

SUNDAY ARTICLE

ST DAVID'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ♦ 13 OCTOBER 2019



God Will Daily Bear You Up

Scott Hubbard

Our worst days have a way of making the future feel impossible.

Perhaps we wake up to a depression that makes our chest cave in. Or a relationship on the verge of collapse. Or pain in our bones that makes the smallest focus a feat. The thought of enduring for a lifetime, or even another week, can send us searching for an escape.

We do not, however, need to know on our worst days how God will sustain us for a lifetime. We do not need to know even how he will sustain us tomorrow. We need to know, even with a mustard seed of faith, that he will get us through today.

We might think that God, creator of continents and stars, would be too big to notice our days. Don't a thousand years pass before him like a watch in the night (Psalm 90:4)? Yes. But God's care for his world is as intricate as it is grand. He keeps inventory of every hair (Matthew 10:30). He catches every sigh (Psalm 139:4). He slows down to walk through every 24 hours with his children.

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And so, he not only gives us promises that cover the span of our lives, but also a precious few that meet us on our worst days, and remind us what he will do for us today.

He will daily bear you up.

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation.” (Psalm 68:19)

Our salvation does not rest merely somewhere in the past, at that first moment of repentance and faith. God *did* save us then. But as long as we are in this world, we need daily saving. “Blessed be the Lord, who *daily bears us up*.”

For David, Israel's exodus from Egypt (Psalm 68:4-10) and conquest of Canaan (Psalm 68:11-18) write in big letters the story God writes every day, though it often goes unnoticed. Every day, he guards orphans and protects widows (Psalm 68:5). He settles the solitary in a home and leads prisoners to freedom (Psalm 68:6). He meets the needy in their trouble and gently bears them up (Psalm 68:10).

If the exodus and conquest wrote God's care for his people in big letters, then the cross of Jesus writes it in letters bigger still (Romans 8:32). If Christ has carried our sin to the grave, will he not also carry us through today? If God has raised Jesus from the dead, will he not also raise our heads above today's high waters?

Our sorrows can sometimes make today feel unbearable. And that is the point of this promise: when we meet the unbearable, God himself will bear us. Even to old age, even to grey hairs, even when our legs can no longer bear our bodies (Isaiah 46:4).

He will daily show you mercy.

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Some comforters, for all their good intentions, eventually withdraw when they find our sorrows to be deeper and more complex than they imagined. Even the best of friends sometimes grasps for sympathy. But God's compassions never fail. His steadfast love never ceases. His mercies “are new *every morning*.”

When I hear this promise, I naturally imagine a scene of calm and peace – the sun rising over a mountain lake, birds chirping in the background. But Jeremiah wrote these words as the sun rose over a different scene: men cut down in the streets (Lamentations 1:20), infants dead on their mother's bosoms (Lamentations 2:12), priests slain in the temple (Lamentations 2:20). The destruction was enough to make him vomit (Lamentations 2:11).

How could Jeremiah look on such devastation and then speak of God's new mercies? Because the wreckage of our lives is never the final word about God's heart toward those who hope in him. Even when God disciplines us for sin, mercy, not wrath, is the banner that trails behind each morning's sun. Jeremiah knew it because God declared his mercy at Sinai (Exodus 34:6-7; Lamentations 3:21). We know it because Jesus demonstrated God's mercy at Calvary (Romans 5:8).

Our dreams falter and fail; God does not. Our hearts grow weak; his steadfast love is from everlasting to everlasting. Our hopes rise and fall; God's mercies come at their appointed time every morning – and they will carry us through today.

He will daily make you new.

“We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.” (2 Corinthians 4:16)

Many of us would be content simply to know that God will get us through our worst days – that we will come to the end of them still sane, still trusting in Christ. But God does not want us to stop there. He also wants us to know that no day endured in faith will be wasted. Even on our most miserable days, when our outer self is wasting away, God is on his potter's wheel, shaping us, forming us. “Our inner self is being renewed *day by day*.”

As with the new mercies Jeremiah proclaimed, our inner renewal is largely hidden from us in the moment. From the outside, we may feel, like Paul,

“afflicted in every way, ...perplexed, ...persecuted, ...struck down” (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). We are left looking like a city under siege.

But even as body and mind are battered, God is at work on the inside, building something that will last forever. “This light momentary affliction,” which wreaks such havoc on our outer self, does something quite different to our inner self. As we keep our eyes on things unseen (2 Corinthians 4:18), our afflictions become the furnace where God renews us and prepares “for us an eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

We sometimes catch glimpses of the new self that God is fashioning

through our trials. But the great unveiling lies on the other side of this life. The saints of God walk into the Jordan furrowed and torn; they arise on the other side new, never to die again. Until that great day, God will be fitting us for our eternal home. He will daily make us new.

Morning and Night

How shall we respond to such unflagging love, such daily mercy? We can take our stand with the psalmist, and say, “It is good...to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night” (Psalm 92:1-2). Every morning, look ahead and remember: *God will show me steadfast love today*. And every evening, look back and declare his faithfulness.

If you are in Christ, God will bear you up today. He will show you mercy. He will make you new. And when tomorrow comes, he will do it all again.

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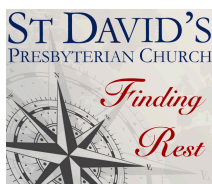


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