

A Prayer for Help

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[0 : 01] Good morning, Christchurch. It's really good to be here with you in the flesh, finally. We've kind of made it, which is great. And it's a really happy chapter that we're looking at, isn't it? You know, if you were expecting to come to church with a really joyful message, this is the Sunday not to come. No, it's a really good message, actually. And so I think it would be good to break down some of the things that I've learned over the last year, which I want to share with you, and then we can dig deep into what this actually means and then apply it into today's message. So, yeah. So when reading the Old Testament, you've got to understand the relationship between God and the Israelites. It's a bit of a, the terminology used is very legalistic in our wording. And so it doesn't really have so much love or caring in it. So when hearing these words, such as covenant, don't think of your house or the land that you own, but actually think of it as an agreement that you've made with someone. So the Israelites and God, they made an agreement. And the Israelites, they had to worship God and only God, and that they had to follow the law. And the law is quite complicated as well. And that's, you could do a whole sermon series on that. But, and if they, if they had fallen out of the law, if they had fallen out of God's kind of blessing, then they wouldn't have any protection, they wouldn't have any provision or, or anything like that. And so as seen in the Old Testament, time over and time over, you kind of think, geez, these Israelites, they really cannot get on and to worship God because they're constantly falling out of God's blessing. But in Psalm 44, this is not the case. They've actually obeyed God's message. They've obeyed God's law. And, and previously, if you think about it also, there's been a lot of wars that have gone on and they've always won. And then all of a sudden, they've got armies surrounding them who are attacking and they're winning.

And so it's quite difficult when they're in that situation that they're crying out to God and nothing's happening. They keep losing and it's causing big problems for them.

So in many different ways, Psalm 44 isn't your normal Psalm. So for argument's sake, the, the Psalm is a one way communication. Normally in other Psalms, you hear God responding back in some sort of way where this, they're in a complete mess and God is silent.

And I suppose for many of us during COVID, we've been really crying out to God thinking, when are you going to end this? When are you going to intervene? Especially when there was no vaccine and the numbers were increasing and it was just looking very bleak.

And then there was the hope of the vaccine, which is great. So for the Israelites, they were under attack and they were having many things going wrong and they were just crying out. So although it's titled a prayer for help, it might be better better call day, cry for help. But they were just really seeking God to intervene and really needed that. It's funny how a Psalm that was written thousands of years ago can still have so much relevance in our walk with God right now. A couple of weeks ago, we, me and my wife, we, we had to take our car to the garage and it was really expensive work and being an ordinary, you don't get a lot of money. And so I was really panicking and trying to think of ways and how we can raise money to pay for this work. And it took me a couple of weeks to actually work out, maybe I should ask God and see what he can do. And it's funny, isn't it? That when we're in situations like that, we always spend all of our time and energy working out how we can try and fix our own problems. And yet the last thing we always do is go to God. And so after, after praying a day, a couple of days passed and I received an email from HMRC. And as you can probably imagine, stress levels were increasing because I thought, oh no, how much tax do I owe? In fact, it was, dear Mr. Wingrove, you paid too much tax in the last year. Please log onto your account and claim it back. And it was the exact amount of money that we needed to pay our car. And upon reflection,

[5 : 28] I just thought, I wasted so many weeks and so much time and energy worrying and stressing about my, to be honest, quite small problem. And yet God graciously intervened.

So I wonder what kind of problems or things that you might be facing. And actually, if we just go to God first, we need reminders around the house, don't we, in terms of when we face problems, just go to God first and see what he can do.

But it's also really, really difficult that when you do go to God and you keep asking and asking and asking, and there is silence. There's absolutely no response and there's no action from him.

That's tough. That's really tough. I was starting to get a bit concerned, especially when praying for COVID to end and nothing seemed to be happening and it was just getting worse and worse.

It's times when we face storms in our life and we're crying out and nothing is happening. And it is exactly in that moment, and I believe Psalm 44 is speaking about this in a different way, that when we are facing a storm, it's really important that we just stand completely still and wait and trust in God that he will deliver us from whatever this may be.

[7 : 08] And it's the complete faith and trust to continue pursuing God and wait for him to step in.

And obviously, our human nature is to try and take over and to try and solve the problems for ourself. And by doing so, we can occasionally get a lot more messy.

But God is in the business of restoring our mess into a message for other people for hope. And so when we face troubles and problems, we have no other solution.

And when we are tired, when we are hurt, when we are low, when we see no solution, and when God is silent and no intervention, he calls us to be still.

And in his stillness, it's full of peace. He calls us to submit to him in everything we do and wait patiently on him. And in the waiting, he will turn that mess into a message.

[8 : 24] And all we need to do when there is silence from God is to wait and trust in him. Shall we pray?

Heavenly Father, just give thanks for everyone here today. And we just pray that no matter what we are facing, that we would keep the courage to keep reaching out to you in all of our problems, that you would deliver us from them.

When we have no hope, that we keep trusting in you. When we are at a complete despair and nothing else that we can do.

And pray that we would have the faith to completely rest in you and wait on you. In Jesus' name. Amen.