

Bethel

Pulpit

Divine Help

Sermon Number 485

**Sermon preached at Bethel Chapel, Luton,
by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom,
on Lord's day morning, 21st May, 2017**

Text: *"Thy God helpeth thee" (1 Chronicles 12. 18).*

What a wonderful word of comfort this must have been to David in his distress, and what a wonderful word it would be to some of us here this morning if this word were to be spoken to us: "Thy God helpeth thee." Beloved friends, it is a very pleasant thing if people speak a word like this to us personally. I remember once on a greeting I received it had these words: "Thy God helpeth thee," and what an encouragement that was. It is a good thing if we can speak words of help and kindness and encouragement to one another. But O the difference if this word were to come to any of us from the Lord Himself with sweet assurance this morning: "Thy God helpeth thee." It did with David, because we are told that Amasai spoke it as the Spirit came upon him.

That is what we desire concerning the preaching – that it might be a suitable text, a suitable word, a suitable exposition – but it is this: if the Spirit of the Lord comes upon us, and then you see the difference – the authority, the help, the confidence, if this word should come with power to any of us this morning, especially in the circumstances. We think of the deep sorrow in which we meet, and the solemnity that rests on our gathering, and our loving sympathy for our dear friends [the death of a baby]. O may this be a word of consolation to them, and may it be a word of consolation to us. There is a beautiful scripture that says, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ." Well, what a theme! And we know there is consolation in Christ. In another place we read this: that the consolations of God are not small, and we believe that "It is the Lord, who can sustain beneath the heaviest load."

"Thy God helpeth thee." Now this was not the first time that David had ever heard of help, and it was not the first time he had ever experienced it. If you read through the Psalms, we have this coming in over and over again: "I have laid help upon One that is mighty"; "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth"; "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth." You can go on time and time again, when David was either

seeking help or receiving help. And it is not just the Book of the Psalms, but the whole of David's life. Now David was a strong man, naturally and spiritually, and as ruler of his kingdom, but he was often brought to feel his weakness before his God, his dependence on his God, and the need of divine help from his God.

You and I will be brought there. Whatever stage of religion we are at – at the beginning, or towards the end, or how much we know, how little we know, whether we are seeking or whether we are finding – it will be this as much as anything else: feeling our need of God's help – providential things, spiritual things – seeking God's help, finding God's help. It will be a wonderful mercy if you and I and those we love and those in trouble prove this word: "Thy God helpeth thee."

Now the place where this was spoken was Ziklag. We are told at the beginning of the chapter, "These are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul." We have three groups one after another who came to David in Ziklag. Now what is it? What was it to David? It was *the place of sorrow*. That is where this word was spoken, and that is where it will still be spoken in these gospel days – in the place of sorrow.

Let me just remind you. David had been tormented by Saul for so long, he thought the only thing was to escape to the Philistines and give himself up as a servant to the king of the Philistines. In that, though he was tried and tempted, he did not act rightly or wisely, and it brought him into trouble. So in a sense, he had brought it upon himself. He had come into this trouble through his own failure and sin. That is a difficulty with you and me, if there are difficulties and problems and sad things, but we realise we have brought them on ourselves, that we are responsible. It makes it more difficult to pray, when you feel you do not deserve the help, you do not deserve the answer.

Well, David proved to be a faithful servant to the ungodly king of the Philistines, and he treated him well and gave him this little town of Ziklag for his own possession, for his family and his few followers. Then there came that dreadful time in David's life. The Philistines were going into battle against the Israelites, and David was there as a mighty man, a mighty captain among the Philistines. How could he escape? He could not

fight against the Lord's chosen people. One day he was going to be their king. Actually, it was only a few days later.

Sometimes God's purposes develop fast, unfolding every hour, every minute, every moment. So it was with David. I do not think David knew how to escape. "Thy God helpeth thee." He could not do anything; but he did not need to do anything; the Lord did it all for him. The lords of the Philistines objected to David going to battle with them. How do we know he will not turn a traitor? We know he is an Israelite at heart. How can we trust him? Get rid of him.

So David was happy. God had helped him. He made his way to Ziklag, and when he came to Ziklag, he came to almost the saddest moment in his life. I read it to you this morning in those few verses in 1 Samuel 30. When he got there, the place was destroyed with fire – the place of sorrow. His wives had gone; his children had gone; everything was gone. It is no wonder we read that "David was greatly distressed." That is Ziklag. That is the place where this was spoken, this place where "David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him." Then we have that beautiful word: "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." That was at Ziklag. That was because the Lord helped him. That was the only reason he could encourage himself. But what ground was there for help?

And then if we could have read through the chapter, he did not know what had happened. He did not know who had done this. He did not know where they had gone. He did not know whether his family were alive. And the Lord led him on. "Thy God helpeth thee." How would he know what to do, where to go? And he found a little Egyptian boy dying by the wayside, and very kindly in the midst of all his trouble he gave that little boy help, and he recovered, and he was able to tell them everything. The Amalekites had done it. He was able to tell them which way they had gone, and David was able to pursue after them and find them completely unprepared. We read that wonderful word: "And David recovered all." Now that is it.

"Thy God helpeth thee." Just at what stage at Ziklag, amidst all these proceedings, Amasai came with this wonderful word of kindness, this wonderful word of encouragement, we do not know, but it was at Ziklag this was spoken. Beloved friends, you will have your Ziklags in greater or less measure – things that distress you, things that perhaps suddenly have come

upon you, things that cause you sorrow, things you do not know how to deal with, things you do not know where to go or what to do. And then to have this word spoken!

Well, Amasai has been long dead, but the Lord liveth, and the gospel still lives, and the gospel still proclaims this to those who come to that place, Ziklag, in their soul's experience: "Thy God helpeth thee." Now are some of you there this morning? Have you got a Ziklag in your life? This is the place where the Lord appears, where the Lord works. He knows; He understands; He cares; He is almighty; He is all-wise; He is full of compassion; and He knows just how to help you, and not only to help you, but to help you along, and not only to help you along, but to help you through.

"Thy God helpeth thee." Now what a word this is! Divine help for those in need, those who feel their sorrow, those who feel their helplessness. "Thy God helpeth thee." Really, just pondering this point, it is not just David. Noah, and all those terrible things concerning the flood. "Thy God helpeth thee." Moses, the Red Sea, destruction. "Thy God helpeth thee." You can go right through the Old Testament, and then you come to the New Testament, and you think of that poor woman pressing through the crowd. "Thy God helpeth thee." And you think of Jairus. "Thy God helpeth thee." It is personal. It is each one. It is one by one, as they come into it, not before. But the Lord is never too late. The poor woman who said, "Lord, help me." "Thy God helpeth thee." And poor Bartimaeus, and that leper. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

"Thy God helpeth thee." Well, thinking of this point, the Lord helping His people, David himself refers to God as his Helper. "God is mine Helper." This help never fails. It never failed David. It never failed the Old Testament saints. But it never failed those in the New Testament, and it will never fail you. It is unfailing help.

"Thy God helpeth thee." Now it was not the first time that David had sought this help. You can think of the lion and the bear when he was a shepherd boy. You can think of Goliath. You can think of all those deliverances from Saul. And Amasai knew it. He had seen it. He had witnessed it. But it was this: because God had helped David so wondrously in the past, apart from this divine revelation, Amasai knew that the Lord

would not fail to help him now. There is a lot of good divinity in that word of John Newton's:

“He who has helped me hitherto
Will help me all my journey through.”

Well, many of you here this morning can look back over your little lives – some longer, some shorter. You can go to that spot and place, that place spiritually when the Lord first granted you a little help, a little hope, a deliverance; and that trouble, and how He appeared and delivered you; and that sadness, perhaps that bereavement, and He brought you through; and so you might go on. You can look back, and you have your spots and your places, those Ebenezers: “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” But what about today and tomorrow, and this coming week, and the rest of the year, and the unknown way, and those things you fear, and that mountain before you, and those things you have in your diary?

“Thy God helpeth thee.” I do like this word *helpeth*. It is like a kind of ever-flowing river. It keeps on coming. It does not dry up. It does not fail. It was here yesterday. It is there tomorrow. It is promised help.

“Thy God helpeth thee.” And then we think, it is *completely undeserved help*. We do not deserve it. We cannot merit it. “Thy God helpeth thee,” despite all thy sins and all thy faults and all thy failings. “Thy God helpeth thee.” He still helpeth thee.

And then this: “Thy God helpeth thee” because *He has promised it*. There are many places. We think of that word: “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help.” We think of a word like this: “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee.” Now He puts a *yea* on it. The Lord does not need to confirm His own word with a *yea*, but He does. *Yea*. He says, “*Yea*, I will help thee.” And one way He will help thee: “I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.”

“Thy God helpeth thee.” Now the Lord helps His people in so many ways, and the most important way in which the Lord helps us is *in the way of our soul's salvation*. It is not just a little helping hand, a little assistance, but that help laid on One that is mighty. It all flows from Calvary. It is all bound up with the cross of Christ. It all comes from His finished work, His righteousness and blood. I believe every sinner prepared for heaven, born

again of the Spirit, is brought to feel his own helplessness. Are you there this morning, some of you? You cannot help yourself in this sense – you cannot save yourself; you cannot forgive your own sins; you cannot make yourself ready; you cannot gain God’s favour; you cannot even repent; you cannot believe. You are helpless. Where is your help going to come from? “My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.”

It is as if this word is very particular: “Thy God helpeth *thee*.” Well, that wicked Saul even went to a witch, but that did not help him. The Philistines had all kinds of gods, but they could not help them in this battle. They were completely overthrown, and David became king. “Thy God helpeth thee.” There is discriminating grace here. “Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.”

“Thy God helpeth thee.” That is what you want personally, savingly, when you are taught your helplessness, for the Lord to arise for your help in the way of your salvation. Again and again recently I have thought that hymn of John Berridge’s is one of the most blessed hymns in the hymnbook:

“To Christ for help I fly,
The Friend of sinners lost,
A refuge sweet, and sure, and nigh,
And there is all my trust.”

“Thy God helpeth thee,” in that way of salvation, in giving you a good hope through grace, in blessing you, in preparing you. This is what we all need personally and savingly. Whatever else we need or do not need, we need Him to be our God. David begins one of his Psalms, “O God, Thou art my God.” He tried it; he proved it. “Thy God helpeth thee,” and not just David, but all the Lord’s people. It is “for Jesus’ sake.” It is through the merits of Jesus alone. If you seek this help, spiritually or in other ways, you must seek it in a way of humble confession, self-abasement, your own helplessness, no plea in yourself, but what the Lord Jesus is and what He has done, His name, His all-prevailing intercession. For,

“This is the name” – the name of the Lord Jesus –
“the Father loves
To hear His children plead;
And all such pleading He approves,
And blesses them indeed.”

“Thy God helpeth thee.” But then you have a *pilgrimage* to walk out. “Thy God helpeth thee.” He did at first, and He will continue to help thee. He will “send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.” It is that strength you need for your pilgrimage on the way to heaven. “Thy God hath commanded thy strength.” That is how “thy God helpeth thee.” He helps you by *supplying all your needs* – all of them – in grace and in providence. “Jehovah-Jireh,” the Lord will provide. “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

“Thy God helpeth thee,” upholding you, *answering your prayers*. O the help that the Lord gives in answering prayers! “Thy God helpeth thee.” So there is this great point here, the wonderful privilege of asking the Lord to help, whatever be your state or condition, and despite your failure, and though you have brought your trouble upon yourself, that privilege on mercy’s ground, going to the throne of grace and begging that the Lord will help you. There are the great things you have, or perhaps some little things you have, when you get home, tomorrow, but you have the privilege of going to the Lord, to the throne of grace, and praying for His help, and how pleased the Lord is to answer. But mind you, we must never dictate to the Lord. The Lord is sovereign and He answers in His own way and His own time, but it is always what is best for you and best for me.

“Thy God helpeth thee.” Then just a few thoughts: “*Thy God*” – the dear Saviour of sinners, the One who died on the cross, the One who is true, almighty God, the One who saves His people from their sins. “Thy God” – Thy Saviour – “helpeth thee.” “Thy God” – the One who has loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore with lovingkindness has drawn you, the One who will never fail you, never forsake you. “Thy God helpeth thee.” “Thy God” – a great and glorious High Priest who sympathises, who prays for you, who intercedes, who is touched with the feeling of your infirmities. “Thy God” – the sinner’s Advocate with God.” O that blessed Advocate at the Father’s right hand! “Thy God” – thy Advocate – “helpeth thee.”

“Thy God” – Jehovah Jireh, the One who appeared for Abraham, the One who has promised to help, the Lord who *will* provide. “Thy God helpeth thee.” But it is “thy God” who understands, and it is “thy God” who knows and cares, and it is “thy God” who knows what to do, “thy God” who is blessed with such wisdom. But He is “thy God” who is blessed with divine, almighty power. The most impossible thing is easy with Him. To

deliver – O the deliverances that David knew, and the deliverance that was at hand, because this word was not spoken by Amasai by mistake or carelessly. In a few days Saul was dead and David was on the throne, every ancient promise fulfilled, the end of the thing better than the beginning. What a word of comfort this is for Zion’s mourners! “Thy God helpeth thee.” It means now, then, in the unknown way. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

“Thy God helpeth thee.” Well, may this word be a help to our congregation at this time of sadness, and especially to our dear friends in their deep sorrow.

“Thy God helpeth thee.”

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In all my troubles and distress,
The Lord my soul does own;
Jehovah does my griefs redress,
And make His mercy known.

He helps me on Him to rely;
He is my strength and tower;
'Tis He that hears me when I cry,
And manifests His power.

In every storm, in every sea,
My Jesus makes a way;
His light shall make the darkness flee,
And turn the shade to day.

'Tis He in trouble bears me up,
And leads me safely through;
My Jesus does maintain my cup,
And daily strength renew.

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