



**HELP! – My Trouble, His Help**  
Psalm 46

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“Help!” was one of the Beatles 21 #1 hits. It sold over 33 million copies and is #29 on Rolling Stone magazine’s top songs of all time.

*Help! I need somebody ... Help! Not just anybody ... Help! ...  
When I was younger, so much younger than today  
I never needed anybody’s help in any way  
But now these days are gone and I’m not so self-assured ... Help!*

At some point, everyone cries for help. It may be when your car is broken down on the side of the road. Or it may be when cable or wifi goes out at home. That’s a real emergency. Reality is ... You got problems. I got problems. We all got problems. Life is filled with worry and stress. That’s normal these days. On top of the daily wear and tear of worry and stress, many of us deal with other really big problems.

Maybe you hate your job or you’ve lost your job. Maybe you suffered a miscarriage or can’t have children at all. There may be tension in your marriage or tension with your kids. You may have money problems or health problems. Whether it’s a big problem or a small one, it wears on us. And that’s when we cry out to God.

When we cry out to God, what do we want Him to do? We want Him to fix it! We don’t want a Bible verse; we want Him to fix the problem. I know the feeling. But think about that. Why do we cry out to God for help? Why do we believe He will help? Because He said He would. Therefore, a Bible verse is not just words. It’s a promise from God. God gave His word that He would show up when we need Him most. He promised! He promises His comfort, His strength, His guidance, His help, and always His love. He promises to walk with us through our most difficult times.

Psalm 46:1 is certainly more than a Bible verse. It is a promise of God’s help. **“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”** Each week, we are going to look at a promise from Scripture, at a Bible verse with promise, and learn how to pray that verse, how to pour out our hearts to God, and learn how to trust Him to help. So, whatever you’re going through, and whenever you cry out to God for help, you can know that **He promises to be there when you need Him most.**

Psalm 46 is a worship hymn. Notice the sub-title. “For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah, set to Alamoth. A Song.” “Alamoth” referred to young female voices. So, this was a song written by the musical family of Korah to be led by a female chorale. It has three sections, each ending with the word “Selah.”<sup>1</sup> “Selah” was a musical term, a technical instruction for the singers and musicians. It referred to a break in the music, to an interlude. The root word means to weigh or to appraise.<sup>2</sup> “Selah” was a moment inserted into a Hebrew hymn that allowed people to weigh and think about what they were singing. “Selah” is a time to pause and ponder. Psalm 46 is a song calling Israel, and us, to pause and ponder the presence of God, and to remember that **He is always there when we need Him most.**

## HELP

Psalm 46:1-3, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. SELAH” (Psalm 46:1-3, NIV).

***His presence means His help.*** And that’s what many of us desperately need. Psalm 46 is honest enough to admit that life is filled with problems. ***We know, by experience, that life is filled with problems.*** Life is filled with stress and distress. And that’s exactly what the Hebrew word “trouble” means.<sup>3</sup> It’s feeling squeezed. It’s feeling threatened. The word literally means to be trapped in a narrow space. We would say being stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Even King David had problems.<sup>4</sup>

- “Do not be far from me,” he cried out to God, “for trouble is near and there is no one to help” (Psalm 22:11, NIV).
- “The troubles of my heart have multiplied; free me from my anguish” (Psalm 25:17, NIV).
- “You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble” (Psalm 32:7). He’s saying, “I’m counting on You to get me out of this Lord!”

Look at verse 2. “Though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea” ... if the ground crumbled under your feet, if your world fell apart. “Though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake” ... if the worst happened, if circumstances were totally out of your control ... do you believe God will be there when you need Him most?

We know, by experience, that life is filled with problems. ***We believe, by faith, that God cares about us.*** We believe that because of verses like Psalm 46:1. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear ...” Psalm 46 was the inspiration for Martin Luther’s writing of the great Protestant hymn “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” Luther was inspired by the psalm because of three words used to describe God’s power and God’s care.

The first word is *refuge*. “God is our refuge.”<sup>5</sup> The Bible describes Him as a “shelter from a storm.”<sup>6</sup> The Bible refers to God as a “rock” and a “shield.”<sup>7</sup> The Scripture talks about taking refuge in the “shadow of His wings” (Psalm 36:7). We believe that God cares about us and that He will provide a safe place when trouble is breathing down our neck.

The second word is *strength*. “God is our ... strength.”<sup>8</sup> The Bible calls Him “a tower of strength.”<sup>9</sup> Like a tower standing tall in the center of a city, so God stands tall in the center of our lives. Interestingly, this word also described the emotion that comes from singing and dancing, like citizens celebrating their blessings by dancing around the tower in the center of their city. It’s feeling safe and secure. It’s knowing that God is there to strengthen us when we are overwhelmed.

The third word is *help*.<sup>10</sup> “God is ... an ever-present help.”<sup>11</sup> No matter what we’re facing, our Father is very present, greatly present, abundantly present, always present.<sup>12</sup>

So what does trouble look like for you these days? What is overwhelming you? Is it financial problem? Or a medical problem? Does it have to do with your job or your family? Whatever it is, He promises to be there when we need Him most. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). His presence means His help.

## HOPE

*His presence also means there is hope.* Knowing that God is there gives us reason to hope, to keep on going, to anticipate good. When we’re overwhelmed by life, Psalm 46 promises hope, real hope. “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. SELAH” (Psalm 46:4-7, NIV)

Hope is like a refreshing river. Hope is like a city in which God reigns. “God is within her” (Psalm 46:5). “The Lord Almighty is with us” (Psalm 46:7). This hymn was a promise to a nation. If a nation can rely on God, then surely we can too. If God is strong enough to help a nation, then surely He is strong enough to help us.<sup>13</sup> Who is with us? “The Most High ... The Lord Almighty” (Psalm 46:4, 7).

Psalm 46 promises that “God will help at break of day” (Psalm 46:5). Every morning begins with hope. Jeremiah, the suffering prophet, experienced the lowest levels of despair, and yet by faith he said, “The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23, NAS). God was faithful when you went to bed last night and God was faithful when you got up this morning. He will never leave you and He will never let you down. Therefore, you can have hope.

Your troubles may be overwhelming, and you may feel like everything is hopeless. But that’s not true. With God, life is never hopeless. King David experienced worry and stress and fear and despair just like we do. And during one season of his life, he said, “I wait for you, O Lord; you will answer, O Lord my God” (Psalm 38:15, NIV). “For what do I wait? My hope is in You” (Psalm 39:7, NAS). “I’ve been trusting You since I was a boy and I’m not going to stop now.”

When David paused and pondered the presence of God, he found hope. “Selah.” Pause and ponder. And when you do, you will be filled with hope that will give your life buoyancy and help you keep going.

## HIM

*His presence means Him.* God promises to be there when we need Him most!

“Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. SELAH” (Psalm 46:8-11, NIV).

This hymn reminded Israel of all the times the Lord led them to victory, and it was a promise that He would do it again. The hymn teaches us that if God can overcome the mightiest army, then surely He can overcome the worst of our problems. *The heart of the hymn is Him!*

“Selah.” Pause and ponder the presence of God. “Be still, and know that I am God.”

When a person is drowning, fear escalates, and a person starts thrashing in the water. The rescuer must get the person to relax and trust. The more he thrashes about, the harder he is to rescue. We do the same thing when we’re worried, when we’re stressed, when we’re afraid, when we’re overwhelmed. We thrash about, and that’s when God says, “Be still.”<sup>14</sup> The best translation of this Hebrew phrase is “Cease striving.”<sup>15</sup> You may be overwhelmed by a serious problem or you may be frazzled by the normal wear and tear of stress. Regardless of why you feel that way, God is inviting you to rest in Him. That’s exactly what Jesus said. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

“Be still.” “Wait patiently for the Lord” (Psalm 27:14, NLT). “Wait in silence for God” (Psalm 62:5, NAS). “Be still ... cease striving ... Selah ... pause and ponder ... know that I am God.”

- Know that He is the God who rules and who watches.
- Know that He is the God who is all-powerful and all-present.
- Know that He is the God who is love and who is good.
- Know that He is the God who hears and who cares.
- Know that He is the God who is all these things.

His presence means Him, all of Him. God is inviting us to look to Him, to pour our hearts out to Him, and to rely on Him when we need Him most.

I want to ask you to do something to show that you believe that. I want to ask you to express your trust in Him and to put your problem in His hand. Take the 3x5 card you received when you came in this morning and write your problem on that card. Write down the thing that is overwhelming you or worrying you or tearing you up inside. Consider this a prayer. Look at this as your cry for help. Don’t be tough and think you can handle it. Don’t think God is too busy to care about you. He means what He says. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” He promises to be there when we need Him most. Don’t put your name on the card. In a few moments, we are going to collect these cards and next week display them on stage, as a reminder that ... you got problems, I got problems, we all got problems. So take a few moments, to write down what is weighing on you most.

## CONCLUSION

As the ushers come to collect our cards, listen to these promises from God’s word.

- When you’re in trouble, remember Psalm 46:1. “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

- When you're lonely, remember Psalm 145:18. "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him."<sup>16</sup>
- When you're weary, remember what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28. "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
- When you're worried, remember Philippians 4:6. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything pray ..."<sup>17</sup>
- When you're afraid, remember Isaiah 41:10. The Lord promised, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."
- When you're hurting, remember Psalm 34:18. "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted."
- When you're tempted, remember 1 Corinthians 10:13. "He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape."
- When you're grieving, remember Revelation 21:4. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain."

These are not just words from a book. These are not just Bible verses to cheer us up. These are promises from God, from the mouth of God! ***He promises to be there when we need Him most.***

So let's declare our faith together. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea ... 'Be still, and know that I am God' ... The Lord Almighty is with us ... SELAH."

## NOTES

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1. “Selah” occurs 74 times in the Old Testament; 71 times in Psalms and 3 times in Habakkuk. The Amplified Version translates “Selah” as an instruction to “pause and calmly think about this.”
2. See Job 28:19.
3. For the Hebrew word see TWOT #1973c.
4. When David was hiding in a cave from his enemies, he prayed, “I cry out to the Lord; I pray to the Lord for mercy. I pour out my problems to him; I tell him my troubles” (Psalm 142:1-2, NCV).
5. For the Hebrew word see TWOT #700b.
6. See Isaiah 32:2.
7. See Psalm 62:7 and 94:22.
8. For the Hebrew word see TWOT #1596b.
9. See Psalm 61:3.
10. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as our “Helper.” God describes Himself as our Helper.
11. For the Hebrew word see TWOT #1598.
12. God said to Israel, “I, even I, am the one who comforts you. So why are you afraid?” (Isaiah 51:12, NLT).
13. Joshua and Caleb spied out the Promised Land they were the only two of the twelve spies who believed God was bigger than their enemies. They urged the people, “The Lord is with us; do not fear them” (Numbers 14:9). But in the eyes and hearts of the Hebrew people, their problem was bigger than their God. As Paul said, “If God is for us, does it matter who is against us?” (Romans 8:31, paraphrased).
14. For the Hebrew word see TWOT #2198.
15. NAS translation.
16. See also James 4:8.
17. See also 1 Peter 5:7.