

A Very Present Help - God is a Refuge

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[0 : 00] It is wonderful to meet one another and to greet one another and to greet one another in the Lord.

And of course, the Lord's what brings us together. And this psalm is really about God. And we'll just read it and he'll just be revealed through it, obviously.

Psalm 46, sorry, verse 1. 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, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, Selah.

There is a river. The streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her.

She shall not be moved. God shall help her and that right early. The heathen raised. The kingdoms were moved. He uttered his voice. The earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us.

[1 : 30] The God of Jacob is our refuge, Selah. Come, behold the works of the Lord. What desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth.

He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder. He burneth the chariot in fire. Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen.

I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge, Selah.

May God add the blessing to the reading of his word. Amen. Thank you, Jesse. A very present help. I was talking to Julie just yesterday, I think it was.

[2 : 31] And I said, have I preached on God is our refuge lately? And it probably wasn't that long ago that I did that. But I'm using a different title. So that makes it all different.

You know, we can't really get enough of that truth that God is our refuge, can we? God is our refuge. And this is a new message. It's not the one that I preached about six months ago.

But friends, it's the truth, isn't it? God is our refuge. And strength. A very present help in trouble. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you are there to us then.

For each one, even in the day of trouble. More so in that day. You are a very present help. Lord, we thank you for these truths. Let it be your word that ministers today to our hearts.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Psalm 46.1. God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. And we can find a sure stronghold today.

[3 : 36] Our trust, our refuge, our hope. When? When we are in trouble. When we are in need. And when we see how weak we are.

It says in Isaiah 25.4. For thou hast been a strength to the poor. A strength to the needy in his distress. A refuge from the storm.

A shadow from the heat. When the blast of the terrible ones is with a storm. Against the wall. It's in the time of trouble. God is.

God is. Our refuge. And our strength. Surely our God is. A strength. Our strength. A strength for us. Our help. And the Lord's presence is with us. He is present. When the trials come. The presence of God is with us.

[4 : 33] He is with us. As we know Psalm 23. That familiar one. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow. Of death. Even that.

I will fear no evil. For thou art with me. The presence of God. Even in the valley. Of the darkest of valleys. There is a refuge for you.

A safe place. A place of shelter you can run to. A place of absolute security. He is that one. What is that shelter? It's a man. It's a man.

The man Christ Jesus. Of him it says. Isaiah 32. The prophet saw him yet to come. And he said. Behold a king shall reign. In righteousness.

And princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be. As a hiding place. From the wind. And a covert. Or a shelter. From the tempest.

[5 : 31] You know that. When the tempest rages. There's a place you can come for cover and shelter. And it says he's a covert. A covert. A shelter from the tempest.

And there's rivers of water in a dry place. As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. God is. Our refuge.

We can find complete shelter in him. Think of it. He's a refuge. He's a sanctuary. He's a shelter. A haven. A home. A place of peace. Our God is real.

And he's present. In the here and now. Even in the midst of the most trying of lost times. And his name. Emmanuel. It means God with us.

We are weak. But God is. Our strength. Our purpose. He says. He's our refuge. And he is our strength.

[6 : 31] During life's difficult times. He has the strength that you need. To carry you through. To draw you on. To lift you. God is all powerful.

After all. So believe it. You can find your strength. In his almighty power. There's no strength greater. Than our God. No greater strength.

That we can find. I remember. Just as a. As a young boy. As a young. A young fellow. Really. Young Christian as well.

That I would pray. And I pray things like. God make me strong. And I. I used to pray. Make me strong like Superman. Or. All the other. Superheroes.

You know. Had this idea. That I was going to be strong. And. But more so. What matters most. Is to be strong spiritually. Isn't it? That's what matters. That's what counts. And that's the strength.

[7 : 27] That we ought to pray for. The strength that we need. And he is that. Amen. Isn't he? He's your strength. Can you believe that? He is. He is. And there's no strength greater.

No greater strength. And of him it says. He says to us. Fear thou not. For I am. With thee. Be not dismayed. For I am. Thy God.

I will strengthen thee. Yea. I will. Help thee. Yea. I will. Uphold thee. With thee. With the right hand. Of my righteousness. Often people despair.

Of where to look. Of who to turn to. Of where to go. To get help. In a time of need. And look. There's lots of places we can go to get help. But there is only one. Who promises.

He will help us. And he'll deliver on that promise. He's an ever present help. Think of that. This help is not one that shuts on and off.

[8 : 24] That is not reliable. I know I was down at hospital lately. And the emergency room was full to all people. I was packed down. And I thought there's no help here.

But God is ever present in his help. He's ever present. There's no waiting for him to respond. There's no waiting for him to draw near and help you. Because he's ever present.

In trouble. Yes. When our heart is crushed. And torn. When things look dark and grim. He is our refuge and strength. And God is at work.

Even in the time of trouble. More so then. Think of a pearl. It's a product of suffering. A small bit of foreign matter gets lodged there.

In the oyster. And it secretes this solution. And covers that little piece of sand. Or foreign object. And then more and more of the same. Layer upon layer.

[9 : 21] As time goes by. Finally you have a perfect pearl. Started from something. That you could consider was an irritation. Something that was fine. That was a trouble.

And it's like that in life. Isn't it? That trouble can make you a stronger Christian. Can make you shine like a pearl. And make you a pearl of a Christian. God can do that in your life. As you receive trouble.

And let it do its work. Let God work through it. To make you the man. The woman of God. That he wants you to be today. And he is our help. So let us lean upon him.

In times of trials. Of grief. Of pain. God is our help. Can you say that to get today? God is our help. God is our help.

When we face troubles. When we face trials. And loneliness. Of fear. Of broken relationships. Of heartaches. God is our help. When we're in danger.

[10 : 16] When there's depression. And disaster. And despair. Discouragement. When it feels like we're overwhelmed. God is always there. He is ever present. He is an ever present help.

And we will all face trouble in life. And tragedy. Different things. Will strike us. And we'll look. Agony right in the face at times. Job said.

Man is born unto trouble. As the sparks fly upward. Just like you have a fire. And naturally the sparks fly upward. So too in life.

Man is born. Unto trouble. And Job could talk from experience. He lost it all. He lost his family. He lost his possessions. He lost everything.

He was struck down. With disease. With terrible suffering. Job knew what he was talking about. And when rough times come. You can ride them through. You can ride out the storm.

[11:13] Tragedy can lead to triumph. God gives grace. He gives us grace in the most difficult of times. In these trying times. We can find his tenderness. We can find new strength.

We can find renewed hope. We can find faith. We can let faith do its work in us. We're not promised a trouble free life. I can't promise you prosperity. A pain free life.

It's not possible. This side of glory. But we are promised a fulfilled life. Aren't we? That we can have life. And life more abundant. Life more abundant.

Psalms 34. 19. What we see. That Job was blessed. In his Lazarus. More than. At his. At the beginning. He lost it all.

But God. Provided. Nevertheless. And friends. It says. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. Many. But the Lord delivereth. Them. Out of them all.

[12:12] God is our refuge. He's our help. And he is. Here. He's a present. Personal God. Very present. Hebrews 13. 5 says.

That. He says to you. I will never leave you. Never leave you. Nor forsake you. And. You could put it. Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you.

It was really. A double emphasis here. Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. And here. We can know that we are never. Beyond the range of his watchful.

Caring eyes. He's watching over us. With love. And we're never alone. He's always with us. Always. Always there for us. An ever present help.

In time. Of need. How can we find this. Sure refuge. How can we draw on this strength. Beyond our own. How can we receive this.

[13:11] Help. This supernatural help. This divine intervention. It prompts us to the need for prayer. It challenges us to a more prayerful life. God can.

God can supply. Go to him. Go to him in prayer. Find his peace. Even as. You cope with life's curveballs. And keep on singing.

Learn to depend upon him. Trust God. Through it all. There was a man came to church. And he sang from his heart. And he showed his great love for the saviour. And he was there in his wheelchair.

He'd lost both of his legs. The pastor was moved by the man's enthusiasm. And devotion. And the pastor said. I'm so pleased. To have you here. To share your joy. By the way.

What happened? That you lost both legs. And the man said. He had an accident. That had crippled him. And the pastor replied. Oh I'm sorry. The man replied.

[14:08] Oh don't be sorry about that. You see. It's because I lost my legs. That I found Jesus Christ. If I had the ease of my legs. I'd still be running away from God. You know.

Sometimes God has got to get a hold of us. And take us to a place of trouble. Because there he will be.

The very present help. Trust God. In that time of need. Help is available. And God is always there. He offers us his help. We just need to ask him for it.

Sometimes we neglect to pray. I neglect to pray. Can you identify with that? And help is just a prayer away. It's so real.

That God is real. And he's near. And he's listening. It tells us of him. Our Lord Jesus. That he is a great high priest. He's passed into the heavens. Jesus. The son of God.

[15:07] Let us hold fast our profession. It says. And I was hanging in there. With your faith. Verse 15. For we have not a high priest. That cannot be moved. With the feeling of our infirmities.

But was at all points tempted. Like as we are. Yet. Without sin. He understands. The feelings. That we have. He's been there.

He can sympathize with our feelings. And then it says this. It says. Let us therefore. Come boldly. Unto the throne of grace. That we may obtain. Mercy.

And find grace. To help. In time. Of need. The Lord Jesus. He was tempted in every way. As we are. Yet without sin. And our source of help.

Is that one. That one. That great high priest. That one. Not a self-help program. Not another human being. Where does my help come from?

[16:06] Comes from the Lord. The Lord himself. He's the source of that help. He became a man. And he was tempted in every way. But he never sinned. And friends.

He's ever present. Ever. Present. Waiting for our call. Available. At any time. It's 24 by 7. And he never puts us on an answering machine.

God is on call. Yeah. Don't wait till the time of need. Well. I was thinking really. We need him all the time. So. In time of need.

We always need God. Don't we? Yeah. Amen. Give him a call. He's waiting for your call. Call upon the Lord. While he can be found. Seek him.

While he's near. And so. It says this. It says. Be careful for nothing. You know. Don't worry about things. But in everything. By prayer. And supplication.

[17:01] With thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known. Unto God. And then it says. The very peace of God. Which passes all understanding. So. Keep your hearts and minds. Through Christ Jesus.

In the midst of the storms of life. It's there that he is. He's not left you. He's right there. In the storm. His awesome peace is available. In the storm. It's ever more.

Present. His presence. And he says. His peace shall guard. Our hearts and our minds. In Christ Jesus. So let's develop that close relationship.

With him. He promises. It says. To guard our hearts. Our minds. With his peace. And friends.

There's a certain confidence. That we can have. There's a real boldness. An assurance.

That we can have. There's a grace. And there's mercy. And there's help. And it's offered freely to us. By the Lord. And again. It says this. Let us therefore. Let us therefore.

[17:57] Come boldly unto. That throne. The throne of grace. And there that we may obtain mercy. And find grace. To help. In time of need. Surely he invites us.

He invites us. It's to his throne that he invites us. You know. You see. In certain palaces. You can't get near the throne. You know. You would not ever have the imagination.

You'd be able to get near the throne. But this king says. Come to my throne room. He says. Come to my throne. To his throne. And his throne is the throne of what? It's the throne of?

Grace. We must draw near to it. Kings have total power over their realm. Our king of kings has the absolute power. He is the all powerful God.

There is no greater authority to whom we can go. No greater authority than we can plead our case with. And you can receive his grace. You can receive his mercy.

[18:55] You can find his help. Have we neglected to bring our need there? Sometimes we complain and worry and fret.

But we've not gone to the throne. That could be what we really need to do. Isn't it? To neglect to take our situation to the one with absolute power and authority.

It's to miss his help. And he wants to give that to you. He wants you to find grace to help in time of need. There is a throne of grace.

Of grace. And it's a place to find help. And friends. Here's our strength. In time of trouble. Here's our strength. If you're anxious, there's a provision for you. And you'll need.

Hudson Taylor said, Let us give up our work, our thoughts, our actions, our plans, ourselves, our loved ones, our influence, our all. Right into God's hands.

[19:55] There will be nothing left for us to trouble about. Or to make trouble about. When all is in God's hands. All will be saved. All will be wisely dealt with. And all will be done.

And well done. Put it in his hands. Put your life in his hands. Trust God in your situation.

You won't say, preacher, you don't know what I'm going through. Look, I have my share. Now and again. I have some things that you wouldn't know about. There's some troubles.

So, look, we can all have some troubles. But it's where we take the troubles. That's what matters. And we can be like Moses. He trusted God's purpose in his situation.

You know, it says of Moses. He was, as we know, he was brought up by the Pharaoh's daughter. He had his share of trouble.

[20 : 54] He was raised in Pharaoh's house for 40 years. And he was brought up as a prince of Egypt. Part of Pharaoh's family. The royal family had reached the apex of the Egyptian society, which was at the height of the world.

So, he was at the top of the tree. And all the education, all the money, all the prestige, all the honor, you can imagine. It was all laid on for him. He was in the Pharaoh's palace.

All the honor, all the success, all the comfort was there at his hands. But it says he considered the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.

Friends, this world can give people all kinds of treasures and trinkets. But rather the reproach of Christ. Rather the shame that you're a Christian and you stand for Christ.

Rather than all the treasures, the riches, the pleasures of Egypt. It's nothing compared to knowing the Savior. And that's what Moses chose.

[22 : 00] And in trouble you can choose. You can choose God's way. You know, the world would tell you to do this and do that. But God says, my way is the best. And in your trouble you can choose God's way.

And he'll honor you for that. There's many other faith heroes in this chapter, Hebrews 11, that went through all kinds of suffering. And friends, Christians here, suffering doesn't mean you're out of God's will.

It could mean you're actually right in the center of it. And this one, this one that we can come to, he's almighty. He's the almighty king. He's got kingly power. He's got dominion and rulership.

And God's grace comes from him, from his very throne. So go to the throne. Go to the throne, believer. God's rules and reigns from that throne.

His power, his authority is there in that throne room. His glory, his ultimate power. And he has power to help you. It is for you. For your pressing need.

[23 : 00] That throne room stores the throne wide open. And maybe you've sought answers far and wide, but you've not gone to the throne yet. Go to the throne.

Go straight to the top. To the one who knows your need. And he can meet your need. And why not take it to the top? You know, we think, as some people go through legal wranglings, they go from one, you know, the local court to the next court, to the supreme court.

They want to go to the highest authority. Well, the highest authority is Christ. He's the king of glory. He's the one you can take your need to. He's the one that will answer you.

The one with the highest power. He's got the absolute power. And so, come to him. Draw nigh to him. It's the present tense. It's got the sense, this thing of coming to the throne.

It's got this present tense. Keep on approaching. Keep on approaching the throne. Present tense. Come boldly unto the throne. It's got the sense of entering in and keeping entering.

[24 : 05] Keeping on approaching. So, as we pray and keep on praying, prayer is our privilege. We can enjoy with confidence, with boldness. As we enter as brethren, we can have that confidence, that boldness, and to enter into that very holiest place by the blood of Jesus.

If you're yet to be a believer, there's a blood-stained pathway to the very throne room.

You've got to go by the blood of Jesus. You've got to ask Jesus to save your soul. Trust in his saving blood that he died for you. Rose again. Jesus is the way, the only, only way.

And we might pray and not be, if we're a Christian and we pray, that only goes so far. But when we're a Christian, when we are, when we're entered by the blood, the way of the blood, when we're saved, when we're born again, when he's washed us by his blood from our sins, that way of prayer is right into the very holiest of holies.

Imagine the most holy place of the temple, of the tabernacle, of the throne of glory, of heaven itself. And we can enter that very holy place, the holiest place.

[25 : 24] And he's called us to come there to a throne. And what is that throne called? It's called the throne of grace, of grace. In other words, you don't deserve it.

Don't think you can go to the throne because you deserve it. You don't. But he's made that way possible. And because of the blood, we can come to the throne of grace.

And again, it says we can find mercy. We can find grace. He's shown us his great love. His throne of grace is a place of authority and power. And here at the throne, it says you can receive.

And it's grace that supplies. You don't, you're not receiving because you deserve it. You're receiving because he grants it, because he gives it. It's salvation. You cannot merit it.

You cannot measure up to it. But grace gives it, as a gift. And here at the throne, we receive, it's our great privilege, as beggars, before the king of glory, to trust his pardon and his favour, his mercy. [26 : 28] And it's here we can receive mercy. Mercy. Mercy really is holding back the punishment that we are due. We deserve punishment, not grace.

We deserve punishment, not mercy. But mercy promises forgiveness. Forgiveness. We can be saved. Saved. Truly. S-A-V-E-D.

Guaranteed. And you can say, I'm saved. Not because you're bragging, or because you're, you know, saying something you're not, but because he's made you saved.

He saved you. Because he has saved you. You can say, I'm saved. Not presumptuously, or by your own manufacturing, as if you deserve it.

But saved because he's given it to you. He's saved you. The Saviour has shown you mercy. He's given you forgiveness. He's cleansed you from sin. And mercy offers his perfect peace, freedom and life.

[27 : 27] And here we can find grace, it says. Grace is God's blessing in time of need. Grace is God's giving to us what we do not deserve. Grace is God's wide open arms to receive us.

To himself. Grace is getting something from God that doesn't belong to us. Someone said, love that reaches up is adoration. Love that reaches across is affection.

Love that reaches down is grace. It's grace. And that's love, isn't it? God's love, grace, reaches down. To the very depths, to the furthest, you know, to the gutter most, where I was, God reached down.

In grace. And here we can find help, it says. We can find help. Our support comes from prayer. Brother, sister, pray. Pray.

Pray through. And it will happen in time of need, it says. And it will happen in time of need, it says. You might think, this is the worst time. Oh, it's the best time to pray. At the time of difficulty, it's the best time to pray.

[28 : 32] Help will come at the right time. At God's time. And our Lord is serving still. It says of him that he's that great high priest as we saw before. His throne room offers the same service it always has.

Right through the pages of the word of God, that same grace, that same throne, that same prayer, that same help in time of need. It's yours for the asking.

That same promise, that same grace, that same mercy, that same help. When was the last time you approached the throne of grace and believed God?

Samuel experienced that and he looked back and saw he'd gone through some stuff and he said, Ebenezer, which means hitherto have the Lord helped us.

He put a marker that was a stopping point in his life and he said, wow, God's been with me.

Sometimes I haven't always realised it but he was there through those things that I've been to.

[29 : 36] He's helped me. He is helping me. He will help me. And there is help. Help to overcome. Help to obey God. Help to be a doer of the word. There's help to be strong.

There's help for your faith to strengthen, for you to be vibrant in your faith. There's help for you to walk in Christ's footsteps. There's help for you to be a stronger Christian. There's help in your present circumstances, your situation right now.

You might say, I'm in that time of need. I am in that time of need right now. There's help for you. There's help in desperate times.

Every day is the time of need. Every day, don't we need his grace? Don't we? To help us obey him, follow him. It's been said, when God puts a burden upon you, he puts his own arm under you.

He offers us this help. His grace is there to help you in time of need. Whatever's going on in your life. And friends, look, you might say, look, I'm hearing you, but it's not sinking in for me.

[30 : 40] Maybe you're faced going through a crucible right now of real life. Maybe it's tomorrow. Who knows? What's ahead? The crucible of real life, of personal experience.

And a crucible is a container in which the metal is heated and the impurities come to the surface and are removed so the metal can be shaped and formed. And God sometimes uses situations that face us to help us to be stronger and more faithful.

And we see right through the word of God examples of men and women of God who faced the storm and went through it and got over it on the other side.

And it tells us how of weeping that while I endure for a night that joy comes in the morning. You know, there might be tears on your pillow but there's joy. There's joy here. There's joy in Christ. You've got the joy of your salvation. He'll help you through. He'll help you overcome. He'll give you a joy and the Bible speaks of it as a joy unspeakable. [31 : 45] You can't put it into words. The kind of joy that Jesus gives is a joy not based on happenstance. It's not happiness based on happenstance. What happens to you? But it's a joy that he gives deep down within.

No matter what your circumstance. And it says joy comes in the morning. It says joy cometh in the morning. It's a promise. Joy comes. It will come. He promises it. And we can seek his help. We can be as the Canaanite woman of Matthew 15. And her daughter was sick and it says she came unto the Lord and it says she worshipped him saying, Lord, help me. Lord, help me. You know, those prayers that you pray don't have to be long and eloquent and strung out and flowery language. It can be just three words, can't it? Lord, help me. That's a good prayer to pray. You can pray that prayer. Seek his help.

[32 : 40] And you can sing too. You can sing in those times of trouble. As David did in Psalm 59, verse 16, I will sing of thy power. Yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning.

For thou hast been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. He can put a song of praise in your heart in the day of your trouble. Even in the day of trouble.

And in the day of trouble, what does it say? He's a defense. He's our protector. He's our refuge. He's a power far beyond our own. He's unlimited and supernatural. My defense.

My refuge. In the day of my trouble. And especially there's an abundant mercy. He says, I'll sing aloud of thy mercy. His mercy is abundant. You've got something to sing about.

If you're saved, you can sing. Because you've got mercy. The mercy of God. It means his compassion. It means a light and load. A future filled with hope. Because mercy lifts that load.

[33 : 41] And he's your anchor in the storm. He's a source of life for us. And times will come when we feel abandoned. And things don't go like we want it to.

Our life feels like it's falling apart in that fiery furnace time. In that crucible. In that time of need. We can feel like God is far, far away. Many, many miles away.

But really he's not. He's not at all. He's very present. He's present in the day of trouble. When we confront the troubles and trials of life and the discouragements, the setbacks, even when he may see him far, far away, he is a very present help.

Don't lose sight of that. As close as the prayer away. In that time of need, is it time to draw closer to him? You know, I've got to say here, friends, that I've checked the authority on the subject and you might want to look up this website for yourself.

there's an authority on the subject and it's told me the day that I'm going to die. It's called deathclock.com.

[34 : 53] It's called deathclock.com. You can write in your age and your weight and your height and work out your BMI and it's predicted the date of my death.

Thursday, September the 18th, 2036. It's calculated the number of seconds I've got left to live based on my age and my BMI 481,237,618.

My death's a few seconds less since I wrote that down. But, you know, really we've got no say, have we? We've got no guessing. We've got no assurance how long we've got. I'm just obviously tongue in cheek here.

You can look up your day and work it out. Just figure out how much time you've really got left. But there's no guarantees of that. We know that. You know, that's...

That's... He said the day, he said the hour. There's this appointed unto men, wants to die. Surely we've all got that appointment, friends. And we've got no guarantees.

[36 : 02] We don't really know. The date of our death, when it will be. But, friends, what matters most is that you know the king. You know your creator. The one who's got ultimate authority over your life, of your death, of the beyond.

And what matters? Have you come to the throne of his grace? Have you found his mercy? Have you found his grace? It's salvation really, isn't it? His mercy, his grace.

God's man, the man who went to Mount Calvary for you, for me, shed his precious blood. He is very present, just now.

And he's here to turn to. You don't have to visit him in church, as if you leave him behind when you go outside. He walks with you. He's with you. You know, Christianity, the Christian life isn't something, you have some holy moments, where you gather and then you leave God behind until you pay him a visit next time you go to church.

But he's very present in your day by day. And in the testing times, God is our refuge and strength. Friends, the man Christ Jesus can become your hiding place.

[37 : 15] He can hide in him. And we can find his rest. He can rest in the Lord. Rest in the Lord. And I saw you talk to me about you've got sleeping problems. Well, one thing's too short, you can rest in the Lord.

You can rest in the Lord. You might still have disturbed sleep, but there's rest in the Lord. That's where your rest is found. Place your life into his hands. Whatever you're going through, whatever your burden, let him carry you and your burden.

Trust him. He is at work. Sometimes we wonder in the scenes of life, what's going on? Actually, God's got his purpose. We don't always know what it is until one day he'll reveal it.

The purpose, he knows what's needed, what we need in our lives, so that we place our complete dependence upon him and commit ourselves to him. Like Habakkuk did.

Habakkuk three tells that Habakkuk catch on rejoicing. And it says, although the fig trees shall not blossom, neither shall be fruit in the vines, the labour of the oldies shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls.

[38 : 27] So this was, in agricultural language, this was income, this was prosperity, this was making a life, a living, this was being able to survive.

And he says, even if all of that's gone, oh, we missed that there, but it goes on to say, yet will I rejoice in the Lord. I will join the God of my salvation.

The Lord God is my strength, it says, and he will make my feet like pines feet, he will make me to walk upon mine high places. And he writes of these words, he says, to the chief singer, on my stringed instruments.

So here was Habakkuk, everything gone, his livelihood diminished, nothing really much to be glad about, and he says, yet will I rejoice in the Lord.

I'll rejoice, I will rejoice. And he says, get out your stringed instruments and sing along. Habakkuk knew a faith that kept him strong, he kept him singing, and he got out his string instruments, and he glorified God, he sang God's praises.

[39 : 37] Friends, you can learn to trust God even when it hurts. To trust him, pressure produces, the crushed flour yields the exquisite perfume, the squeezed fruit, produces the delicious juice, steel is iron that is passed through the fire, the sparkling diamond is created in the fierce pressure and heat of the earth's core, the value of a soldier is not known in times of peace.

Friends, it's the trials that are the making of you. Neera was asked the best way to have strong faith and he said, the only way to learn strong faith is to endure great trials.

There was a wise man comforting some parents who had lost a six-month-old baby who had died. And he said, a tragedy like this is similar to being plunged into boiling water.

If you're an egg, your affliction will make you hard-boiled and unresponsive. If you're a potato, you'll emerge soft and pliable, resilient and adaptable.

It may sound funny to God but there have been times when I prayed, oh Lord, let me be a potato. Don't be like an egg, getting hard-boiled. Be like a potato. God will make you soft.

[40 : 51] He'll work that. He'll make you such that he'll work in that for you and it will be the bettering of you. Reason teaches us to value the world.

Feeling tells us to value pleasure. Faith tells us to value God's work. Spurgeon on his bedroom wall had a plaque that said, I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

God's choosing you in the furnace of affliction. That furnace, that trouble that you're going through where God is doing his work. Someone has said, we're chosen not in the palace, but in the furnace. Beauty is marred, fashion is destroyed, strength is melted, glory is consumed, yet here eternal love reveals its secrets and declares its choice. He chooses us in the furnace, friends, and our Father, he deeply cares for our needs.

He knows the numbers of hairs on your head. Some of us reckon it as in troubled times, says he'll hide you, he'll hear you, he'll help you.

[42 : 01] Psalm 27 5 says, in the time of trouble he shall hide me. He shall hide me, he shall set me upon a rock. It says, Psalm 27 7, hear O Lord, when I cry with my voice, have mercy also upon me and answer me.

Psalm 121 it says, I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh mine help? my help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

You might say, preacher, I'm hearing all of this but I'm too weak. It sort of sounds good in theory but I'm weak. I'm the weak Christian. Things overwhelm me, I can't make it, I haven't got the strength. Well, have I got a scripture for you today? Here it is. He giveth power to the faint. To them that have no light, he increases strength. He gives power to the weak.

He gives power to the faint. He'll help you, he'll strengthen you, he promises to. Maybe you feel like you're battling and losing ground, temptation's overwhelming you, you don't know how to beat it.

[43 : 02] He will not let you be tempted, it says, above that you're able. What does it say about God? God is faithful. God is faithful. What does it say he will do?

He will give you a way of escape, it says. He'll make a way of escape. When trouble comes, we ask, where is God? He is with us.

He is with us. He says this, Now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee, by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee. When thou through the rivers, thou shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned. Neither shall the flame pendle upon thee.

Now, of course, it says, it's addressed to Jacob, and of course, we've got to take themes dispensationally as to how it's addressing and all that, I get that, but it actually says the God of Jacob is our refuge, our refuge.

[44 : 09] I think we can claim that verse, don't you? Now, there's a song that says, every promise in the book is mine, every chapter, every verse, every line, all are blessings of his love divine, every promise in the book is mine.

Friends, I believe we can take this promise that God addressed to Jacob, and we can make it our trust today, because the God of Jacob is our refuge.

God is with us in the brokenness of life, and he gives us songs in the night. Friends, to close, God is our refuge. Let's say this verse together, can we? God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Let us pray. Our Lord God, we pray these words would be words we claim. Lord, we know that faith comes by hearing, hearing the word of God.

We could even think that faith comes by speaking it too, that we want to speak these words and claim these promises to confess your truth.

[45 : 16] Lord, and more so that it live in our lives. We pray each one might know that wonderful one who saves, the one who is the shelter, the one who is the refuge, the hiding place, and that is you, our Lord God.

Lord Jesus, you are the one we can run to and find shelter and safe keeping. Lord, we pray for each one, whatever trouble we face, Lord, we'll claim these words and know these truths.

Lord, help us as people here are going through things others do not know, the situations yet ahead. Lord, we know some of us may face some great trials.

Lord, we know that we may face some great testing. Help us, Lord, to know these truths that you are our refuge and our strength. I pray, Lord, these things in Jesus Christ's name.

Amen.