

My help comes from the Lord

(Some thoughts with Dr. Joel M. Crichlow)

We all need help. Sometimes we are in greater need than at other times. There are even the occasions when we really are in dire straits. However the first condition that has to be met for us to receive that help is the admission that we do indeed need help.

God is our creator. He will help us.

Genesis 1:27 (NIV): *So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

The Psalmist expresses how wonderfully we are made by God. God will help us.

Psalm 139:14 (NIV): *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

God knows the number of hairs on our head. He will help us.

Matthew 10:30 (NIV): *And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* See also Luke 12:7.

God sustains us. He will help us.

Acts 17:24-25 (NIV): *The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.*

Indeed God is the ultimate source of our help. He loves us and He is always willing, ready and able to help us.

John 3:16 (NIV): *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Jesus came to earth as the expression of God's love for us. Before He died on the cross to suffer the penalty for our sins, He expressed in His actions His clear mission to help the needy. One example of this is recorded in the gospel of John chapter 5.

John 5:1-3 (NIV): *Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals.² Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.*

Jesus found His way to a group of real needy people. I am sure that there were several other places that He could have gone to "hang out". But He was on a mission to help.

John 5: 5-6 (NIV): *One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"*

Jesus focused on a very needy individual around that pool. But, of course, He would be of no help to that man if that man did not acknowledge his need. So Jesus asked him, *“Do you want to get well?”*

John 5: 7 (NIV): *“Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”*

Indeed the man wanted to get well. He needed help, but help was not forthcoming from that company that he was in. We may be in real need. We are quite aware and have acknowledged that we need help. But the help we need cannot come from the group that we are in. Since each one in the group is also in need and is probably just looking out for himself or herself.

John 5: 8-9 (NIV): *Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.*

Jesus with divine authority spoke a word to the invalid. The invalid did not know who Jesus was. But he obviously sensed the authority with which Jesus spoke. He was so overwhelmed by a desire to be well, and so moved by the obvious concern, compassion and power demonstrated by Jesus, that the invalid acted in faith: *“he picked up his mat and walked”*.

But everyone was not happy with the result.

John 5: 9-13 (NIV): *The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”*

But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ ”

So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

The invalid had obtained the help for which he had waited so long. This was certainly an occasion for rejoicing. But there came another challenge. What should be the response in the face of a challenge to our deliverance? Retreat or press on? Jesus provided the answer.

John 5: 14 (NIV): *Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”*

We are to press on, we are to walk in that victory. Will God continue to help us? The Psalmist answers that for us:

Psalm 121: 2 (NIV): *My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.*

But remember God will not be helping us to sin. God will not be helping us to do what is against His will. God will help us begin a good relationship with Him. God will be there to help us grow in our knowledge of Him, to have sweet fellowship with Him, and among other things to be a blessing to others. Indeed He will help us to be channels through which He can pass on His help to others.