

Help From Wisdom

Scripture: Proverbs 16: 20-30

Date: January 31, 2021

TRIALS

LIMPING

When I was learning to swim at local pool I took lessons and one lesson was to jump in the deep end with our clothes on to simulate falling into deep water. However, I immediately began to sink as the weight of my soaked clothes dragged me down. I felt like I was going to drown.

Many in our world are also fighting this drowning feeling because you don't need water to feel weighed down. A full year of Covid 19 restrictions has weighed many people down with concerns for their physical health towards an unknown disease. There have also been burdens on finances, on social engagements and on our mental well being as the guidelines and protocols have diminished our expectations and capabilities.

But truthfully the weights in our lives are not new under Covid 19 worldview. There were many concerns about our financial uncertainty in our current world climate. There were many who were uncertain on an emotional and psychological level of who they were and how they could engage in the world in which they lived. There were many relationships – marriage, friendships etc. that were under immense stress and strain.

Proverbs 16 text speaks of the hardships in this broken world. The words used from verses 25 to 30 that describe this. They speak of scoundrels, perverse persons, violent persons who are creating conflict, gossip, enticement, fire and pain. There is evil and there is death.

ALL of this contributes to the fear / anxiety we face with the pain and peril in this world. There are parts of our world that are hard and feel hopeless and there doesn't seem to be any answers on how to move past these issues or get out from under them.

We need help

LOOKING

In the pool – I knew pretty quickly that I was in trouble. I was treading water frantically and gasping for air. I turned to look to the lifeguard for help.

The Hebrew word for help is *eizer*. It's focus is on aiding and serving others to what is needed. It provides a strength and power to accomplish what is needed. What is recognized by the Hebrew people – Psalms and Proverbs – is that their life circumstances are hard and that they can't resolve the circumstances in their lives.

What is sought by the Hebrew people – Psalms and Proverbs - is for a source of strength and aid – greater than themselves. They are seeking a power and presence and provision to help them.

People ARE looking in this world for answers – for help. We turn to science and technology. We turn to politicians for leadership and Youtube for guidance. We see the posts on social media and we read the stories on the news and we listen to the conversations from our friends. But we find the help we get - perhaps it's because we're looking in the wrong places. But what if the problem is bigger than our – or our friends - ability to give us help.

There's a line from Harry Potter books - *help will always be given at Hogwarts to those who ask for it*. In those movie contexts - the help is ALWAYS just what you need and the help is ALWAYS just when you need it. But that truism from a fictional novel is also true in the biblical narrative. Psalm 121 asks where help can be found and it asks who can give us that help.

TRUST

LEANING INTO GOD

The lifeguard threw me some help in the form of a ring buoy. I was so desperate at this point that I grabbed it immediately because I knew it was going to help. But because of the skill and wisdom of the lifeguard – it was designed to help.

Proverbs 16: 20 declares that those who trust in the Lord are blessed. Psalm 121 speaks of the greatness of the God that we call to help from. Psalm 46: 1, Psalm 5: 2, Proverbs 3: 5 and Matthew 11: 28 all speak of the trustworthiness of God and God's willingness to respond.

There need to be a leaning INTO God when we are overwhelmed and when we are under able. A leaning into when you're tired – exhausted – done in and there's nothing left. One lean INTO the truths you know - even when nothing makes sense. You lean into – with faith sometimes – with what you do know to be true and you grab onto what you see will help.

LEANING ONTO GOD

The lifeguard helped guide me to the side of the pool - hanging on for dear life to the ring buoy. I was hanging on – knowing that the ring buoy was my rescue

Proverbs 16: 20 speaks of heeding to wisdom because being rescued isn't the end – it's the start. Proverbs 3: 6 and Matthew 11: 30 both speak of the rescue becoming a calling to walk further with God.

The strength that appears in our lives IS something to trust. It's not something that we use to get us out of trouble but something that we use to keep us moving / living forward. Not out of desperation - but out of dependence.

TRYING

LIVING WITH HELP

Proverbs 16 also speaks encouragement to continue trusting God and to discover the blessing from God. Vs. 21-24 speak of the blessing of prudence which is an understanding of life, a wisdom for life and a fountain of full life. The proverbs declare that God's light guides and guard our lives and that prudence is found in living out this wisdom. A submission and dependence on him - not just when we are in trouble or in testing but in all facets of life.

When we see the wisdom of help in our lives – we would be wise to accept it. I could have refused the ring buoy as an aid. I could have wanted to pass the lesson without help but without help there was a possibility of drowning. There are times in life when our body aches and we need help and we need to live with that help – short term or long term.

This past week Canada focussed its energy on mental health and creating conversations so that people can get help. However, such issues – such concerns – are more than just one day of a year but are ongoing requirements of help needed. But also of help offered

LIVING TO HELP

Proverbs 16 text also indicates the direction on how we can show that blessing to others. It reminds us that gracious words teach instruction and that hearts of wisdom teach instruction. Such wisdom and instruction are sweet to the soul and they provide a grace that heals our body, that heals our hearts and that heals our heads

Now I'm not a lifeguard so I'm not capable of helping those in a swimming pool if they are struggling to swim. But in a metaphorical way - each of us CAN help others but offering life support as able. We are called not just to keep the help to ourselves but to help others as we are able and opportunity arises.

So that we can live in the Epiphany light of God helping us to walk in the path of faith and so that we can live in the Proverb wisdom of God helping us walk in the path of life

AMEN