

The Mighty Hand and Arm of God

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[0 : 00] I want us to look back to Psalm 89 and just to ponder for a little tonight on the verse 13, well-known verse, you have a mighty arm, strong is your hand, high is your right hand.

Now we know it's interesting how often the Bible speaks to us about God in physical ways. Now we know that God is a spirit and does not have bodily parts in the way that we have. But scripture uses this way of talking about God because otherwise we couldn't understand.

We wouldn't have the capacity to understand what God is wanting to reveal to us. So we often talk about the eye of God and the hand of God and the arm of God and the ear of God in many, many different ways.

But that is simply in order for us to understand the way in which God deals with us. And here we have this great word given to us about the strength and the power of the arm and the hand of God.

[1 : 24] And it's so comforting for us to know that God's hand can reach up to anywhere. There is nothing too high, but God's hand is there.

There is nothing too low, but God's hand can go there. There is nothing too powerful that God's hand cannot uphold and sustain.

And so this is a tremendous comfort and consolation to the Christian in a world that's always changing. And in a world that is so uncertain to know that the hand of God is a reflection of who God is in himself.

Now, in many different references in the Bible, and it would be interesting just to go through them all and to see of how where God's hand is spoken about. So that here we have you have a mighty arm, strong as your hand, high is your right hand.

Now, there are many, many things that we could say, and I'm sure we have at different times looked at aspects of this. And the first thing that we would say about God's hand is that God's hand is a hand that is capable.

[2 : 38] It's not just capable. It is a hand that does hold his people all the time. Remember the words that Jesus spoke? I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.

And he goes on to talk about plucking out of his father's hand so that no one can pluck them out of the hand of Christ and out of the hand of the father. And it's a wonderful consolation to know that, as the Lord tells us in the word, that we are kept by the power of God unto salvation.

So that as we journey through this world, and we're going to remember that our journey through this world is a journey to glory. Just as the Israelites left Egypt, and every step that they took, and sometimes they meandered, because the journey straight from Egypt to the promised land, it wasn't a direct journey.

Had it been a direct journey, if there hadn't been the problems with the spy, when you remember how they spied out the land and everything, there was a lot of wandering. And so it is with us.

Our journey is, not for any single one of us, a direct journey of constant progression to glory. Unfortunately, we have our times of stopping.

[4 : 02] We have our times of stumbling. We have our times of wandering. We have our times of maybe going back. Sometimes we're walking quickly.

Other times we're walking slowly. But all the time, it's a journey that is going in a particular direction. And all the time, God has one purpose for us, that he is preparing us, and he is shaping us, and he is molding us all the way in order that we will be conformed to the image of a son, and that in glory we shall be like him.

Like him as a mediator. Like him as he is as our savior. Like him as a mediator. So it's a wonderful thought that God, all the time, that hand is keeping us.

And it is a hand that nobody can open, prize open, and that we cannot be plucked out. Now, of course, we know that in and of ourselves, it would be impossible for us to walk to glory on our own.

We couldn't do it. There are enemies all around us. There are enemies within us. Indeed, the enemies within us, I would say, are worse than any enemies outside. Because the potential for ruin that lies in your heart and my heart is so powerful.

[5 : 24] It's like a sleeping hand grenade that is ready to explode at any moment. But we are kept all the way by that hand. We are kept, and we will be taken home safe and sound.

And so this hand, as we think about it, and if we think of the hand of the Savior, and that we are in the hand of the Savior, you and I tonight are in the hand of the Savior because that hand was pushed.

That is why you and I tonight are following the Lord Jesus Christ. And our hand in the hand of the Savior, and our hand in the hand of the Savior, and that we see so often that these hands were outstretched in healing.

And that he identified with, we would see him touching the leper, touching those that other people wouldn't dare touch. But he identified with the feeling of our infirmities, as the Bible says.

And these hands were the hands that took the children, and he blessed them, suffered the little children to come unto me. Forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of heaven.

[6 : 47] Remember how he took the little child and set the child down in their midst and taught the great lesson there? And so the hands of Jesus were always at work, doing good.

And yet the enemies took Jesus, and they stretched out these beautiful hands, and they hammered into his hands the nails, holding him to the cross.

These strong, mighty arms, and that strong, mighty arm became limp and useless. But what we've got to remember is that they became limp and useless only because he allowed them.

Because that, if the Lord had not allowed himself to become limp and useless, that hand is so powerful that he would have wiped his enemies out in a moment.

Remember when they came to arrest Jesus, and of whom Peter took out the sword, and he swiped the sword and had cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.

[7 : 56] Jesus said to Peter, put away your sword. He said, do you not realize I could call on my father for 12 legions of injury? All the enemies of Christ could have been annihilated in a moment.

That was a power that was at his disposal, but he wasn't going to use it. And for our sakes, he allowed his hands to be limp and to be weak and to be useless and to be pushed and to be nailed to the cross.

So that is why tonight we are able to follow him. And that is why tonight we are in his hands. Then again, sometimes we fear that the Lord will forget us.

It's something that we often think about. Sometimes when we're praying and we feel that we're not getting anywhere with our prayers, and we're thinking, well, the Lord isn't hearing me.

And then sometimes we fear everything, begin to think, has he forgotten all about me? And our human nature takes over in these things. But then again, we're reminded of these beautiful ways.

[9 : 06] We considered that not so terribly long ago on one Sunday. Remember what it says, Nicene? Behold, I have engraven you upon the palms of my hands. Now, you and I know that quite often when we're maybe wanting really to remember something, and we get a pen and write it.

I remember a man I knew very well, and his hands were always covered, not with tattoos, but little phone numbers and little messages. He had a terrible memory. He was always jotting something down so that he could see.

Now, we all at times will put something there on the back of our hand. But it's not our name that is engraved. It's us, you. And it's not written engraved.

And when you engrave something, you can't erase it. You can't rub it off. It's a permanent. It's something that's here for good. And so that's what the Lord is saying. You are engraven.

You, not your name, but you yourself are engraven on the palms of my hand. And when we get to glory, remember, it tells us that his name, he, his name is written in our foreheads.

[10 : 20] So there's this twofold aspect of it. So again, the Lord will never, ever forget us. And again, we see the Lord's hand being opened in order to supply all that we need.

You see, the Lord has all resources for everything. And we're told that in the Psalms of how he liberally supplies and he opens his hand to give to us.

Paul said, my God shall supply all our needs according to the riches of glory of Christ Jesus. Everything that we need, the Lord has.

And if we are going without, and I know that just now we're going through difficult times. They're unusual times. And it's all too easy for people to become down and despondent.

You know, when we need, one of the things that is liable at this particular time, to maybe make our Christian faith, we might feel, oh, it's not the way it was.

[11 : 30] At one level, it isn't. Because we need company. We need the fellowship. It's important that we're together. And that's one of the things that we find difficult is because once we become Christians, we're part of a family.

We belong to one another. And when families are separated, it's difficult. And we find this difficult. And so it has an impact upon our Christianity.

And it should have to a certain extent. But we can't just blame it all because we've got to remember that this also is in God's hand. And as he said to the Israelites at the borders of the promised land, you shall remember the whole way that I led you.

And that everything that happened to you, it was in order to humble you and to test you whether you would keep my commandments or not.

And that's exactly where we are just now. Everything that's happening, the Lord is humbling us. And he's testing us. And so, spared after we look back, we will realize this was all part of the Lord's, this was all part of the journey.

[12:42] When you look at the Israelite journey and you think of all these years in the wilderness, in the desert. And, but it was part and partial. God was breaking them.

And so he does with us as well. But even there, the Lord supplied. He gave them manna. It might not have been a great feast.

They had their feasts back in Egypt. In fact, there were times when things weren't going well in the wilderness. And they wanted back to the flesh parts of Egypt.

They forgot the bondage that they were in. It's sad to say that there are times we too are like that. When we can be having bad days and the evil one gets the ascendancy.

And we say, oh, do you know, it was easier before I became a Christian. No, it wasn't. That's where your thinking gets distorted. But it's all part of the testing.

[13:38] All part of the refining process that is going on. So all the provision is there for us. So it is up to us to go to the Lord and remember that he's a liberal giver.

But again, the hand of the Lord is a reassuring hand. You know, when somebody might be scared or worried. And they're filled with anxieties.

And they're saying, oh, you know, I'm really, really worried. Quite often you put your hand on the shoulder and sort of maybe put your hand on the shoulder. It's all right. And you're doing it in a way where you're trying to assure them.

Well, the Lord does that as well. You remember in the book of Revelation when John was given this amazing vision of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it overwhelmed him.

And he fell down as one dead. And this is what it says. He that laid his right hand on me and said, fear not. I am the first and the last.

[14:42] He that liveth and was dead and alive forevermore. See what he did? He put his hand on me. And he said, fear not. And you know, the times when we are going through difficult times and we need reassuring.

We can go to the Lord and say, Lord, please help me. Reassure me. And he would put his hand on us. And through his word, he would, just as he did with John with the word, he would reassure us.

Again, we find the Lord's hand is there in order to uphold us in our weakness. You know, when somebody is weak or somebody is not able to do.

I remember when my granny used to stay with us when we were three in Latterley and Calamish. And she was very, very disabled. And she couldn't walk without help.

And I remember when she was still able to go to church, she always had her arm. And I would be holding her like this little steps because otherwise she couldn't do it.

[15:47] Her knees, it's like her knees wouldn't hold herself up. And so, not that my arm was very strong, but that's the idea that you need the strong arm to keep, to lift you and to enable you to go forward.

Well, that's what the Lord does. And remember these beautiful words in Isaiah, fear not, be not to me, for I am your God. I will strengthen you.

I will help you. I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. Isn't that lovely? Again, it's a hand that reaches out in order to save us.

We have that great example of the apostle Peter. Remember when Peter was sinking in the water and he shouts, Lord, save me. Jesus stretched out his hand and took hold of him.

And that's exactly what had happened with you and with me right at the very beginning. Lord, save me. And he did. And that hand that reached out, remember how he drew him into the boat.

[16:55] And Jesus has drawn us into that boat that is sailing homewards to glory. And we are safe with him despite the storms, despite all the things that are going on.

He is with us, traveling with us, and he is upholding us every single step of the way. It's also a hand that enables us to serve him.

You have that great example given to us in Nehemiah. When remember in the building of the walls. And it says, let us rise up and build. The hand of my God is upon me.

So they strengthened their hands in the work. I love that. Nehemiah's, it was a hard work. The enemies were out to stop them. Everything was against them.

But Nehemiah says, the hand of the Lord is on me. And the hand of the Lord equipped him and enabled him to go forward into that work.

[17:58] That's what the Lord is doing for you and for me as well. That's why we're here tonight. That's why you have taken every step that you've done in your Christian walk.

And remember, your walk is a service. Sometimes you think as a Christian, you say, you know, I don't know what I'd actually do for the Lord. Your witness as a Christian, even coming here tonight, that's a service.

It's a witness. It speaks to people that Jesus Christ is Lord. He is your Lord. There's a powerful, ongoing witness and testimony and service in the life of every believer.

And it's only in glory that we will come to really understand what it is. A tiny example is given to us when Jesus says on that great day, when you did this and that for me.

When you saw me hungry and thirsty. And he tells us even giving a cup of water in his name. But that will carry its reward. There's a service.

[19:06] Because you as a Christian are serving the Lord often in ways that you don't understand. And just doing things, maybe simple things for other people.

Maybe helping people. And they're saying, take note and say, you know, you know that man, that woman there. That's a real Christian. And it has an impact upon people.

And these things are important. And it's the Lord who enables us and equips us for all this work. And at the end of the day, the Lord will welcome us home.

And I believe just there, you can almost see that, you know, when you welcome someone, it'll be you stretch out your hand and welcome. And it's a picture.

It's a wonderful thought of our entry into glory. To be with the Lord forever and ever and ever. But as we journey out of 2020 and move into 2021.

[20:08] May we do so, as we so often say it, putting our hand in the hand of the Lord. Because it is, as we read here, a hand like no other.

Of strength and might and power. And it's also a hand of love. Lovers love to hold hands, don't they? That's what lovers do.

They hold hands. They walk hand in hand. There's a sense of love, of comfort, of belonging, of reassurance. No end of things that come just from the holding of hands of lovers.

And that's what we have started to do with the Lord. We were running away. But now we're walking with him. And we're walking with our hand in his hand.

And it is our walk of love. And so, as we enter into 2021, we pray that the Lord will indeed bless us, every single one of us, and keep us all safe.

[21:16] And that we will know his hand around us, around our homes, around our families. Around our families who are away. Around their loved ones who are away. That they will be protected and kept in the face of this pandemic.

And that we will know his blessing and his keeping every single step of the way. Let us pray. Lord, our God, we give thanks for your word. And just reflecting upon how great you are.

How great thou art. As the hymn writer said, and how true. We ask, Lord, that you will part us with your blessing tonight. And that you will do us good. Wash away from us our every sin.

In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.