. A failure to receive God's help is often due to a failure to ask Him for His help. Just knowing that God is our helper is not enough. We must ask Him for this help.

Conclusion: Knowing and acknowledging the Lord as our helper destroys fear and brings our faith to higher proportions. Instead of giving voice to the fears that the devil tempts us with, we should be reminding ourselves of how the great Almighty and all-powerful God is our helper. With Him on our side who is able to stand against us (Josh 1:5; Rom. 8:31)