

## Isaiah 50:4-10

**Help** is something which is rather **elusive**. If you really needed **help** for something, to whom would you **turn**? The answer to that **probably** depends on how you **picture** help, or on what **kind** of help you need. If you think of help as being something **positive** and **useful**, you might turn to someone who is considered to be an **expert** - someone who would have the **answers** to your particular **problem**. But, if you view help as being something **harmful** or **negative**, you might not even **ask** for help at all. **Many** people are like that. They think that there must be something **wrong** with them if they have to ask for **help**. They might even quote, as a Bible passage, "**God** helps those who help **themselves**" - even though those **words**, and that kind of **attitude**, aren't in the Bible **at all**. In fact, God's message is just the **opposite**. **God** helps those who **can't** help themselves.

And it's a good thing too, because that's exactly what we **are** - people who **can't** help ourselves - people who would be lost **eternally** without the help of our God. Most often, that help comes **directly** in the person of our **Savior**, Jesus; and our example in today's **text** is no different. As the chosen Servant of the LORD, **Jesus** brings **help** - help for **us**, bringing us eternal **salvation**, but which resulted in **death** on the cross for **Him**. Through the Prophet Isaiah, Jesus tells us that **Our Help Comes From The LORD**. He helps us to **listen** attentively, and He helps us to **bear persecution** patiently.

The Bible gives us **many** examples of people who had a hard time **listening** to what the LORD **said** to them. Let's start by taking a look at **Moses**. For 80 years Moses had **wanted** to be the **leader** of God's people. But for the first 80 years of his life **God** had said, "**No**. Not **yet**." And then, when God finally said that it was **time** for Moses to take that leadership role Moses replied, "*Please, Lord, I have never been **eloquent**, either in the **past** or more **recently** or even since you started **speaking** to your servant, for my mouth and tongue are **slow** and **clumsy** ... Please, Lord, send **someone else**."* So, the LORD **told** him what to say, and even provided his brother, **Aaron**, to be the **spokesman** for Moses. Then there was **Jeremiah**. God had chosen **him** to be a prophet too, but Jeremiah said, "*Ah, Lord God! I really do not know **how** to **speak**! I am only a **child**!"* But, God told him, "*I have now placed **my** words in your mouth. Look, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to **uproot** and to **tear down**, to **destroy** and to **overthrow**, to **build** and to **plant**."* God gave him all the **wisdom** and the **courage** he needed to **listen** to His Word and to **follow** His will. **Our Help also Comes From The LORD**, but we need to be listening alertly, attentively, and obediently, or we run the risk of **missing out** on what the LORD is saying to us.

There's great **value** in learning the art of **listening**, and it only requires **two things** from us. One is that we are **alert**, and the other is that we are **attentive**. Webster describes **alertness** as the state of being **watchful, active**, and ready to do **battle**. So that would mean that alert **listening** is being mentally prepared **ahead** of time for something which is about to be **said**. It's coming with an **open mind**, expecting to hear something **important**.

Quite often we fall far **short** of that. For example, how **alert** are we when our **husband** or **wife** has something to say to us? Are our minds prepared to **hear** their words, or are we so **preoccupied** with something **else** that their words just sound like **background noise**? And how **alert** are we when it comes to listening to our **children** or **grandchildren**? Do we give them our **full attention**, or are we too caught up in our own **personal** interests to actually **listen** to what they have to say? And for **all** of us, as students of God's Word, did we come here today expecting to hear something **worthwhile** in our worship service, or are we just being **seat-warmers**? It's so **important** for us **especially** to listen to **God** - to take **advantage** of the many opportunities we are given to **hear** and **study** His Word in **worship** and **Bible classes**. God says that when we put Him **first**, He will take care of all our **other** needs - both **physical** and **spiritual**. So when our lives are falling apart, and the world is collapsing all around us, let's be sure we're **listening** to God's Word, and **following** it in our daily lives. If we have **prepared** ourselves to be **alert** listeners, then we will **also** be **attentive** listeners, and we won't miss out on **any** of the important words spoken by our **family** members, our **friends**, or our **God**.

Listen again to what Jesus said, "*(The LORD) wakes me up morning by morning. He wakes up my ears so that I listen like the learned. The LORD God opened my ear, and I myself was not rebellious. I did not turn back.*" Notice that the entire **listening process** begins with the **daily care** which is provided by the LORD. He wakes us up to **listen** every morning. And He tells us that the person who **listens** is **learned** (or **wise**). It's only **after** we have **listened** that we'll also be able to **speak** with wisdom. That's the way it was with Jesus' chosen **twelve**. They were **disciples** - **students** - **followers** who needed to **listen** and **learn**. They sat at the feet of the Savior for **three years**, and only **then** did Jesus send them out to **preach** and **teach**. Listening is **important** - especially listening to the **LORD** and His **Word**.

But these words which Isaiah recorded for us are actually the words of our **Savior**, and Jesus serves as a **perfect example** when it comes to being an **alert** and

**attentive** listener. He said about **Himself**, “*The LORD God opened my ear, and I myself was not rebellious. I did not turn back.*” Turn back from **what**? Jesus goes on to say, “*I submitted my back to those who beat me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard. I did not hide my face from disgrace and from spit.*” Jesus shows us here that **He** is in **control**. Even as He was confronted with the most **contemptible** and **disrespectful** of actions, Jesus was able to **endure** them all, and He was **willing** to endure all kinds of **disdain** and **abuse** - the spitting, the mocking, the whipping, and the taunting - Jesus was willing to endure **all** this, and even **more** - including offering His perfect life as a **sacrifice** on the cross - in order to **save us**. Jesus was willing to endure **all** of these horrors, because they were all a part of the heavenly Father’s **plan**. Jesus **listened attentively** to that plan, and He perfectly **obeyed** His Father’s will.

I think it’s also important to point out the **attitude** of Jesus throughout all of this **persecution**. Our text says, “*The LORD God will help me, so I will not be disgraced ... I know that I will not be put to shame. The one who will acquit me is near ... The LORD God will help me.*” Jesus was totally **confident** that no matter **what** was thrown at Him, **Help** would **Come From The LORD**. And that **confidence** enabled Jesus to **offer** His **back**, and His **cheeks**, and His **beard**, and His **face** to His persecutors. That **confidence** enabled Him to make His face **hard like flint** - to **grit** His teeth - to be **totally determined** to carry out the heavenly Father’s plan of salvation - no matter what level of **persecution** He would have to suffer.

That same **strength** and **confidence** to be able to bear **persecution**, is also **ours**. At one time or another persecution comes to **all** of us, and it’s only by imitating the attitude of **Jesus** that we can expect to be successful in **patiently bearing** persecution. We need to **attentively listen** to God’s Word. When we think that we’re at our wits **end**, we can still **endure**, because **Our Help Comes From The LORD**. God **has not** and **will not** leave us to fend for **ourselves** against our mortal enemies. He has already taken care of our **greatest need**, by providing us with full and free **forgiveness** for all of our sins, so He certainly won’t desert us in any of our **other** needs either. As the Apostle Paul told the Romans, “*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him?*” Trusting in **Jesus**, our Savior, we have **everything** we need, no matter **what** the circumstances.

**Our Help Comes From The LORD** - the LORD who **made** heaven and earth - the LORD who **conquered** sin, death, and the forces of Satan himself. Our God has **no equal**, so we will always be **safe** in His protective care. May the

LORD always help us to **listen** - to **listen attentively** to His Word, and to **patiently endure** the persecutions which come from this evil world. Amen.