

Text: Hebrews 13:6

Title: God Our Helper

Truth: God's promised presence and help emboldens us in the face of sinful human opposition.

Date/Location: Sunday February 5, 2012 at FBC

Introduction

6 - So that we may boldly say: "THE LORD IS MY HELPER; I WILL NOT FEAR. WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?"

Our Christian God is the only One Who provides this kind of personal connection, love, help, and bold confidence (consider Daniel 3:29).

The so-called gods of all the other religions are far off or impersonal in the self-understanding of the practitioners of those beliefs.

In reality, however, those 'gods' do not even exist because there is only one true and living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 8:4, 1 Kings 8:60, Isaiah 44:8, 45:5-6, 45:18, 45:21-22, 46:9). Non-existent gods cannot protect anyone or anything. They are laughable in that they have no abilities (1 Kings 18:27; Isaiah 46:1-7, 44:9-20).

God made people, redeemed His children, and carries them along through life. The idol is made by people, can't redeem anything, and has to be carried by his devotees!

It is true that false religions may be backed by demonic 'gods' but these are not interested in people in a personal, loving way.

I. Connection with the Preceding Verses

- A. Verse 4 was concerned about maintaining the honor and purity of marriage. Those who transgress against it are subjects of God's judgment. Closely related to this sin of lust-greed is the sin of money-greed, and so verse 5 exhorts us to be people who are content with what God has given us instead of coveting more. We have to make sure that our lives are not just a long string of covet-it-got-it-grow-discontent-again-covet-something-get-something-grow discontent-again.
- B. The main reason that a believer can be content is that he has the presence of God in his life. He promised his personal presence to believers in ages past (Gen. 28:15; Deut. 31:6-8; Joshua 1:5), and He brings that promise up to the present day in this passage. This is the kind of God we have.
- C. Verse 6 adds, "So that..." What this phrase means is that as a result of God's promise to never abandon us, we can confidently say something.

II. The Quote from the Psalms

A. The quote is from Psalm 27:1, 56:11, and most directly from 118:6.

B. Exposition of Psalm 118:1-9

1. A call for thankful recognition of the merciful loving-kindness of God, v. 1-4

This is a four-fold call to give thanks to God because of His mercy.

2. A recollection of God's help in distress, v. 5, 10-14

The psalmist sets up a recollection of a stressful time in life which helps those using the psalm in worship to think on their time of distress and how God answered their supplication.

3. An expression of the believer's confidence in God, v. 6-7

This section is the meat of the psalm as far as Hebrews 13:6 goes. The quote in Hebrews comes right from here.

4. An exhortation to trust God rather than man, v. 8-9

It should be obvious that if God is on your side (you are on His), then it is foolish to transfer your trust to mere mortal, finite man.

5. A song of praise, v. 11-29

Some further sub-sections could be found here, but the whole section is shot-through with words of praise and blessing of God.

III. The Christian's Relationship to Other People

A. Potential mis-use of the verse

There is a way in which we could be cavalier about this truth, in the sense of not caring about people to the extent of running roughshod over them. "They can't hurt me...so I'm going just plow ahead/be myself/do what I want/etc." Or, "I can't hurt them, so here I go!"

Luke 18:2-4 gives an example of a man who did not regard God nor fear man, and he was called *an unjust person*. That kind of attitude is not what we should have toward people precisely because it is sinful.

Another way we can mis-use the verse is to think that all that is contrary to us is sinful opposition and expect that God will help us *out of it*, when in fact He may want to teach us something *in it*.

B. Caving in to the Fear of Man

At the same time, we cannot buckle under the sinful pressure that people bring to bear on us. Proverbs 29:25 says that lays a snare for us. In other

words, if we fear people, we get trapped in sinful behavior as we try to mollify that fear.

God asks us to obey him in certain areas. If our first thought in response is “But Joe and Mary will think...,” then we have become a trapped by our holding people higher than God.

I used this simple example before: God commands hospitality. But we might have a messy/small/humble home and use that as an excuse to not be hospitable. The messy part we can clean. The small/humble part is just a reflection of our estimation of what God has given us, as compared to the world, and that it is not good enough to ‘impress’ Joe and Mary. That’s sinful thinking.

Even more difficult: God commands us to evangelize others, not to be ashamed of the gospel. There are probably a few excuses we could use to get out of this command...but again that is wrong. In our culture, we can tend toward fearing the ridicule of people—and that’s all they have to give us. There are not bullets, no prisons, only words and demeanor.

In doing any of God’s work, you may be “talked out of it” or “talked into something else” by the fear of man. Always be on guard whether we fear God or man more. One way to know is to ask “Who am I trying to please here?”

We might justify caving in to man to avoid being “hurt” by them by saying that God will forgive us, *and* we will avoid the temporal problem, embarrassment, etc. But that is not a faithful attitude toward God. That presumes upon his forgiveness and basically says, “The Lord is my helper when I want him to be, I will fear man when I want to fear him, and since I’m not supposed to do that, God will forgive me anyway.”

IV. The Help of God

- A. The fear of God overcomes the fear of man. In Hebrews 12:28 we learned about how we ought to serve God with reverence and godly fear. 10:31 reminded us how fearful it is to fall into the hands of the living God in judgment. If we instead are there as His children, we are safe.
- B. The worst that man can do is something like killing the body. See Matthew 10:28 and Luke 12:4. Certainly man can hurt you, but he cannot take away those things God has promised. He can do a lot of physical or temporal damage, but never eternal damage if you are in Christ, saved and safe forever. A man can fire you from your job; he can make your life difficult at work; he could take away your home or car or other property; he can hurt your emotions, divorce you, or steal from you; he can abandon you, and a

million other bad things. But none of that can take away the fact that God is your helper who will never leave you.

- C. The Bible calls us to **bold confidence, not timidity** (Acts 4:31, 2 Timothy 1:7). We are not timidly saying that God is our helper. We are boldly saying so!

The certainty, confidence, and courage we possess ought to be evident. 2 Cor. 5:6-8 is an example of this confidence in God and His promises, even in the face of death. Boldness is exhorted throughout Hebrews (10:19, 10:35, 4:16).

Look—God cares for you – Matthew 10:30-31. He will help us when we are in weakness or danger or apprehension.

Being fearful doesn't help anyway! Matt 6:25-34.

The vast superiority and power of God makes the statement "What can man do to me" a boast, almost a taunt.

- D. In the context of Hebrews, the trial for a new Jewish believer would be this: I am associated with Jesus now; my family and community are going to ostracize me. Now what am I going to do?

Following God through Jesus is what God wants. He is your helper, so do not fear about what people do to you. Go on and live for God, have Him as your help (Psalm 146:5). The Jewish person is steeped in this kind of thinking from the Old Testament—that is, to trust God and not fear man. So, when it comes to God sending His son to die for sins and the world's ridicule of that, the Jewish reader needs to be reminded that the God of Jacob is still their help.

Conclusion

We may feel God has left us. But God doesn't get in a huff and walk off or walk out! Instead, maybe we distanced ourselves from God. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you (James 4:8).

Verse 6 gives the result of the promise "I will never leave nor forsake." When we take that promise seriously, then we can confidently assert that God is our help.

In so doing, we are at once praising God *and* offering a confession of faith in the Lord.

God says, "I will never leave you." We respond, "We boldly affirm back to you in the sight of man, O God, that You are our helper, we will not fear anyone more than we fear You!"

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