

## God: Our Refuge & Strength

Joe Slater

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear . . .”* (Psalm 46:1-2a).

God is our refuge, our place of shelter in life’s storms. Danger isn’t always physical; our adversary walks about as a roaring lion seeking to devour us. Jesus taught us to pray, *“Deliver us from the evil one”* (Matthew 6:13).

God is our strength. Our own strength will fail us, but God’s strength never will. Not just our physical strength but our moral and spiritual strength may be taxed to the breaking point by whatever trials and temptations we are facing.

God is a very present help in trouble. He is not distant from us or unconcerned about us. Even people who do not know Him are objects of His care, as Paul told the philosophers in Athens, *“He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being”* (Acts 17:27-28). That being true of people in general, how much more should we have confidence He is present with us, especially during difficult times?

Therefore we will not fear. Since God is our refuge, our strength, and a very present help in trouble, why would we fear? When Jesus’ disciples became afraid, He said, *“Oh you of little faith! Why did you doubt?”* (Matthew 14:31). Little faith is often our problem, too. We find ourselves saying with the man in Mark 9:24, *“Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”*

Your trials aren’t the same as mine, but we all encounter trials that put us to the test. Let’s remember that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. So, let us not be afraid, but confident and strong in the Lord!

## From Darkness To Light

As the church of Jesus Christ, we often become confused regarding our true mission in this world. Is it to redeem the world socially? or economically? or politically? Indirectly, the evils associated with these will be addressed and corrected as the church accomplishes its mission. However, none of these is the purpose for which Jesus established His church.

We may err in thinking that our main object is the exposure of the sin and error of mankind. Religious and moral crusades have often been conducted against drugs, drinking, prostitution, abortion, etc. Many sermons, including those of this writer, have been directed against religious errors which men have embraced. However, such crusades and sermons may proceed down the streets from pulpits without the principal purpose of the church ever being accomplished.

Jesus told His disciples, *“You are the light of the world”* (Matthew 5:14). Light and darkness are mutually incompatible. If we follow Christ, both our teaching and our example will dispel the darkness of sin and error. The light or knowledge of Christ within us will not be able to tolerate or condone the world’s darkness. Hence, we will hold up Christ by word and deed, which will in turn rebuke the moral sins and the religious delusions of men.

When we exalt Christ and His way before men, we must be ready to encounter this reaction: *“Are you saying I am lost because I do not believe in Christ? Because I have not been baptized?”* Here we must demur at becoming personal judges, referring the inquirer to Him who will judge them in the last day (John 5:22). He is our light, the light we reflect to the world. What He has said we must say, for by His word we will all be judged (John 12:48).

--Hershel Dyer (deceased) via *Old Paths*

## What Sin Is Not Like

Cuts heal, broken bones mend, and illnesses are cured. However, sin is not like a cut because it does not heal over time. Sin is not like a broken bone because it does not mend stronger than it was before. Sin is not like an illness because it cannot be cured with medicine or a bowl of chicken noodle soup. Sin is a permanent problem that leads to a permanent death, and there is nothing we can do about it in and of ourselves. However, there is a solution to the lethal and eternal consequences of sin. That solution is Jesus Christ, and the power of His blood can make us whole once again

Kevin Patterson (via Facebook)

### INSUBORDINATION = IDOLATRY!

Saul had God’s detailed orders for the complete destruction of Amalek because of its attack on Israel on her way out of Egypt. But the king blamed his people for his failure to obey the Lord precisely. He was so full of himself he couldn’t see his own motivations.

Why did Saul not obey God? He failed to see God’s word as absolute – to be obeyed to the letter. He imagined that he could obey God generally rather than specifically. Bringing home a captured king and the best of the animals would be a much more glorious end to a long campaign. His soldiers would be more satisfied; his countrymen would be impressed.

Can I see myself in Saul? Do I behave as though I don’t understand God’s command – God’s will? Do I obey God partially, because I really don’t want to do what He wants? Do I foolishly think my arrogance will not be noticed?

*“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice”* (1 Samuel 15:22).

--Norma Privitt (via *Power For Today*)