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### Sunday, May 02, 2010

Sermon Texts: Jeremiah 31: 10-13  
Luke 2: 25-35  
Hebrews 2: 10-18

Sermon Title: "Help Yourself!"  
Sermon Topic: Helping Ourselves With God's Helpful Arm  
Sermon Purpose: To teach people they're not to lie back, bemoaning their plight; but rather to get up, get going, and do something about it - with the reassurance that God is always there to help, when needed.

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*Sermon Prayer: Heavenly Father, as we seek to do your Will guide us in our words and deeds. Now, we pray, guide our hearts and minds as we hear your Word and make it a part of our life. Amen.*

"How can I talk to someone about my problems? No one else knows the pain, the torment, or the trouble I'm in."

How many times have we thought those same thoughts, or heard them expressed by someone we know? How many times have we heard the family members of alcoholics, of addicts, of the mentally or physically challenged, the families of cancer victims, heart patients, and others; sitting in the pools of their own tears, "crying in their beer" about the agony they're going through?

And yet, how many times will they **not** seek the help of the physician, or of agencies established to help, or of someone who has gone through it, themselves? How many times have they **not** gone to the Lord with their problems?

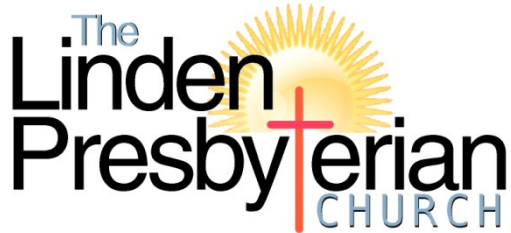
How long will we be willing to sit and whine about what we're going through, and how long will we be unwilling to seek help?

Now, I realize these questions may be hitting all of us right between the eyes. They did the same to me, when I first read these passages. But, do you know something? I'm not here to make everything so sweet and syrupy that you develop cavities in your teeth because you've attended worship. Teaching the love of Christ and the grace of God is one thing - only one facet of my task as your pastor, and I relish every minute of it. But, I have also been called to the ministry of teaching the responsibilities and duties that **accompany** the acceptance of that love and grace.

If Christ had taught only forbearance and self-sacrifice, the disciples would have stayed in Judea and the ministry of the Gospel would have been sealed in their best intentions! "**Sure** we **want** to tell everyone, but **Jesus** didn't, so why should **we**?"

In **all** the gospels, Jesus told His disciples to tell **everyone** - and He showed them righteous indignation when people were misusing the house of God, or lying on their backs, complaining about their problems while not doing anything about them; not trying to help themselves.





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### A Very Present Help

Yes, the God who gives us guidance, protection, healing, understanding, and salvation through His only Son: that heavenly Father was, is, and ever shall be with us.

In Jeremiah, we're told that the Father God is like a shepherd keeping watch over us, like those of the Christmas story. He leads us to freedom, gives us life, comforts us, and gives us a reason to be joyous in our celebrations.

Luke tells us of God, the Son, being recognized as the one who came to save the world; a promise kept - "this child is set for the fall of many in Israel."

The lesson from the epistle tells us that all suffering is for the salvation of mortals. Jesus took upon Himself a mortal nature; flesh, blood, and suffering; that He might be able to know the conditions of mankind and insure their salvation: a help in any situation. He knows all our desires, our pains, our joys, emotions, illnesses, and health. He **knows**.

The last verse of our epistle lesson says, "For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted."

When you start thinking that no one else knows your problems, when you start thinking that it's all falling on your shoulders; pray!

People! Don't lie on your backs bemoaning your problems. Let's all get on our feet, face our problems, pray, and work them out: all the time remembering, "Our Lord **is** a very present help." So, help yourself to all He is offering!

### Let us pray:

O God, Who is, and was, and is to come; before whose face the generations rise and pass away: Age after age, the living seek you and find that there is no end to your faithfulness. Our fore bearers, in their pilgrimage, walked by your guidance, and rested in your compassion. Still be to their children the cloud by day and the fire by night. Where but in you do we have a comfort from the storm, or a shadow from the heat of life? In our manifold temptations, you alone know and are ever near; in sorrow, your pity revives the fainting soul; in our prosperity and ease, it is Your Spirit alone that keeps us humble. You are the sole Source of peace and righteousness. Take the veil from every heart, and join us in one communion with your prophets and saints, who have trusted in you and were not ashamed. Not of our worthiness, but of your tender mercy, hear our prayer; for the sake of Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

