

A Refuge In Times Of Trouble

Introduction. The Old Testament patriarch, Job, observed approximately 3,500 years ago, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14:1).

Every week I am reminded of this solemn truth. Every week reveals the sickness, struggles, and even death of friends that I have loved, families that I have been close to, and earthly relationships that I hold dear. There are those who are suffering with an incurable, debilitating disease. There are those whose family home has been destroyed by a fire. There are those whose father has walked out on his family. There are those who have lost their life savings. There are those, as we sadly know, who have lost everything in the typhoon-stricken Philippines.

So what is the answer? How do we cope? Where do we turn when trouble troubles our lives? Psalm 9 is David’s prayer and praise for God’s just rule of the nations. In vv. 9-10 he writes, “The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.”

The scriptures reveal four ways that God can be your refuge. We have all observed these from our family and friends who are suffering.

I. Live In God’s Presence

- A. Get close to Him (James 4:6-8). Get to know Him (Philippians 3:8-10). Talk to Him (Luke 18:1-8). Follow Him (John 14:15).
- B. When we suffer adversity, we can know that we are in the presence of God. What a great encouragement, comfort, and consolation. David was a man who knew the presence of God in the midst of conflict (Psalm 57:1-11; 59:1-17).
- C. One might ponder, “Where was God when my son died?” The answer is, “The same place He was when His Son died.” God is not a spectator of our pain; we are in His presence (2 Corinthians 1:5).

II. Learn From God’s Promises

- A. The psalmist affirmed that God would be with us. He is “our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble” (Psalm 46:1). God’s people saw this working throughout their lives (Acts 9:23-26; 27:21-25).
- B. God promises help, comfort, and hope that will never end (Matthew 28:20). He says, “I care, and I will care for you” (1 Peter 5:7). He feels our pain, and will supply our every need (Hebrews 13:5-6).

III. Lean On God’s Power

- A. When Sennacherib, king of Assyria invaded Judah, Hezekiah stood up and rallied his subjects (2 Chronicles 32:7-8).
 - 1. The arm of flesh will always fail when pitted against the power of the Almighty God (1 Samuel 2:31; Ezekiel 30:21).
 - 2. This same power was demonstrated so well with Moses at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21-22), Joshua at Jericho (Joshua 6:20-21), and Gideon at Jezreel (Judges 7:21-22).

- B. Finite strength is undependable and expendable, but God's infinite power is sufficient for every need — we are “kept by the power of God” (1 Peter 1:5; cp. 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Peter 4:19; Jude 24; Revelation 3:10).

IV. Look For God's Purpose

- A. God's purpose is not to make you miserable. Paul said to “rejoice in the Lord” (Philippians 4:4; cp. Psalm 97:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:16). God does not send pain, problems, and pressures. God is the giver of good gifts (James 1:17).
- B. Why does trouble come?
 - 1. Satan is the purveyor of evil in the world (Luke 13:16).
 - 2. It could be through our own poor choices (Galatians 6:7-8).
 - 3. Maybe it is because of the evil of other people (Acts 10:34).
 - 4. Sometimes it is the result of living in a natural world (Luke 13:4-5).
 - 5. It can be used as a means to test our faith (1 Peter 1:6-7).
- C. So what is God's purpose for me as I experience life's problems?
 - 1. To learn to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).
 - 2. To use adversity to make me stronger (James 1:2-4; Romans 5:2-5).
 - 3. To focus on God's eternal plan in Jesus (Ephesians 3:8-11).
 - 4. To claim victory through His love, grace, and mercy (Romans 8:30-31).

Conclusion. We all will suffer trouble in this life. Sometimes extreme tragedy will befall us. Yet, whatever the trial or trouble, there is help and hope — because there is God: “I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High” (Psalm 9:1-2).

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