

911 – Lord Help! (David’s Call for Help)

It is hard to believe that it has already been 20 years since the tragic events of September 11th, 2001. All of us that were alive likely remember the day vividly, where we were, and what we were doing. Melissa Doi was a 32yr old businesswoman working as a Financial Manager. Sep 11th was like any other day for her. As was her normal routine she was already at work on the 83rd floor of Tower Two (South Tower). At 9:03am United flight 175 hit the South Tower plowing through floors 77-85. At 9:17 a.m. Melissa Doi made a desperate call to 9-1-1.

Frantically weeping Melissa asked the 911 operator if she could send someone to help. When the operator said they were working on it Melissa replied ***"Well, there's no one here yet, and the floor's completely engulfed. We're on the floor and we can't breathe, everybody is having trouble breathing, some people are worse, it's very, very, very hot"***. Melissa can be heard on the voice recordings pleading with the operator for emotional support, ***"Can you hang on the line with me, please? I feel like I'm dying."*** Melissa continued on. ***"I can't see, it's too hot. There is smoke and I can't breathe. I don't see any air anymore; all I see is smoke. I think I'm going to die."***

In her state of agony, she was looking for confidence in the voice on the other end, hoping for a promise of rescue. Eventually after 24 ½ minutes the conversation was cut off. And at 9:59am the South Tower collapsed. Though Melissa desperately sought help sadly, the operator could offer no hope for rescue and nothing else could be done for her.

This brings us to our text this morning. Psalm 6 is King David’s 911 call for help. As we have seen over the past 3 weeks in Psalm 3-5, David has experienced significant times of trouble throughout his life. In these first 7 verses he appears to be even more desperate, suffering at his worst. Possibly because of his own sin. But by the end of Psalm 6, in the last 3 verses there is a change of heart. David gains confidence because he finds real help. He finds saving help from the Lord!

Many of you have suffered greatly in the past, and some of you are currently suffering and desperate for help. If you have never suffered, it means you are probably a teenager or younger. It is only a matter of time before you will suffer. Why, because we are sinners that live in a sinfully broken world that is currently under a curse. Whether you have fallen into sin, or some unexpected tragedy has come upon you, Psalm 6 can be your 911 call for saving help. The good news is the operator is the LORD himself, a God rich in mercy.

The main idea this morning from Psalm 6 is a simple exhortation of hope when you suffer. **Plead to the Lord for help.** We are going to explore this idea through 2 main points.

1. David’s plea for help
2. Our plea for help

The first point is David's plea for help. What was his plea for help? It was a plea for mercy. Look with me at v 1-2

***¹ O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger,
nor discipline me in your wrath.***

² Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;

From these verses, it appears David assumed he was under the Lord's discipline and therefore was seeking the Lord's mercy and grace. Because of this the early church fathers classified Psalm 6 as the first of 7 penitent Psalms. To be penitent simply means to be sorry or repentant for something wrong you have done. Though David does not confess sin explicitly like he does in Psa 32 or 51, because of language like, "***rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath***", it's likely David felt he was suffering discipline because of a personal sin he had committed.

As we saw last week in Psalm 5 the LORD, Yahweh is holy and just therefore he must punish sin. Throughout the entire Bible we clearly see that sin evokes the wrath of God. David knew the Torah well. He knew that the wrath of God would often break out against the Israelites and consume them when they fell into sin. He knew the story of Uzzah. And because David knew the Torah well, he also knew Ex 34

Exodus 34:6-7 The Lord—the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, ⁷ maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin.

So, David appeals to the Lord's nature of grace and mercy for his current condition. Now his condition is in such a state of despair and suffering that he can't even finish his sentence?

Look with me at v2-3

***² Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;
heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled. (shaken or trembling)***

***³ My soul also is greatly troubled.
But you, O LORD—how long?***

As one commentator put it, David is experiencing an "inner panic as well as an outer trembling".

The Psalms often use what is known as synonymous parallelism. Synonymous parallelism involves the repetition of an idea in the second part of what has already been expressed in the first by simply varying the words. David elaborates on his suffering further. Now v6-7

***⁶ I am weary with my moaning;
every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.
⁷ My eye wastes away because of grief;
it grows weak because of all my foes.***

David desperately seeks mercy in his state of agony. Discipline is painful because sin has consequences. Sin = pain. When I was in 5th grade, I remember tripping a kid that I didn't like. As he ran past me, I slipped my foot out and there he went like a snowball rolling on past me. Then he got up and he chased me and knocked me to the ground, and I fell on my back and twisted my neck so badly that I couldn't move it for a week. To this day I still suffer pain in the same areas on my neck and back. Sin has consequences and the consequences are often painful.

God is a loving father, so he disciplines those he loves. It really is his mercy to let us feel the consequences of our sin through pain. I have 4 boys and when they were young, they all seemed to do the same thing. I'd say, "don't touch that", then son would touch that. Because that is the sin of rebellion/disobedience. Therefore, I would discipline them with the rod of love, the wooden spoon, which was the painful consequence of their sin. Discipline is loving because it connects the consequence of sin with pain. Parent's it's why it is so important to discipline your children in love, but you need to make it hurt. The goal of painful discipline is to keep children ultimately from rebelling against God and having to experience the ultimate pain of his Holy wrath for all eternity.

What else was David's plea of help for. It was for the deliverance from death. Look with me at v4-5

⁴ Turn, O LORD, deliver my life;

save me for the sake of your steadfast love.

⁵ For in death there is no remembrance of you;

in Sheol who will give you praise?

David pleads with the Lord that he would deliver his life. Since David mentions his foes/enemies in Psalm 6, it's likely he is in fear of death from being hunted down. Though we don't know contextual specifics; we recall how David fled for his life from his son Absalom as a result of the discipline of his sins of adultery and murder. David sought deliverance from death.

The OT saints didn't have the same light/revelation that we do regarding the afterlife. David mentions Sheol which represents the grave in Hebrew scripture. Throughout scripture, Sheol is pictured as a dark and gloomy place without escape. But the main emphasis of David's plea for deliverance from death seems to be centered around the absence of God presence in death.

⁵ For in death there is no remembrance of you;

in Sheol who will give you praise?

David is saying, turn O Lord, come back to me, let me no longer be outside of your presence. Let me not enter Sheol, the grave, where I will be separated from your presence, where I will have no current or present knowledge of you, and no way to praise your holy name in death. David knew the Lord was faithful to hear him. So, he cried out for saving help. He cried out for mercy and deliverance from death.

So, what did David's plea for help bring? It brought confidence. Look with me at v8-10

[display these verse through the next few sentences until I state verse 10 again]

***⁸ Depart from me, all you workers of evil,
for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.***

***⁹ The LORD has heard my plea;
the LORD accepts my prayer.***

***¹⁰ All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled;
they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.***

[Continue displaying verses

Because the Lord has heard his plea and accepted his prayer, David's tone has changed. He went from weak and languishing, from swollen eyes of grief, swimming in a bed of tears, full of the fear of death and shame for his sin to the capstone of Psalm 6 verse 10.

***¹⁰ All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled;
they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment.***

[End displaying verses]

David was experiencing shame and torment from his enemies during his time of suffering. We remember Shimei who threw stones and cursed David as he left Jerusalem during Absalom's revolt. But now David has found a renewed sense of confidence because the Lord has heard and accepted his prayer.

This is how the OT saints who didn't know the Messiah would have likely heard Psalm 6. This is how the Israelite reader under the Law of Moses in the Old Covenant who didn't know David's multi-great grandson, the Lord Jesus Christ would have read and sung this beautiful Psalm...his plea for help. Our first point was David's plea for help – a plea for mercy and deliverance that brought confidence.

But Christians live under the New Covenant. So today as NT believers, how do we read Psalm 6. This brings us to our 2nd point. Our plea for help.

Our plea for help. Like David we often need mercy. Why do we need mercy? Because like David we also are sinners.

***¹ O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger,
nor discipline me in your wrath.***

² Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;

All sin is rebellion against God and therefore sin evokes God's holy wrath and discipline. God's nature is love, but his nature is equally holy and just and therefore it would be unjust of a holy God to not punish sin. Sin has consequences and often they are painful. The wages of sin is death. Ultimately sin left unchecked brings death. Some of you continue to battle the same

sin. Your struggle has worn you out, and at times you feel helpless to change. Some of you here this morning have recently fallen into sin and not even sure how you got there.

When my boys were young after they would do something sinfully foolish, I would ask why did you do that? Countless time the answer would be, I don't know. I remember it took me awhile to connect the dots, they were born sinners and are acting out their nature. No one need teach a child to sin. Sin has corrupted every fiber of our beings. We are all marred with sin and therefore we do stupid sinful things. This is no excuse for our sin, but we are weak and so often easily fall to sin, therefore we need mercy,

Some of you this morning feel like David. You are weak and fear the rebuke of God's anger as you feel the weight and conviction of your sin. Some of you for years have been addicted to pornography. You can't seem to find your way out. Some of you may be living with a secret sin that continues to abound and you're living with the shame and guilt and have lost the joy of your salvation. Others of you may find yourself filled with jealousy and greed, never content with life always wanting more, wishing you had a better life, never satisfied with what God has given you, always finding fault with others. You desperately need help. You need God's mercy.

But others of you that are engaging in sin may not feel conviction for your sin. God will not tolerate sin; God will not be mocked. Lay hold of God's right hand of mercy before his left hand of justice lays hold of you. I plead with you this morning, repent, plead for mercy.

What other help do we often need? Deliverance. Deliverance from suffering.

³ My soul also is greatly troubled.

But you, O LORD—how long?

⁴ Turn, O LORD, deliver my life;

How long O Lord. How long will I suffer, how long until I experience your presence again. Maybe this morning you are thinking Josh, yes, I am a sinner, but I haven't fallen into adultery or murder, there are no immoral sins that I am involved in, but still I'm languishing in pain. You need deliverance from suffering. You need deliverance from the emotional and physical pain you face from the sinful abuse that was done to you. You need deliverance from the depression and anxiety that you endure every night as you flood your bed with tears trying to fall asleep. You might be thinking, if you only knew the pain, I have from losing my spouse, or child, that was taken to early from me, or the pain from the cancer or sickness that has ravaged my body.

Whether you are struggling from your own sin or from the general suffering of this world, within some of you there is a cry for saving help! You feel like you need a lifeline. Just like in the old game show, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire", some of you feel like you need to phone a friend just to survive the round, because your suffering seems unbearable.

Brothers and sisters there is help! There is a lifeline. There is a friend to phone. In your weakened state, no matter what situation you find yourself in you can desperately plead to the Lord for mercy and deliverance it and he will supply it. Why, because of the gospel. Because of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for you.

Ephesians 2:3-5 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

(John Stott "But God! The greatest 2 syllables ever spoke in the English language)

For the sinner that means Jesus has already paid the punishment for your sins. The son of God, who spent eternity past with God the Father, in perfect harmonious fellowship, was separated from him on the cross and God poured out the fury of his holy wrath for every sin you committed. That is how much the Lord Jesus Christ loves you this morning. The good news this morning is that there is unlimited mercy and complete deliverance available for you.

So, Psalm 6 can be your cry for mercy. "Be gracious to me O LORD, heal me for my whole being is troubled". His mercy is more. That means there is more of his mercy for you than there is of your sin. If God extended you mercy when you were his enemy, and a child of wrath, how much more also now as a child of God will he give freely of himself.

Because of his mercy we have been delivered from death and made alive. ***⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ***

We have been delivered from spiritual death because Jesus died for us. And now we've been made alive because Jesus rose from the grave victoriously. Jesus defeated the grave, he rose in victory, he rose in power and like David called for his enemies to be greatly shamed, as Col 2 Christ put his enemies to open shame and triumphed over them.

And now as fellow heirs to the promise of life this victory has been given to us through his resurrection. Victory over sin. Power to say no to sin. Power to put sin to death. Power to endure suffering of all sorts. One of my favorite verses in the entire bible is found in Phil 3:10 ***Philippians 3:10 My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death. CSB***

This means we can turn our mourning into joy, because our sufferings help shape us to be more like Christ. *(Tony Remley passing and quote about milking it for what it's worth).*

Not all of your suffering is due to sin you have committed but because we live in a sinful world. Biblically suffering is a form of sanctifying training that the Bible calls discipline (not

punishment). The Lord allows us to be trained through the suffering of discipline. Look with me to Heb 12:7-11

⁷ Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline—which all receive—then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn't we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but he does it for our benefit, so that we can share his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

I have coached boys lacrosse for the past 7 years. To be a good lacrosse player you have to pass and catch the ball without dropping it. It's fundamental to the game. So, as you can imagine we run lots of drills that involve passing and catching. The drills can be intense at times, and when the boys drop the ball repetitively, we'll do some pushups. When they keep dropping it, we might do some knuckle drags. It's painful discipline that trains them. The boys aren't being punished for wrongdoing, they are being trained to be better passers, to perform as better athletes, to be more skilled players. That's what it's like in the Christian life.

God allows us to suffer so that we will become more like his Son. And God is more than a harsh coach, He is a loving father so he has mercy for us when we suffer.

And now like David our plea for help (mercy/deliverance) will bring confidence. Confidence in what? Forgiveness of sin. ***Ephesians 1:7 ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,***

When you do fall into sin, you have help. You have an advocate, and a mediator, the man Jesus Christ. Your plea for forgiveness can be the perfect blood of Jesus. Under the Old Covenant sins like David's adultery and murder, required continual animal sacrifice. Then there was the annual day of Atonement where the High Priest trembling with fear would enter the holy of holies, where the ark of the covenant sat bearing within it the 10 commandments. Above it sat the Mercy Seat, upon which the priest would sprinkle the blood of a bull to appease the wrath of God for the sins of the people. But now there has been a greater sacrifice for sin. Jesus our true mercy seat has shed his blood once for all and has forever appeased God's anger. Now instead of seeing your sins, God sees Jesus blood. Therefore, you can have great confidence that you are forgiven. If you confess your sin.

Because we have mercy/deliverance through the blood of Jesus, we can have confidence to enter the Lord's presence for help. (Just summarize) ***Hebrews 4:15-16 ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.***

Sometimes we don't fully appreciate the significance of Jesus's human nature. Jesus was fully God and fully man therefore he can sympathize with our weakness. There is a great scene in The Chosen season 2, where the disciples are sitting around the fire, and they are arguing about suffering under the Romans. Jesus is not in the scene; he is still off in the distance healing the sick. Well Jesus's mother Mary is asked about his birth, and she begins to tell them he had to be wiped off, he cried, and he was cold. Jesus lived 33 hard years of life (in a world without AC, sanitation, technology, etc.) He felt pain, he felt weakness and he suffered like us, he knew agony. Like David who wept in agony and asked that the LORD deliver him from death, so did David's multi-great grandson, experience agony as a man, the night before he was crucified. Jesus was in such agony; it's recorded that he sweat drops of blood.

Thankfully he endured suffering as a perfect man and went to the cross for the joy set before him, and now as our great High Priest is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. We are able to enter God's throne with confidence, and draw near to his presence to find grace, and help in time of need. There is no greater man to turn to for help in this life than the Lord Jesus Christ.

But because we still live in a sinfully broken and cursed world, it's possible that in this life you many never fully be delivered from your sickness, suffering or your struggle against sin. But you can be confident that a day is coming, a day of finality to your suffering, a day where all sin will be forever consumed, a day where there will be no more weeping, no more sorrows nor more pain no more suffering no more death. Christians can have confidence of a future hope because Jesus rose from the grave.

We can have confidence that the Lord Jesus Christ will return to reign in righteousness, where we will worship him forever, and sing his praises for the mercy and grace he has freely given us.

But until that day, let Psalm 6 be your cry for help. Psalm 6 is applicable for all people. For the youth that is cut from a sports team, for the single person who desires marriage but has no spouse, for parents that can't conceive, for the woman who was sexually abused and for the man who has fallen into grave sin there is mercy/deliverance/confidence. It's also applicable for the person here this morning that is not yet a Christian. The Bible is clear that a day of final judgment is coming. There has been a day fixed before all time, when the Lord Jesus will judge the world in righteousness. It is a guarantee because he rose from the grave. That day is coming! And on that day the King of Kings will echo King David in Psalm 6 as he declares, ***Psalms 6:8 Depart from me, all you workers of evil, (Mat 7:23)***

On that day, a cry for help will no longer be heard. Mercy and deliverance will no longer be available. So, I plead with you this morning, cry out for God's saving help. Repent of your sin and find mercy and deliverance through the blood of Jesus. Let today be the day that you are set free, the day your shame is wiped away, let today be the day where you find hope and confidence that only a savior like Jesus can offer. I promise you will find it when you humble yourself and plead for his help!

Today we have considered God's Saving Help under 2 points. David's plea for help and our plea for help.

Thankfully, the story of Melissa Doi is not the only one on September 11, 2001. Her story wasn't the only cry for help and deliverance that fateful day. There is also the story of Stanley Praimnath. Stanley was a bank executive working on the 81st floor on the South Tower. At 9:03am United flight 175 hit the South Tower with the wing slicing through his office and becoming lodged in a door just 20 feet from him. Stanley became bruised and covered in debris, which left him trapped and unable to escape on his own. In desperation Stanley began to cry out for help. His plea for saving help, was heard by Brian Clark who was working on the 83rd floor. "Help, help", cried Stanley, "Is anyone there, I'm buried, I can't breathe".

Brian followed the sound of his cry using a flashlight, and eventually made his way to Stanley. There he saw Stanley through a hole in the wall on the ground with his arm stretched out pleading for help. Brian reached through and heaved him over. Stanley's exact words were "Hallelujah, I've been saved" at which point he kissed Brian. Once outside and two blocks away from the South Tower, they stopped and looked back at the building as the South Tower began to collapse. Stanley's plea for help was heard and he was saved!

We can rejoice! There is a man who hears; a God-man, Jesus Christ who loves to save, who is able to save, who knows your pain and suffering and who is fully of mercy and deliverance. Plead to him when you are in desperate need for saving help!

Amen.