

Don't Miss God in a Crisis



The relationship between grace and faith

What is the relationship between God's grace and our faith? Do you understand the importance of knowing this in a time of need or crisis? The book of Hebrews tells us we can come boldly to the throne of grace to receive this help. God's will is what has already been provided by His grace and our positive response to receive is faith. When we pray, our confidence in God's goodness and provision is what allows His grace to flow. This is the relationship between grace and faith.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Don't miss God in the midst of a crisis

There's a story of a man in a crisis, who by faith, trusts God to deliver him. I'm going to recount the story here.

The Drowning Man (source unknown)

It begins with this man sitting on top of his roof during a flood. He prays to God for help. Soon a man in a rowboat comes by and shouts to the man on the roof, "jump in, I can save you!"



The stranded man shouted back, "No, it's ok, I'm praying to God and he is going to save me."

So the rowboat went on.



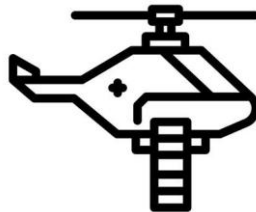
Then a motorboat came by. The fellow in the motorboat shouted, "Jump in, I can save you!" To this, the stranded man said, "No thanks, I'm praying to God and he is going to save me. I have faith."

So the motorboat went on.



Then a helicopter came by and the pilot shouted down, "Grab this rope and I can lift you to safety!" To this the stranded man again replied, "No thanks, I'm praying to God and he is going to save me. I have faith."

So the helicopter reluctantly flew away.



Soon the water rose above the rooftop and the man drowned. He went to Heaven.



He finally got his chance to discuss this situation with God, at which point he exclaimed, “I had faith in you but you didn’t save me, you let me drown. I don’t understand why!” To this God replied, “I sent you a rowboat and a motorboat and a helicopter, what more did you expect?”

I’ve heard this story many times in churches and even heard lay people use this story to justify the crisis situations they are in and God’s inability or decision NOT to save them. The most obvious lesson shared through this story is a good one. God uses people to accomplish his will in our lives. Amen.

Unfortunately, people take that and twist it or dilute this important truth. So let’s start there, and see how much more we can find in the story of the “praying man” that reveals our relationship with God.

This is the story of the relationship between grace and faith.

God does use people and natural situations as His primary source to answer our prayers and fulfill His purposes on the earth. He created us, and everything in the world for His good pleasure and desire. This does not mean God is limited by His creation, but rather He uses it because it is His. The book of Revelation shows us this truth.

Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

So then, how is God, who uses this natural world as His source for blessing, unrestricted by its fallen state; even the world’s enmity and apathy toward His purposes and plans? Scripture tells us in the book of Philippians that God supplies all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Sometimes when reading the Bible, we tend to pass over words we don’t know, not caring whether we completely understand the ideas behind what we are reading. We often gloss over statements interpreting them only figuratively and in doing so, completely miss what is really be said.

So let’s do a quick “dictionary” look into this profound statement God shares with us in His Word. He wants us to know what He is saying to us; that is why He gave us His Word. Otherwise, we can miss the beautiful simplicity of His gift of grace (God’s provision for man’s every need; spirit, soul, and body).

Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
(underline mine)

Riches: Strong's Concordance Greek: ploutos:

Definition: riches, wealth, abundance, materially or spiritually.

Glory: Strong's Concordance Greek: doxa:

Definition: honor, renown; glory, an especially divine quality, the unspoken manifestation of God, splendor.

To expand on this as noted in Vines Concise Dictionary: It is used (a) of the nature and acts of God in self-manifestation, ie. What He essentially is and does, as exhibited in whatever way He reveals Himself in these respects, and particularly in the person of Christ, in whom essentially His "glory" has ever shone forth and ever will do.

What we see in this one verse is that God will supply all our spiritual or material needs by means of His abundance and wealth which is provided through Jesus (my paraphrase). He does this by grace (God's provision for man's every need) through our faith in Jesus.

Hebrews 4:6 Let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we might obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

God's super on our natural can take us further than than we could ever go on our own and is why we can be sure we can always receive for our every need. Amen.

Hebrews 4:6 Let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we might obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

So the end of the story is, the water rose above the rooftop and the man drowned. When he got to Heaven, he asked God why he didn't rescue him. This man's perception was clouded by his expectations. He was expecting something

more like an angel than a rowboat. He didn't understand that God works things in the natural on our behalf. Even though he did have faith in God's ability to rescue him, he limited his experience of God's presence and intervention to what *he considered* miraculous or supernatural. God did not wake up that morning seeing the crisis that this stranded guy was in, and say, "oh man, I didn't see that coming, what should I do?" Or even, "I hope there is a boat around here I can use to save him!" God knows where you've been; he knows where you're going, and even what's coming at you. Hallelujah!

Nothing we experience is a surprise to God or beyond His ability to intervene. He's already made provision for our every need before we even know we need it. This man limited God, and caused something that was not God's will to come to pass. He set parameters for how he would accept God's help. So again, while God does flow through people and circumstances, nothing can alter His will from even overriding natural circumstance except when we limit Him by our own expectations or lack of faith.

Faith is our positive response to what we know God has already provided for us by His grace. He does want our cooperation, which is birthed out of our confidence in His ability and willingness to provide. When God appeared in the burning bush to Moses, He did not speak to him right away. Moses saw the burning bush, and as he looked, he noticed it was not being consumed by the fire. This got his attention, and he came closer to see. It was only after he had done so, that God spoke to him. Moses could have

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ignored it or just not have valued the significance of it, and missed God's presence.

To us, reading back on this incident, it's easy to see the significance of the bush burning without being destroyed but if Moses had only been looking for the miraculous, he may not have even taken the

time to see the burning bush in the first place. However, scripture tells us that it was by faith that Moses chose not to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Hebrews 11:24) esteeming the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures of Egypt, having respect for the recompense of reward. Then in Hebrews 11:27 it says of Moses, "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, seeing him who is invisible." It was when he came to Horeb, the Mountain of God, that he saw the burning bush (Exodus 3:1). It is evident from these scriptures that Moses stayed in relationship with God and anticipated God's presence in His life. We must consider how many times we have missed the suggestion of God's presence in our circumstances. We should be expecting to "see" and "hear" it clearly even in the natural! It could come as a rowboat, a person at the grocery store, or a scripture verse.

The stranded man tells us something about us as believers. Although he did believe in God's promise of protection, he missed the obvious help he needed because of his expectations of how God would intervene on his behalf.

I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have passed up a lifeboat or a helicopter to save myself from drowning but would I have seen my deliverance as coming from God or recognized his supernatural presence involved as the person in the boat drove up to help me? Would you? I can think of many times I've asked for HELP! Thinking I knew exactly how my help should come. I prayed many prayers and sat back waiting patiently for the answer I was expecting. Limiting God's ability each time and not seeing the results I wanted...even though I am sure that God answered.

You might argue your faith is so strong, why couldn't you expect God to send an angel? God does the miraculous! He does. And at times He will supersede the natural and perform a miracle. However, we don't determine or dictate God's response. We can expect it by knowing His Word, what He has promised. Therefore His help will always be good, deliver us out of, and recompense us; never take away, withhold, or deny. And that is salvation.

Salvation, from the originally used word in the Greek (soteria) means, welfare, prosperity, deliverance, preservation, save, safety, and health. Faith is simply our trust in Him for these things and confidence in His constant goodness toward us.

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Your faith doesn't control God. Your faith determines your ability to receive what He already wants to do for you, and even the degree you may experience His provision. God uses people and natural resources to accomplish his divine purposes. Who's to say the boat didn't get to you at exactly the

right moment? The Holy Spirit may speak to you that morning and tell you to leave before the storm hits. God's MO (method of operation) is in His hands, but He will always speak to us, and answer our prayer of faith according to His word.

But if we're always looking for what we qualify as help or "an answer", we'll most likely miss it. Again, so many times I can remember praying for deliverance, solutions, or help but in the back of my mind I'm really thinking I want this, I need that to happen, I have to have an answer by tomorrow, please God, help! I'm sure I've missed many of God's interventions and answers because of it. Too often we want "our solutions" and "mana from Heaven" when we come to God. I can picture myself on top of the roof, waterlogged, exhausted from struggling to get as high up on the roof as possible, and seeing a helicopter with a rope dangling down for rescue. And I'm saying, "God, you've got to be kidding me, you want me, really, after all I've been through to just get up on this roof, to climb up that rope while the pilot flies me over the rising water? I've prayed, and believed you would save me, this is too much effort! This can't be you.

God knows better than we do how to help us. The type of relationship God wants with us is a dependent one. He wants our trust, and complete dependence to be on Him. How do we do that? We submit to Him in humility. So who is a humble person? **1 Peter 5:5-7** says, ...for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Do you want supernatural help today? Humble yourself by asking for it, with no preconceptions or expectation of how the Lord will accomplish it for you. Cast your care on Him and be ready to receive! Be sensitive to recognize it, even if it seems small or insignificant compared to the problem you are facing. God rarely shows us the end from the beginning. Respond with thanksgiving and take a small step of faith keeping your hope on the Lord, not on the circumstance until your mountain is completely removed.

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not fret or have anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God. And God's peace (shall be yours, that tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ)