

Help Is on the Way

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the distinction between the Old and New Covenants, highlighting God's faithfulness and the assurance of His help in times of discouragement.

Duration: 19:52

Scripture: Isaiah 41:8, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 28:20, John 1:17, Hebrews 8:6, Hebrews 8:13, Revelation 2:10

Topics: "Help"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Isaiah 41:8, where God addresses Israel as His chosen servant. The preacher emphasizes that God has chosen and called His people, and therefore they should not be afraid or discouraged. He encourages believers to trust in God's strength and help, as He promises to uphold them with His righteous right hand. The preacher also highlights that God takes joy in showing mercy and helping those who look to Him, even when they feel unworthy.

Transcript

There's a rule when you read the scripture that no verse in the Old Testament, no promise, no command applies to us unless it is repeated in the New Covenant, in the New Testament. There's 500 and something commands in the Old Testament. Not only is no one in this church obeying all those commands, most of us don't know the commands, and yet God gave them in the Old Testament and told Moses, teach the people to obey all these commands.

As I've repeated before, but I'm glad visitors are here today, so this will help you when you read the Bible. So there's many elements of the Old Testament for John 1 says, the law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. We're reading this week through the book of Hebrews one chapter at a time in our books of the Bible, New Testament, that thousands in the church are reading through, and we found out that the New Covenant is not just superior to the Old Covenant, it has a better priest, Jesus.

How many are happy that our high priest is Jesus? And we have a better sacrifice, not animals. Who's our sacrifice? Jesus. Nothing in the Old Testament can be just picked up out of it and said, no, you got to obey that unless it's verified in the New Testament.

There's an example of it or it's taught. So defeating enemies and killing them is not something we do as Christians, but in the Old Testament they did. They killed the Philistines.

A prophet named Elijah, he actually withstood the prophets of Baal and then when it was over, he went in the valley and slew 450 of them. That has no application to my life. Zero.

If you do that, you will be in jail and need a lawyer, right? So Muslims, Hindus, people who believe differently than us are not our enemies, they're the mission field. How many got it so far? No promises, no promises in the Old Testament about physical blessings apply to us unless they're mentioned in the New Testament. So the promise of long life and all of that and prosperity and that was given to Israel in the land and about their crops.

But in the New Testament, we have something that is revealed to us called the cross of Christ and suffering for Christ that is unknown in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, if you were right with God, you beat the enemy, you destroyed them, and everything worked out fine and you sat in your house and under a fig tree and you eat curds and whey or whatever they had back there. So in the New Testament, we have Stephen being martyred, but Jesus standing to welcome him.

We have apostles put in prison. We have Jesus saying, be faithful even to the point of death and I will give you the crown of life in the book of Revelation. That's not found anywhere in the Old Testament.

Heaven is not a heavy emphasis in the Old Testament. So the Old Testament, according to Hebrews, has become obsolete. So when you read the scripture, this is how the false prosperity teaching has gained traction.

They pick and choose verses from the Old Testament without comparing it and judging scripture by scripture and finding it in the New Testament. The New Testament says God has chosen the poor of this world to be rich in the true riches that we live for are not here on earth. If the true riches were here on earth in money and property, then the people who curse Jesus have more money than we do.

Is that not true? Is that not true? I'm asking you a question, okay? Aren't there some atheists billionaires? Well, if money is everything God has for us, how come he's giving it to people who deny his very existence? So we thank God for prosperity. We thank God when he blesses you. Some people are very, very wealthy and have the ministry of giving, but you don't make fun of an Ethiopian Christian who doesn't have two sticks to rub together.

They might be a better Christian than you. Am I not, am I not right? They might be more like Jesus, right? So you got to be, you got to be freed from all of that. And the simple rule is, is just to analyze that.

Like some of the Psalms, we were talking about that in Chicago to some ministers. So some of the Psalms have parts of them, even though it's inspired by God and it's profitable, especially in that day, it's not for us because it says about God, their enemy, some of the vindictive Psalms say, and God take their children and they may be smashed upon the rocks. We're not, we're never to pray that.

May my enemies break their head and smash their teeth. It says that, right? I know some of you have liked to pray that for your enemies, but God says not to pray that. What did Jesus tell us to do for our enemies? Love our enemies and bless them that curse you.

That is not something you're going to find in the Old Testament. Okay, so this is no, I'm not giving you some new thing. I'm not saying the scripture is not the word of God.

It is, but it has to be rightly divided. And as Martin Luther, the great reformer said, the hardest part of rightly dividing the word of God is understanding the difference between the covenants, the old versus the new. See in the old, there would never be a verse like this.

If we suffer with him, we will also reign with him. New, there's nothing about that in the Old Testament. Although in David's life, you start to see it.

He came after the law was given, but already him and the prophets, even though they served God, you know, Daniel wasn't thrown into Trump tower. He was thrown into a lion's den, right? So already you see, now you serve God, you can run into some problems. So those Egyptian Christians, what are the Egyptians that were beheaded by ISIS? Yeah.

So God isn't not keeping his word. Are you kidding? They've got the real reward right now in heaven. Come on, let's all say amen to that.

Paul says this, if only in this life we Christians have hope, then of all the people in the world, we're the most to be pitied. Because we're to deny ourselves, we're to follow Jesus no matter what. And sometimes when you do that, you get more aggravation, not less.

How many, since you become a Christian, you've been aggravated by people or things have gone wrong, even though you're serving the Lord. Lift up your hand, all right. We have all been aggravated or whatever.

So now there are some promises though, that when you hit them, they apply old, new, oh they're so good. There are promises like this one, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Jesus said, I am the good shepherd.

So there you go, we have a shepherd. We have a shepherd named Jesus. But here's the one, one of my favorite verses in the whole Bible, especially in the Old Testament.

I've made a study a lot of Isaiah 41 through the end of the book, chapter 40 through the end of Isaiah. And here's the verse I just want you to look at, Isaiah 41 10. So do not fear, for I am with you.

Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Say that with me together, wait. So do not fear, for I am with you. So do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Now yeah, let's put our hands together.

That's one of the best verses in the whole Bible. And all of those promises from Jesus and God in the New Testament are found. Lo, I am with you to the end of the age.

Never be discouraged. Now, the thing about this, Isaiah 41 is this, it begins the chapter by saying this, but verse eight, I should say, but you Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham, my friend. I took you from the ends of the earth, from its furthest corners I called you.

And I said, you are my servant, I have chosen you and have not rejected. So do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed or discouraged.

The word in the Hebrew actually means literally, don't look around and be like, oh no, what's going to happen next? Do not do that. For I am your God. I will strengthen you.

I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. How many here are believers in Jesus Christ? Lift up your hand.

How many want to live for God with all your heart and live a life pleasing to him? Wave your hand at me, okay? So now this verse is for all of us. What's interesting about this, and I noticed today during our prayer time from 12 to one, was this. The portion here really begins in verse eight, and God says to his people, remember this is Isaiah, the prophet, who is lamenting the people's backslidenness.

They've built idols, they've made a mess of things, but Isaiah is looking ahead to the time when God will restore and bless his people, and he wants to encourage those who are keeping their trust in God, no matter what's going on around them. And then he says this, he says, but you, oh Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen. Now what's odd about that is Israel, that's the name of the nation, but really Israel was first mentioned in the Bible when God changed the name of Jacob.

Jacob's name was changed and became Israel. So he says Israel, and then, don't be afraid Israel, and then Jacob whom I have chosen, Israel my servant, Jacob who I have chosen. But wait a minute, Jacob means deceiver.

It means one who grabs at the heel. It means a used car dealer that you don't want to buy a car from. That's what Jacob means.

How many know the story of what he did to his brother Esau? Cheated him out of the what? Out of the birthright, blessing, right? Wait a minute, Jacob who I have chosen? You leave Jacob's name out, just say Israel. Just say Israel, my servants. Don't be saying Jacob, but that's the point.

There's a mystery in this room, because I had you lift your hands and you said you put your faith in Jesus, didn't you? But before you ever chose him, he chose you. Now wait, I do not understand, no one can fathom that, without violating our free will, or else choosing him wouldn't mean anything. If you're forced to love someone, what does that love mean? It means nothing.

If I am programmed that I have to love someone, then that person can't say, oh wow, Jim Simba loves me. No, love has to be free for it to be love. But on the other side of that coin, in the mystery of God's sovereignty, God said, I've chosen you.

I know, but God, don't choose Jacob, he's a crooked little thing. I know, but I've chosen him. Because in the end, he's going to put his trust in me.

Brothers and sisters, if the truth were told, aren't we all here tonight, not because of our faithfulness, but because of God's faithfulness. How many can, lift your hand if you can say that with me. And why was he so faithful? Why did he keep his promises? Hasn't he done things for us that you and I can't even imagine why he would do it? When God began to first work in my life, I was in college, and I loved the Lord, I was serving the Lord, going to church when I was home for the summers.

And sometimes God's spirit would come upon me, and God would bless me in ways I don't want to go into now, but he just would come and I could feel his embrace and his love. Sometimes he would even prompt me to be used in some little way, maybe to help someone else. And as God is my holy witness, sometimes

when I felt his blessing and his love, I would say, God, not me.

Because you know who I am. You know how I failed you. I wasn't always a strong Christian in college.

None of us have always been strong Christians, have we? And even the strongest Christian, haven't we messed up? And I would actually say to God, no, no, not me. Find another. Don't, not me.

I'm not worthy. Haven't you ever felt not worthy when God just wraps his arms around you and he blesses you? Isn't it not true that some of the choicest blessings God's given us are not when we've been at our best, but when we've been at our worst? Is that not true? Does God just wait to bless us when we're doing good, or does he just shower grace and mercy and blessings? Jacob, whom I have chosen. So yes, you're here today because you put your faith in Christ, but in another way, God has chosen you.

And here's what he wants you to know tonight. Don't you be afraid. For God says, I am with you.

Don't you be discouraged when you look around and see like what's happening here and what, and it can be in a wide circle of the world, ISIS, and what's going on here and international finance and is Greece going to go under? Is the European Union going to dissolve all the, will it affect the markets here in New York? What's happening with China over there in the Pacific? What's going on? Or it can be in a small circle. Like, how am I going to go to college? How am I going to pay this next bill? What am I going to do in the world that I live in? God says, hey, I am with you. I chose you before you even knew about me.

And now that I chose you, and now we're one, we're walking together, I will be with you. Not only will I be with you, I will never forsake you. I never want you discouraged because I am your God.

I am your God. And then finally, I will help you. God is a helper.

Come on. Can we say amen to that? He loves to help. I will help you.

I will help you. Even if everyone turns their back, I will help you. And you know, when God is your helper, it's going to work out.

It's going to work out. So I want to say this to everybody. God is going to help you.

God is going to help us. But Pastor Simba, I'm not what I need to be. He knows that.

He's going to help you because of who he is, not because who you are or who I am. I don't deserve to even walk on this platform, but God is full of mercy and grace. One more time.

Can we just say thank you, Jesus? Come on, say it with your mouth. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.

God delights in helping messed up people. I don't get it. It's true.

God delights in showing mercy. Judgment is his strange act. He takes a joy in helping people who are unworthy but who look to him.

Don't look inside. You'll get discouraged. Trust me.

I've looked inside. I don't like what I see so often. But when you look unto Jesus, his love, his mercy.

Just before we go any further, close your eyes. Somebody fighting discouragement right now. Fear, discouragement.

You're going through something. Just stand up right where you are. God's going to help you right now.

Just stand up. God is going to help you. Just affirm to God, God, I'm going to choose to trust what the minister read out of Isaiah 41.10. Just stand up where you are.

I'm not going to be afraid. Lift your hand up. Come on.

I'm not going to be afraid. I'm going to trust in God. He's not a man that he should lie.

What is he going to do after selecting you, choosing you? He's going to let you fall in a black hole. Impossibly. Impossible.

Could never happen. So you're at a transition time and you don't know what the next step is. What do you think? God is up there wondering what's going to happen.

He knows the beginning from the end and the end from the beginning. He's going to help you. You think this is simple truth.

Trust me. The devil will fight you tooth and nail not to believe this. He will make you afraid.

He'll get you discouraged. What's going to happen? I've never been this way before. But God says, hey, I am with you.

I am your God. I chose you. I delight in blessing you.

I will uphold you by my strong right hand. And best of all, I will help you. If you're sitting near someone who's standing, just reach out and touch their arm or their shoulder right now.

Gently. Father, God bless these people. Take away fear.

Take away discouragement. Deliver me from all discouragement and fear. Deliver my friends from all discouragement and fear.

For your love is greater than our mess-ups. We are glad that you're the God of Jacob. If you were only the God of some perfect person in the Bible, we would be afraid.

But you're the God of Jacob. You say, Jacob, I've chosen you. Even though you're wrinkled and messed up and crooked, I'll make you straight.

And I'll cover your sins with my skirts. My mercy will cover your disobedience. So God, make them strong tonight.

Strong. Don't let them look around. Let them look at you.

Let them be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. For we ask all of this in Jesus' name. In Jesus' name.

And all the people said, amen. One more hand clap of praise.

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