

God is in Trouble

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[0 : 00] Psalm 46. God is our refuge and strength, the very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, 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 heathens raged, the kingdoms were moved. He uttered his voice, the earth melted.

The Lord of hosts is with us. 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 ends of the earth. He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder. He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still and know that I am God.

[1 : 08] 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.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your word. Take it and use it in our hearts, Lord. Minister, by your spirit to each one now, we pray for your glory and praise.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. If I was to put a title on this message, I would say, God is in trouble. God is in trouble.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Talking about troubles. Now, I'm sure there's people here that don't have any troubles.

No? Troubles. In our earthly journey, we're going to face trouble, aren't we? The Bible tells us that God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

[2 : 15] He is with us. Psalm 46 tells us when you're in a time of trouble, he is in there with you. As one woman of God wrote years ago of trouble, she knew what trouble was, this particular woman.

The waters are rising, but so am I. I am not going under, but over. We're not going to be under the floods, we're going over the floods.

And with God, you can stay above the water of your situation, whatever the trouble be, and not sink into it. You can go over with God. Amen?

You can. He is close by. Even in our darkest hours, he is our refuge and our strength. Not only does he strengthen us, he is our strength.

A very present help. Very present help. What are some of the troubles that we can face through life? I'm sure you've got a long list, as I have.

[3 : 23] Your list might be longer than mine. I'm sure we could all make a list of all the troubles we've had or we may face down the track. A long list of troubles of different kinds.

Let's think of some of the troubles we can face through life. Worry. Stress. You know, all those worried lines. The worrying, I can remember a time when I didn't have any on my forehead.

But, you know, worry, stress, it's part of life, isn't it? But, as someone has said, no man ever sank under the burden of the day. It is when tomorrow's burden is added to the burden of today.

You know, what did our Lord say? Let tomorrow take care of itself. Think of, you know, live in the now. You know, that's the Andrew Craig version. And on a tranquil scene on a calendar, someone printed this.

They said, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday. You're still alive. You're still kicking. You're still smiling, hopefully.

[4 : 24] Today is the tomorrow we worried about yesterday. And so it's so easy to spend time worrying about what may never happen. Worrying about tomorrow. We may spend so much time doing that.

Worrying about tomorrow that we miss the opportunity that we have in the now. Today. Right now. Right here. And another trouble we may find, as well as worry or stress, can be busyness.

Oh, I'm so busy. Who's ever said that? I'm too busy. I'm so busy. Like hamsters in a cage. It's how some people live their lives.

And they get in their cage and it's like these hamsters. The wheels are turning and they're running 9,000 miles. But never getting anywhere. Yeah. Busyness can be a trap, can't it?

We can run the rat race, as it is called. Busying ourselves. Busying ourselves with activity. But forgetting the actual goal. What are we aiming for? What are we here for?

[5 : 23] What's God's purpose for our life? We can act like Martha in Luke 10. Where we read, now it came to pass as they went. That he entered into a certain village.

And a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word.

But Martha was cumbered about. Much serving. Cumbered. Loaded down. Burdened down. With much serving. And came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister have left me to serve alone?

Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.

But one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

[6 : 27] She sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. We can get so busy that we neglect that. That one thing that is needful. Needful. A man called George McCausland was a director of an organisation, YMCA.

And here he was at this time some years ago serving. And YMCA was losing lots of its members and it had financial troubles. And George had terrible staff problems as well.

And George found himself working 85 hours a week. He was getting little sleep at night, taking little time off, worrying and fretting about all the problems of his organisation.

And a counsellor came to George one day and told him that he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. He'd let his busyness got so bad that it was consuming him, destroying him from the inside out.

And he had to learn somehow, the counsellor said, to let go. Let go. And somehow let God enter his problems. But he didn't know quite how to do that.

[7 : 39] So one day George took the afternoon off. He took some rare time to take a pad and paper and he went down with his pad and paper and his pen and he got down with his head.

And into some quiet afternoon in the cool of the afternoon. And just as he got into the woods he felt his neck and his whole body start to, oh, just started to relax and unwind.

And he sat down under a tree and he sighed. And for the first time in months he relaxed. And he got out his pad and paper and he decided that he would let them go, the burdens of his life.

And he wrote God a letter. And he said, he got out his pen and he said, Dear God, today I hereby resign as general manager of the universe.

Love, George. And later recounting that day he was smiling. He said, and wonder of wonders God accepted my resignation. You know, we can be like that, can't we?

[8 : 50] We get so busy with that trouble of busyness that we think we've got to do it all and we've got to run ourselves ragged. But sometimes we've just got to resign as the general manager of the universe and let God have his way.

Let it all into God's hands, into God's control. When we're in trouble we can feel stress. We can feel worry. We can feel busyness.

And when we're in trouble we can feel alone. Alone as well. When we're in trouble we feel like no one cares. Nobody cares. Who cares?

We all need and want to feel cared for. It can be another trouble in life, can't it, where we're feeling like we're all on our lonesome. There is one who cares.

He always cares. You know, there's an old song that says, Standing somewhere in the shadows, you'll find Jesus. He's the one who cares and understands. Standing somewhere in the shadows, you will find him and you'll know him by the nail prints in his hands.

[9 : 57] He's there in the shadows. He's watching over you. He's never left you. He cares. He cares for troubled hearts and homes. He cares for each one that will trust him.

He came on a mission to seek and to save the lost. He wept over the lost. And he died to save the lost.

And his mission is not over yet. Today he works still through his own people. And he cares. He truly cares.

He's not far away. But he's always close at hand. Even when the disciples were out in that choppy sea and they were saying, Lord, don't you care?

Of course he cares. Of course he cares. Don't ever think that he doesn't care for you. He is there.

He's never far away. And he's always as close as a prayer away. He is present with us.

[10:57] Very present in trouble. Amen. That's what it says. Through our troubles. Through those troubles you've been through. Through those trials that lie ahead for you. He is there. He is with you.

Our refuge and strength. Through every trial of life. It says in Deuteronomy 33, 27. The eternal God is your refuge.

He is your dwelling place, it says. And underneath are the everlasting arms. Think of that. Isn't that a comfort?

Underneath are the everlasting arms. What a comfort. His arms will carry you through. He will gather the lambs with his arms, it says in Isaiah 40, verse 11.

A helpless lamb. The shepherd holds us to his bosom. He holds us safe and sure and close. As someone has put it, oh, the sweet unfailing refuge of the everlasting arms.

[12:01] In their loving clasp and folded, nothing worries or alarms. The sweet unfailing refuge of the everlasting arms. We can put our trust in that. Whatever's going on.

No matter how low you feel, underneath are the everlasting arms. You might feel, I'm at a low point. Underneath you are the everlasting arms. Amen. Underneath you still.

He's never stopped holding you. And the God whose power created the universe, the heavens and the earth, also has the power to help us through the darkest valleys.

The darkest tunnels of life. Through the shadows. He is there. He is there. Present with you. Your heavenly father watches over you.

It tells us in Matthew 10, verse 29, that not one sparrow falls to the ground. Apart from your father's will.

[12:56] You know, the inconsequential, the routine kind of thing. You see birds falling out of nests and all the time, don't you? That sometimes we need to just accept that our father knows and he's watching us.

And not one sparrow falls to the ground apart from your father's will. Our heavenly father is the bird watcher. He's not merely an observer but he knows, he feeds, he constantly watches over us.

As we read elsewhere, it says that, you know, the lilies of the field, he clothes them. You know, he looks after the wildlife of this world, of this planet.

And how much more does he care for us? Who know him, his children. And so in the context of the world, his children. And so in the context of where it tells of this sparrow falling to the ground, in the context here is where our Lord tells of the fact that his disciples will be hated, that they will be persecuted, that they will be suffering.

This is the context of this scripture here. Hated, persecuted and rejected. We submit to his will, don't we?

[14:16] We submit to his will. He knows what's going on. And in this world of sin and suffering, yes, the rain falls on the just and the unjust. We're all going to have our part and parcel of what life throws at us.

But we've got something more. The God who does watch over us. The God who is the everlasting arms. The God who is always there. In his caring love, he sent the love gift of Christ our Saviour.

To be the punishment that we deserve for our sins. God is in trouble. He's in the trouble. If we are in trouble, God is present with us.

Very present, it says, in the time of trouble. So, what can we actually do about trouble? What can we do? What can we actually do if we have troubles?

I'll put to you three things, three practical things you can do about your troubles. Number one, talk with him. Number one, talk with him.

[15:18] Philippians 4 verse 6, it says, Be careful. In other words, be not full of care, full of worry. Be careful for nothing.

But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. Be careful, full of care for nothing.

But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Are we anxious? Are we anxious? Care-worn? Worried? Paul tells us, don't be anxious about anything. But hand the situation over to your heavenly Father.

And know his peace, he'll give you that. Learn to pray. Take time to pray. Talk with him. Hand your troubles over to him.

[16:21] Brother, sister, by faith you can. By faith you can. Place those worries, those concerns for the future upon his broad shoulders to carry you and to carry your burden.

To carry you through. And know his love, his mercy. This God who has been through it all.

Through many of the same kind of trials we face. Our great high priest. He can sympathise. He can relate to what we're going through.

Because our God has skin on. Came in human flesh to be our saviour. Manifest. Made evident in the flesh.

Clothed in human flesh. Yet sinless. And he can sympathise with our weaknesses. Because he has been tempted. He's been tested.

[17:18] Just like we. Yet without sin. And so we can draw near, it says. We can boldly draw near. Enter his very throne room. The throne of grace. And find grace to help in time of need.

So firstly, talk with him. Talk with him. Secondly, another point. Practical point. How to deal with trouble. Trust him. Trust him.

How powerful is our God? How great is our God? How awesome. How mighty. How strong. He's big enough and strong enough to take all of your care.

Trust him. Isn't that a relief to know that our great and awesome almighty God has the power to look after us and to care for us and care for our problems?

Isn't that a source of peace for me, for you? He's fully qualified. He's tested in all points like as we are.

[18:20] He's been there, done that. And he is with you. You can trust him. You can have faith.

Now we know troubles test our faith. Faith means our trust in God.

Well, you know, faith in a way to be real has to be tested, doesn't it? And it reveals its character by trials. And so when trials and troubles come, we have that faith road tested, if you like, don't we?

You know, I used to work in the Bridgetone Tire Factory. And I was one of the production workers there, working three rotating shifts. And I was privileged to get a promotion.

I became the cleaner, which was day shift. Which was, I was glad to work day shift cleaning the toilets because I could get home to be with my wife at night. But one day at Bridgetone Tire Factory, I went into the testing room.

And the tires there go around this big machine. And they run them at, I don't know how many hundreds, maybe certainly very fast. I don't know how fast they go.

[19:28] But they would run them at a huge speed. And they would put some big obstacle like a brick there or something of that nature. And they'd run that tire, boom, boom, boom, boom, and test that tire until it blew.

They tested that tire to see how much punishment it could take. And trials can test our faith, like that tire gets tested. Sometimes we've got to go through those testing times.

But we can't trust him. We can't trust him. It says that he knows how far he can take it, as it were.

He will not take us beyond that which we're able to overcome.

So we can trust our Lord. We can trust him with our troubles. We can leave them in his hands. And we can know that he can solve those things that are beyond our control.

We can trust him. Trust him. Even when we face the loss of our loved ones at such a time of deep grief and loss. It was a funeral of a loved one.

[20:34] And a minister came and said this. Suppose you are a gardener employed by another. It's not your garden. But you are caught upon to tend it.

And you have your wages paid to you. And you have taken your great care with certain roses here. You've trained them up. And they are blooming in their beauty.

And you pride yourself upon them. And as you come as the gardener and you turn up one morning to work into your garden and you find the best rose has been taken away.

And you are angry. You ask the other gardeners if they've taken the rose. But they all say that they haven't. And one says, I saw the master walking here this morning.

I think he took it. Is the gardener angry then? No. At once he says, I'm happy that my rose should have been so fair as to attract the attention of the master.

[21 : 35] It is his own. He has taken it. Let him do what he pleases. Sometimes life's journey means loss and grief and sad times.

Yet, our master knows what he's doing. And we'll be reunited again with those that have trusted him. We may not understand why everything happens now.

How it does. But it will, if we will learn to trust him. Learn to trust him. He will comfort us and carry us through. It says in Psalm 34 verse 7, the word of God.

It says, the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him. He pitches a tent around us, it says. The angel of the Lord.

The very evident feature of his presence. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them.

[22 : 37] Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. The promises of God's word are so abundant, so plentiful.

And there's calm assurance and blessing as we take these scriptures and make them live in our shoes, in our lives. As we learn to trust him. Psalm 62 verse 8, it says, trust in him at all times, O people.

It's easy to trust him when everything's going fine and dandy, when it's all rosy and fair and easy. And you're just coasting along. But it says, trust him. Trust in him at all times, O people.

Pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us. That's Psalm 62 verse 8. That's a good one to write down. I'll say it again.

Psalm 62 verse 8. Trust in him at all times, O people. Pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us.

[23 : 56] He is a refuge you can rely on. You can trust him. When we trust him, he brings hope. When we trust him, he brings hope.

Hope to the hurting soul. When we trust him, he brings help. God can be a great help in time of need, in time of trouble. But he has never promised a trouble-free life.

He's never promised that. You know, there's some preachers that make it sound like, trust Jesus and it's all easy breezy from there on. No, you never promised a trouble-free life.

But you promise God in trouble. God in trouble. We've all got those times of strain, of worry, of natural pressure, of upheaval, of uncertainty, of trial, of testing.

But when we trust him, we find his help. When we trust him, we find rest. Matthew 10, 13, it says, The very hairs of your head are all numbered.

[24 : 59] You know, every day it's got a few less to count. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. How much he cares for you. How much he cares for us. Think of his loving care that it goes to such a minute detail of your life, of mine.

Of his loving care for his own children. Of the sweet rest we can find in him. When we just yield to him. Yield to him. Find that rest. We find he is a refuge.

Brings hope. Brings help. Brings rest. Brings peace when we trust him. The very name of Jesus. Prince of peace. Peace.

How do you describe it? How do you define it? How do you picture it? There was a time where some correspondents of a major magazine were asking this question.

What is the meaning of life? And how can we find peace? And they took many photos to talk about peace. And one really took the prize, as it were, that pictured peace.

[26 : 07] And it was a dramatic photograph. And it's commonly seen around the place. You've probably seen it. Possibly seen it. Of a lighthouse on the Brittany coast.

And this lighthouse, this majestic lighthouse, is on a rocky outcrop in a stormy sea. And there's gigantic waves crashing against it.

Against this mammoth brick structure, nearly swallowing it up. and then there's a photograph of the sheltered side of this lighthouse where there's a man there surrounded as it were by these boiling waves all around him, this lighthouse keeper and he's just looking casually out with the thrashing

sea behind him with his hands stuck in his pockets and just looking quite calm.

And that's a picture for us of how life can be for us as we face those fierce storms. They're all around us, about us, threatening to overwhelm us and yet we have a refuge.

We have a refuge, don't we? We trust in God's overshadowing care. We trust in God's promise that he is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

[27 : 25] And for every believer, God is our refuge and strength. In the storm, in the trouble, in the storm, during those storms of physical affliction, something just comes out of left field and you get knocked off your feet.

Emotional turmoil. People hurting you deliberately. Without a cause. Spiritual attack.

Constantly attacked. Barraged. But we have his protection. We have our refuge and strength. He holds us sure and we have that calm assurance that he's never leaving us, never forsaking us.

He is there. He cannot be moved. This shield who is our God, no matter what threatens us, we have his peace. In turbulent times, we can know for sure, no matter what, he is there in trouble.

Christ didn't promise a trouble-free life, you know. I could try to pretend it's going to be trouble-free for you, but I'd rather be honest with you and tell you, trouble awaits you.

[28 : 39] You will face trouble. But it will be like the trouble you've been through. You'll look back and say, I got through that, by God's grace. I got through that, through God's strength and help.

And we can know his inner peace even in the midst of enormous upheaval. In difficult circumstances, we can know his peace. So talk with him.

Talk with God. Give him your situation in prayer. Don't neglect to pray. Go to pray first. First, pray. Trust him. Trust him.

Father knows best. His comforting presence is our very present help in time of trouble. We must trust him. And thirdly, the third response to trouble is this.

Transfer it. Transfer the trouble. Transfer the trouble. Transfer our troubles into his hands. Don't hang on to it. Oh, I've got my little trouble here.

[29 : 40] My little trouble that I'd like to hang on to and tell everybody about. Transfer it. Give it to him. Commit it to him. 1 Peter 5 verse 6, it says, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

Humble yourself. Pray. Trust him under his mighty hand. He's going to exalt you in due time. You know, the sunshine follows the rain.

Casting all. How much? All. All your care upon him. For he careth for you. Casting all your care upon him.

All your cares, all your worries on him. Why? Because he cares for you. Know his care for you. It says in Psalm 55, 22.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

[30 : 43] What a promise. Psalm 55, 22. Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee. He'll take care of you. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

It tells us he will sustain. He'll take care of us. But first we have to do what? Cast thy burden upon the Lord. Cast it. You know, what does it mean?

It means go like this. That's what it means. What else can I throw? Cast it. You might cast it sort of. Cast it like that.

That's what it means. It's got that sense of throw it away. You know, it's got that sense of get rid of it and give it to him. I've got a glass of water here but I won't try that one.

Cast your care upon the Lord. Amen. Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee. You know, you've got two choices really, haven't you? You can either cast your burden or you can carry your burden.

[31 : 50] Isaiah 53, 4 tells us who should carry our burdens. It says, surely he hath borne our griefs. You're not crying alone when you cry.

Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. What a promise. The question is, are we letting him carry our griefs and our sorrows?

He wants to. His word tells us he wants to. Isaiah 53, 4. We may not understand the losses and trials of life, the hurts, the sadness that we sometimes have to face.

Someone put it like this. May your troubled heart find peace and comfort in the knowledge that you are never alone. May God's presence ease your trembling spirit and give you rest.

He knows how you feel. He is ever aware of your circumstances and ready to be your strength, your grace and your peace. He is there to cast sunlight into all of your darkened shadows, to send encouragement through the love of family and friends and to replace your weariness with new hope.

[32 : 59] God is your stronghold and with him as your guide you need never be afraid. No circumstances can block his love. No grief is too hard for him to bear.

No task is too difficult for him to complete. And when what you are feeling is simply too deep for words and nothing anyone does or says can provide you with the relief you need, God understands. He is your provider. Today, tomorrow and always. And he loves you. Cast all your cares on him and believe.

End quote. So God is in trouble. People this morning, God is in trouble. And don't ever think when trouble comes he's left you. He's still there. He's in it. He's in it.

Every step, every moment. A very present help. Right here, right now in your situation. And what can we do? Talk with him about your troubles.

[34 : 02] Share your heart. He'll hear your prayer. Talk with him. Talk your troubles over with him. And learn to trust him as he walks with you through the valley and transfer those difficult situations completely over into his hands.

He will carry the pain. He carries our grief. He carries our sorrows. He carries every burden that if you just trust him and cast it upon him, cast it upon him.

And so God comforts us in our troubles. But there's something else we can do. Something else we can do, we that are troubled. Don't keep it to ourselves. Don't keep it to ourselves.

Let's be a caring people so that you can learn and apply those lessons you've learned and help others also. It's too good to keep it to ourselves.

To rather be that caring people that he wants us to be. In 2 Corinthians 1 verse 3 it says, Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.

[35 : 12] The God of all comfort. Who comforts us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble. By the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

It's telling us here, the God of all comfort. He's comforted us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort others in trouble. So let us be such a church, amen?

A caring church that will have a heart for people. A heart to care. A heart to reach out. In genuine purposeful love. And I know many of you are doing that.

I hear many stories of that. We can all learn to care more. To show our love in practical ways. To be people sensitive.

People sensitive. And so where we see hurting people, we'll see them as opportunities. To comfort them with the same comfort we ourselves have received.

[36 : 12] So whether it be a phone call, a visit, a card, a letter. An offer of help. Money. A conversation. A smile with a total stranger we see as downcast.

A reaching out to a friend. To show our support. Reaching out with his love to this hurting world.

As our Lord says, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it unto me. Matthew 25, verse 40. You know, sometimes we can reflect on trouble and again feel overwhelmed.

It's only natural. We're flesh. There was one Bible teacher said this. Sooner or later God will bring self-sufficient people. Self-sufficient people.

To the place where they have no resource but him. No strength. No answers. Nothing but him. Without God's help, they're sunk.

[37 : 14] You know, you see in many countries around our world today where they've got nothing but him. Amen. Nothing but him.

And we in the West, in this Western world, this Western way of living, we can get self-sufficient, can't we? Where it's just, it's almost too easy to be a Christian.

We can get self-sufficient. But sooner or later God will bring self-sufficient people to the place where they have no resource but him. No strength. No answers. Nothing but him.

Without God's help, we are sunk. Now maybe you'll come to that place. Maybe you've already been through it. It's time to talk with him. Trust him. Transfer your trouble to him.

Just to close, a despairing man confessed to his pastor one day, my life is really in bad shape. He was there with the preacher and he was baring his heads in his hands and he was just totally

overwhelmed and feeling like he'd just come to the end of his own strength.

[38 : 21] And the man said, I'll tell you how bad it is, preacher. All I've got left is God.

All I've got left is God. And the pastor's face lit up. I'm happy to assure you that a person with nothing left but God has more than enough for great victory.

Now when we come to that place where it's total devastation, nothing left but God, but God, but God. That's more than enough, isn't it?

When you've got God, he is all, all you've got. You've got more than enough, more than enough. 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.

[39 : 37] God is our refuge and strength. Let us pray.