

The God Who Helps

Psalm 40

TAG Team Lesson

Week starting July 25, 2010

We have all experienced times when we've analyzed a problem until we can analyze it no more, done all we can do and possess no more resources. To struggle alone any longer becomes intolerable. In these moments we call out, "God help me!" – the most common prayer in the world and the most underrated. When we ask God to help us, it is like asking a sensitive, loving friend for relief, but this friend possesses infinite foresight and ability.

When we help someone, we lift a load or provide a remedy. In what areas do you sometimes feel overwhelmed and wish for this kind of help? List the dilemmas you've faced during this last year. Which problems still linger despite all your efforts to resolve them?

Sometimes even when we plead for God's help, he doesn't come. In Psalm 40 we find David flailing. He speaks with honesty about his anger and helplessness. He seeks a larger perspective. Then he waits for God to help at the proper time.

Read Psalm 40

1. What past, present and future attitudes and situations does the psalmist refer to?

2. Look again at verses 1-4. Picture yourself falling into a deep pit with slimy walls. How would you feel, and what would you do?

3. Why do you think he uses the analogies of mud and mire, then a rock and a firm place to describe some of life's situations?

4. What portion of verse 5 particularly stands out to you, and why?

5. Righteousness (or goodness) is a key theme in verses 6-10. Why might sacrifices and offerings be something God doesn't want?

6. Read Hebrews 10:3-7, 10. What new meanings does this passage add to David's psalm?

7. Return to Psalm 40. What do verses 6-10 reveal about David's relationship with God?

8. What is David saying about true righteousness (vv. 6, 8-10, 12)?

9. Compare the innumerable things in verse 12 and the innumerable things in verse 5. What wisdom can you glean from the comparison?

10. What six things does David pray for in verses 13-16?

11. David realized he needed God's help even to desire to do the right thing (vv. 10, 12). Consider your strengths and weaknesses and ways you would like to be a better person. Where would you like God's help?

12. Verse 17 is a summary of the main themes in this psalm. Survey the chapter to find a phrase that means the most to you today. What would you like to do about it? (This could be anything from asking God for help in some situation to sharing something you've learned with a friend.)
