

Responding to Gods Offer to Help

Isaiah 44

Pastor Josh Fegles

Are you Listening to God When He Says He'll Help?

Isaiah begins this passage by saying, "But now listen...this is what the LORD says". Two more times he repeats the phrase, "This is what the LORD says." You start to get the idea that no one is listening to what God is trying to say to them. It's almost as if the loud megaphone of life and its circumstances have captured the audience of His people and they aren't hearing what the LORD is saying to them. In the midst of life in a broken world, where sin has born the fruit of destruction, where it seems no thing is secure and where there is too much to be afraid of, the LORD is saying that He's here to help.

He Helps by Promising a Helper

Over and over again in scripture we hear the voice of the Lord telling His people to not be afraid because of fear. Fear assumes that someone or something is more powerful than the God in whom we trust. He says not to fear but to have faith and to trust in His goodness, but that is difficult to do when you've turned your back on the Lord! Israel found themselves in difficult times as a direct result of their sin of idolatry as they turned away from the Lord and worshipped other gods. It's no wonder they were afraid! Not only were they afraid of their enemies in Babylon, but they were afraid of further repercussions from the LORD for their sin. He responds by reminding them that He chose them, He made and formed them and that He would help them. Though they were being punished by a just God, they weren't going to be abandoned by Him. Out of this

time of fear, pain, loss, difficulty and even hopelessness, God gave a promise of relief—water on the thirsty land. He was going to enter into their 'desert experience' and bring relief, not only would He bring relief for them, but He continued by promising a future and a hope for their children and their children's children. There would come a time when a future generation would, far from the memory of the exile, claim the name of the Lord and be identified with Him, walking in blessing and in His Spirit.

He is the Only One Who's Really Able to Help

While Israel was surrounded by those who were more powerful than they and those who worshipped flashy images and idols, the LORD enters in with the pronouncement that He is the only God, the Almighty, Israel's King. How far this must have seemed from the daily reality the Israelites were living in. Everything around them pointed to the exact opposite. The LORD must be the weak one, the one unable to act or to save His people. Look at the success of the Babylonians. Their gods must be the secret to their success. It's awful how deceptive the devil can be as he spreads his lies and causes the faith of believers in tough times to waiver. He makes the world and its ways seem so put together and so wise. The LORD responds to this temptation by declaring to His people that He is the one who has been around all this time and who will never cease to be. He alone knows all that has happened, believe it or not, He knows what is going to happen in the future. He even knew ahead of time that Israel would get themselves into the current mess they were in. Nothing catches Him by surprise, which is why He again says to them, "Do not be afraid". He is a rock, He is secure. Nothing will ever shake Him because He is in total control! The false gods and idols offer no such stability. In fact they even have to be nailed down so they don't fall over! (Isaiah 41:7) While they are powerless, the LORD, however can save us from the world and from ourselves. He can and will help us in this life when we turn to Him.

Remember to Turn to Him for Help

Life is hard. There are things in life all the time that we struggle through and often times we carry the weight of life on our own shoulders. We look in the mirror for help, we look to whatever resources we have around us and when all that fails, we panic! For some reason it's not until that point that many of us remember to turn to the Lord for help. We realize that we're at the end of ourselves and we need an intervention. The Lord is saying to His people and to us to remember that He's your helper and He's truly able to help in your time of need. Remember Him first before the point of panic and let Him carry you everyday. He's literally taken care of the most difficult thing in life, sin and death, through the power of the Cross and His resurrection. There is no thing too difficult for our Almighty Jesus! Turn to Him today. Return to Him if you've left. Allow the truth of His gracious offer of help to penetrate your heart so that you begin to turn to Him for everything. There is no thing too small or insignificant for a God who loves you as much as He does.

Going Deeper

Take some time this week to think through the different areas of your life, for example your work, family, relationships and fears. Write them down and then stop and pray. Ask the LORD to show you what areas of life you are carrying on your own or that exclude Him altogether and then ask the LORD for His help in those areas. Take a look again at your list at the end of the week and review it with the Lord in prayer. Be honest with Him and be willing to ask for help again. Make this a part of your regular practice in coming to the Lord. He really wants to help so let's remember to let Him.

RW Happenings...

Wednesday, July 23rd • Jr. High Pool Party! 6-8pm

The JR Highers are going to a Pool Party at the Halvorson's! Bring your modest swimsuit, towel, change of clothes and we will provide dinner, fun and games. If you have any questions please contact Doug or Lianne Anderson 522-8801 the party is at 3140 Royce Way-Lake Oswego (No Youth Group for High School students on the 23rd)

Thursday July 24th • Pie Night! River West Church 6:30pm

We're showing the movie, *Lord, Save us from your followers*, followed by pie & a discussion with the writer/director of the movie! Childcare is not provided. Contact Mary for more information 699.2226 or mary@riverwest.org

Jr. High Summer Camp

Get your registration in! Camp dates are August 4th-8th. If you have any questions, give Pastor Josh a call at 699.2226 or josh@riverwest.com

Saturday July 26th •

Men's Pancake Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall • 7-9am

Join the men of RW for a Pancake & Sausage Breakfast with speaker Terry Burns from Western Seminary. Terry will be speaking to Men on the how to interact with each other so they can **empower** each other to become Christ-like. For information, contact the church office at 699.2226

Saturday August 2nd • All Church Blue Ribbon BBQ! Noon-4pm at River West Church

We're having a cook-off at the year's event! Sign up to show off your barbeque, culinary and/or pastry skills! Sign up by calling the office @ 699.2226. A-O Bring a side dish and P-Z bring dessert. Looking forward to seeing the whole family!

For more information on what's happening at River West Church, go to **www.riverwest.org** and click on the calendar link.