

Hold thou me up and I shall be safe (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 00] As the Lord helps me, I would like to direct your attention to some thoughts found in Psalm 119 and verse 117.

That's the 119th Psalm and verse 117. Hold thou me up and I shall be safe. Hold thou me up and I shall be safe.

As you realize, friends, knowing that this would be my last Lord's Day here for a few weeks, I did try to look to the Lord that he might give me some suitable text to speak from.

Truthfully, friends, it seemed to be wandering from one to another and hoping and trusting that my mind more or less settled upon this particular word. Hold thou me up and I shall be safe.

Certainly, friends, this is not a word only for myself and certainly one stands in need of it. But certainly it also is a good word for the Church and for each individual.

[1 : 17] The great mercy, friends, if we can find ourselves well secured for time and for salvation in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly, we find that the Apostle Paul felt his security not only for himself and for the Church when he entered into those meditations of which we find in the eighth chapter of Romans.

When he thought himself to be surrounded, as it were, with so much which is found there in the seventh chapter with his own richard character and his own deceitfulness, but yet as he looked upon himself, he seen himself that he was secured in Christ and that there was no condemnation.

And when he looked upon the perils of life and all the sorrows which can come upon a child of God, he was brought to see, yet in the spite of all these perils, persecution, trials, and temptations, he could rest assured that nothing could ever separate him from the love which is found in Christ Jesus.

So the greatest of all mercies, friends, is when we can see our blessed security, when we know what it is to have that blessed rest of faith.

Ah, there were times when the Paul was greatly troubled, and now that the Lord finally spoke to him and there was a sweetened rest of faith on the part of the apostle, as well as all of those like David and even Abraham.

[2 : 57] But certainly we don't have to read very far in the Psalms and in many other portions of scriptures, friends, and we know that a child of God does not always remain in such a blessed position.

Now, the best place, as I already said, is to know that we are there. But if I'm correct, I would like to say the next best thing for us then is to realize the fear of self and have many questions about our ability to be able to stand against the temptations and of all the wild evils of which we are surrounded with.

Certainly we find that in our text the psalmist here was brought to realize his weakness, his utter inability to keep self. And therefore, by recognizing himself, his weakness, and his utter inability, he turned his heart and his prayer to his God.

Ah, friend, what a mercy when we are brought to realize that the arm of flesh will fail us. Even the best of friends cannot give us right consolation or instruction or support us in the hour of trouble.

But what a mercy also to know that you find within you, when surrounded and when, as it were, feeling that you sink, as it were, under the power of sin or unbelief, doubts or fears or troubles, you find something within your own heart that lifts up its heart and soul in prayer before the Lord.

[4 : 33] Oh, like Peter. Oh, his love was so great to his master, and he says, Lord, if it be thou bid me come unto thee. That wasn't presumption, friend.

It was love which drew his soul to his master. He did not want to presume on his own. And as he heard the Lord Jesus say, Come, oh, what an eagerness there was in his soul.

He did go. He stepped out of that ship with all of its waves and with all the winds roaring, and he walked upon the waves and he came to Jesus, the very object of his soul, being held up by the mighty power of living faith and love to his master.

But, oh, the Lord tested him and tried him. Then, as it were, some angry waves come dashing around and the winds blew, and he took his eyes off the Savior and began to sink.

But, oh, he hadn't forgot to the language of living faith, did he? Because, friend, where there is a prayer of faith, there is the object of faith associated with it.

[5 : 44] Because, friends, we never can separate faith from its object. Where the faith rests upon a person, upon his own strength, that so-called faith, it isn't faith, but we'll use it in a broad sense, it does not rest upon the object of Christ, but upon the object of self or an object of another person.

But we find there that even in the midst of all that fearfulness which had come over Peter, he knew where his object was, and he cried unto the Lord, he says, Lord, help me, or Lord, save me.

And the Lord put his hand forth, and he caught hold of Peter. Ah, true, he received a good reproof, and certainly we need these reproofs.

I know you hear me in prayer, often pray that we might have the evidences of the Lord's presence among us, and that we could feel some comfortable assurance at times that the candlestick is here.

And it is a mercy if the Lord would show us, but friends, if it is, it's never going to bring to pride. You're never going to go out the doors boasting and say, well, I know the candlestick is there.

[6 : 58] If the Lord ever gives us a little indication from time of his presence, and we may trembling, not with any boasting, believe that the Lord's candlestick is among his friends, it's going to humble you.

Because I can assure you there's nothing so humbling as the Lord's presence, the Lord's sweetness, the Lord's grace. And so what a mercy when we are brought to realize the frailty of self, the other inability to keep self, and then to know what it is to lift up our heart and our souls in prayer before the Lord.

The psalmist on another occasion, he says, I sink in deep mire, I sink in deep waters, and the waters are coming over my soul. With all his grief, with all of his fear, he thought sure that he would come under the power and the dominion of his enemies.

Yet in the midst of it, he cried unto the Lord. Now, friends, when we come to the words of our text, hold thou me up. Ah, friends, when we can see some of the great saints in the word of God, like that faithful man Abraham, who is referred to as a friend of God, when we can see the impatience there of Moses, when we can see the slips and the falls of David, when we can see the fears which came upon Peter there in the judgment hall, when we can see the great apostle Paul crying out, Oh, wretched man that I am, and the things that I would, I do not, and the things that I would not, I do.

And he found everything so contrary, and he found there was a flesh and the spirit fighting one with another, absolutely contrary, one with another. And sometimes I don't think he ever got into such wretched state as I do, but he wondered, at least if he came into my place, he wondered if sometimes he would be overcome by his own flesh and by his own heart and by his own deceitful ways.

[9 : 09] And then, friends, when we think how Adam, when he came from his maker, came with a perfection. God looked upon the perfection which he made of Adam, not out of the cursed earth because it wasn't cursed, but out of the dust which wasn't cursed, made in the image of God, and there breathed in him the life, there become a living soul, there with perfect fellowship with the God to his creator.

And then as we see him walking there in the garden of Eden, and even God looked upon him as well as all of his creation, he said, it is very good. Yet, friends, with all of his blessed privileges, privileges, I know he was born under the covenant of works, but yet there was in his innocence.

So, friend, if we think of him so highly favored and so gracious, so wonderfully privileged, I ought really not use the word grace because grace comes when there's sin, when there's a fall.

But nevertheless, yet we find friends he couldn't stand. Then when we think of those angels, the third of the host of a heaven, how much they praised God prior to their fall, I don't know.

I can't even get into it. I never want to belittle my God. But yet when we think of those angels, friends, and Satan, and then we think of their fall, ah, then when we think of our wretched state of what we are, fallen, wretched creatures born in sin, conceived in sin, then we've got every reason then to fear that we might then pray to the Lord that he might hold us up.

[11 : 05] So we find then the psalmist says, hold thou me up and I shall be safe. In other words, he was brought to realize, but now I know where my safety is.

not in the arm of flesh, but in the arm of that mighty God. I like that expression where it says, hold thou me up.

Now what do we want to be, what is needful that we be held up above? First of all, may the Lord ever hold us up above self. There is so much pride within self and there certainly is one that stands before you.

And therefore, friend, pride is that wretched thing. Whichever wants to take the stand in the place of God and friend, it can't. It's not to do. It's not to be there.

So there is, friends, we might ask, well, the Lord, hold thou me up against the wretchedness of the pride of my heart, lest in any way I should ever have self-esteem or seek to exalt myself above any other.

[12 : 19] Oh, friends, remember, we've all come from that same pit of corruption. We all were born there in sin. There we all were by nature as that babe there out in the loathing of its blood.

And there we were only to perish. And sad friends, we would have been delighted to perish in our sin if the Lord had yet not kept us from it.

I think I remember one particular hymn, Preserved in Jesus when my feet made haste to hell and there should I have gone, but thou hast all things well.

Thy love was great, thy mercy free, which from the pit delivered me. A monument of grace, a sinner saved by blood, the streams of love I trace up to the fountain God, and into this wondrous mercy see eternal thoughts of love to me.

So, friends, then there's nothing to boast. Nothing there is a word to put any confidence in self. therefore, there is so needed there when it comes to this wretched pride of self, hold thou me up and I shall be safe.

[13 : 50] And then, friends, we might also look upon hold thou me up. And if you will excuse me for being a bit personal here, and I still need it, friends, I still got my same fears.

I may believe before I joined this church, I had a great love to those who were the members and to this cause. And I mean it, it was strong.

I could not leave these for my place. My desire was to be founded as often as I could. When the Lord brought me into a hope for myself, and prior to that I was brought into great exercise about the ordinances of God's house, that is baptism, and joining with the cause, I thought, oh, but what if I would join, and then if I should bring shame and reproach upon the cause?

I love the cause so much that if you'll excuse how I'm going to put it, that I loved it so much I thought it'd be better if I don't join. I know that's a paradox.

I'm sure, friends, it was something of the suggestion and the measure of Satan, but I thought, what if I bring reproach upon the church of God and upon its testimony?

[15 : 13] Ah, friend, we may well be a fearful of self. And I can truthfully say that same experience range within me now. Lord, that thou wilt hold me up, lest in any way I bring reproach and shame upon his name, upon the cause and upon the truth.

Ah, there's much of it today, isn't there? You remember when David so grievously sinned, the Lord said, thou hast caused thine enemies to rejoice.

They made it a mockery. And even one of the great saints, when he was brought into great troubles, I can't remember one, though it was not any particular sin.

Yet, when he was brought into such great straits, it was either Job or David, there when he was so as persecuted by his persecutors, his name and his experience was the song of the drunkard.

They made light of it. Now, they did it in the wrong way. And it is sad, friends, when we have to suffer for, as it were, for reproach or for our own sins.

[16 : 28] And that is when we are reproached for our sin. But there is no shame, nor is there any regret, if we are reproached for the truth's sake.

In fact, if we are ever persecuted for the name of the Lord Jesus and reproached for the truth, we are counted in the word of God as a blessed character. prayer. But in any way, friends, it takes this constant prayer, hold thou me up.

Certainly, in other words, the psalmist realized that he was liable to a fall, not a falling out of grace, but a falling and to bring reproach and disgrace upon to the name of the Lord.

Oh, do we not then need that prayer, both for self and for the church? Hold thou me up. And then there is that constantly holding up, that is, the nature of living truth.

We're living in a day when there is much air sweeping across our nation. And, friends, I can't go into detail, but someone was telling me recently of a certain case.

[17 : 45] And the man went as it were before the church and says, what should we do about this? Well, the man in the church says, just pray about it. In other words, don't do too much about the air, or don't do too much about the things which are wrong.

Just pray about it. In other words, don't do nothing. Ah, friend, what a mercy if the Lord upholds us. And, I need it.

It's so easy to be a nice person, isn't it? And as it were, as it were, seeking to make some compromise, eyes, now I realize there's always room for prayer, but we can't always just say, well, we must leave it in prayer, try to seek the Lord in it.

I believe sometimes it's more carelessness than anything else. But, oh, friends, what a mercy if the Lord might be in our prayer, hold thou me up, that I might honestly and earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints of old.

Oh, I love that expression of J.C. Philpott, where he says men fall into air because they never really love the truth they profess. When once loved the truth, air will never find a place in our heart.

[19 : 04] In other words, hold us up that we might have that spiritual love to the truth, to the name of God, to his people.

And then, friends, there will be no room for the enemy because love covers a multitude of sin. Oh, when we think of that early church, how the nature of love prevailed amongst them.

And by their faithfulness, continually abiding one with another, it was this that said of them, and they took note of them that they had been with Jesus.

Odd is the mercy, friends, when they can take note of us that we have been with Jesus. When we come to the house of the Lord and we hear the word of God and we receive it in the love of it and the truth of it, and therefore to know what it is to be bound with our ears to the boar toast of this house because of the truth.

And if the truth has ever departed, friends, may we all know what it is to depart, well, then there's nothing left, is there? But may we earnestly contend, ever being on our guard, lest in any way Satan might take the advantage.

[20 : 26] Hold thou me up, because there is that wicked one who is the Satan, which goeth around as a roaring lion, and he also goeth around as an angel of light.

Remember, as I said recently, we read in the book of Revelation, he is the adversary of the brethren, not of the world, but of the brethren.

He's got to the world, he's got to them in their religion, nor in their sins, and there they reign and rule in their heart. But he is the adversary of the brethren, ever seeking whom he may devour.

And how we have the apostle Peter warning the church there about that evil one going around seeking whom he can devour by air, by sin, by reproach, by pride, by enmity, by malice.

Ah, friends, we have an adversary, don't we? And I realize he's a mighty foe, but remember he's not almighty. And therefore, may we ever take ourselves to the prayer which we find in the words of our text, Hold thou me up, Lord, against the enemy, against sin, against the reproaches.

[21 : 49] When I think of Satan as an angel of light, friends, in other words, he comes as if the light. He comes even with a measure of truth, but not the whole of the truth.

He has a marvelous knowledge of scriptures. He quoted the scriptures even to the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lord Jesus Christ. He no doubt has already tried to quote scriptures to you, to try to turn you aside, to follow the erroneous teachings, because he only quotes part.

Oh, friend, as an angel of light, I believe we've got much to fear. But when he comes as a roaring lion, friends, I'm afraid of a lion. And maybe some of us have been to the zoo and we've heard the lion roar and, friend, it echoed through the hole of the place where I once was.

It was awful. And when we know that, friends, I know it's the roaring of a lion, but I'm fearful. But all friends, remember, when we look to that blessed armor that the Lord has given against all that roaring of Satan, but keep this in mind, when we look in the Ephesians there and read about that armor which God provides for his people, he says, take ye on the whole armor of God, the sword of the spirit, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of faith, they're all needed, especially now when one is absent, one from another.

But remember, friends, there's nothing for the back. Everything was for the front. In other words, friends, there's no turning back. Oh, when I read Pilgrim's Progress, when he came against Apollyon, he was ready to depart.

[23 : 36] He was armed. He had had the armor given to him sometime before, but he had never yet fully proved it. But now when he came across Apollyon friends, now he had to prove it.

And there was a great question. And then he thought there, I have nothing for the back. And certainly if I turn upon him, he will cast out as it were all his sword and his spears against me, and I shall finally perish under the hand of that wicked thing.

Ah, friend, there is no turning back. There is a going forward. But what a mercy when we look upon to this particular expression, hold thou me up, there is one who has gone before, and he does go before.

And oh, I realize if we could only know what it is more by faith, to put our feet into the very marks and the steps which the Master has given before us.

God is behind us. And there are times when he is with us and walks with us. But yet, friends, it goes that he is continually surrounded of completely his saints.

[24 : 52] He goes before. Ah, what power did we ever have against the law when his thunderings came into our own conscience and brought condemnation?

What a mercy when we were brought to see the condemning power of the law, when we began to see there was one who fulfilled it, and he went before us. What a mercy when we have some trial to have entered into our pathway, and we do not know what to do.

We're afraid to put our foot sore forward. We fear that of which lays in the future. And then what a mercy when we are brought to see there is one who has gone before, who was tempted and tried in every trial and temptation far beyond what we are, and that he is a friend which sticketh closer than a brother.

Ah, can you see the necessity of this prayer? Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe. In other words, what we find here is a prayer of faith, and its answer, or the assurance of faith, or the rest of faith, knowing that I shall be safe.

Well, when we think of it, friend, could we ever be safe in any other hands than in Christ? Now, I realize when it comes to the upholding hand of God upon his people, it's in various ways.

[26 : 24] And every time you're going to find it in a far different way than you had thought. I know it is a mercy sometimes when the Lord, as it is when we seek to venture, and when we set our foot forward and the Lord says, this is the way, walk ye in it.

But we are very apt to prescribe, as it were, some particular text. If the Lord would give me that text, then I can do it. But sometimes the Lord does it in a far different way, in fact, always in a far different way than our carnal reasoning is.

Remember at all times that flesh and blood is never to enter into the kingdom of heaven, never to enter into our experience. It's going to be all of grace. But friends, I wondered if Jonah had many times prayed while he was in the land of Israel and while he was administering to the children of Israel without much profit.

he would often say when he was ready to give over to discouragement, hold up my ways, Lord. Hold me up. But then when he fled from the Lord and went down to Damascus or thought to go to Damascus, he never knew that the Lord would hold him up in that way.

He would hold him up by letting him fall so that he might realize, Jonah, you're not to prescribe your own way, but you're to go in the way that I have ordained for thee.

[27 : 52] Never do we want to look upon any falls and justify them. Ah, when I think of even David, oh, how strong he was in his God.

What great confidence he took in his God against the enemies. With my God, I go through a wall, I jump over a wall, and I go through a troop, and so forth.

He went boldly there without armor and without even a sword but a sling when he went against the giant. Yet when he looked upon all the fears, he says, I shall someday perish by the hand of Saul.

This is the man who prayed, hold thou me up, and I shall be safe. I would trust, friends, that this particular psalm, if it is written by David, which is usually considered that he did write it.

Personally, I feel he wrote it quite late in life. And yet how he was brought even there to realize that even there he had to be held up. He thought of his past, he thought of his slips, he thought of his falls, he thought of his temptations, but yet, friends, the Lord did uphold him.

[29 : 07] Maybe he was like Jacob of old, he forgot his prayer, he forgot his promises. But then when everything turned against him, and when Sig Lag was burned, and the men sought to stone him, then he began to realize, or when he uttered his prayer, and David strengthened himself in the name of the Lord his God, I wondered if he looked back to the time when he prayed, Lord, hold thou me up, and I shall be saved.

In other words, the Lord used, allowed David, as it were, to fall, so that he might know what it is to see the values of being held up by God himself.

I know we never want to pray that we might slip in order to find the strength of God, but certainly we see it in the case of Peter, don't we? We'll never want to discredit Peter in his love and his devotion to his master.

Peter was one of those gracious souls who was blessed of his God. He had a sweet and a blessed revelation of the Lord. By there he says, Thou art the Son, Thou art the Christ, the Son, the Son of God.

And yet we realize that day Peter had to hold up that he had to be held up by a mightier hand than that of Peter. When he says, Lord, that all men forsake thee, I won't.

[30 : 38] But later he was brought to see the precious, glorious, wondrous, to be found in the prayer of Christ. It does us well to read John 17 again and again, how the Lord prayed for his disciples.

There Peter heard him pray, I pray not that thou shouldst take them from this world, but that thou should keep them from the evil. I believe Peter heard that prayer.

There was a measure of it entering in by faith. And then when the Lord says, Peter, I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, then later Peter was brought to realize, oh, the upholding of my God.

One can almost imagine when one come to him later and says, Peter, did you hear about Judas? No, he might have said, I'm not reading it to scriptures, but I'm just letting my imagination go.

But Peter, he committed suicide. He betrayed his master for thirty pieces of silver. He threw it on the temple floor and he went out and he committed suicide.

[31 : 54] And later Peter says, and he went to his place. Ah, then Peter was brought to see the blessedness of that prayer of Christ. Ah, what a prayer, friends, we might all pray now in our absence, one from another.

Lord, hold thou me up and that I might be found in thy prayer. Because, friends, I do.

When I feel the failure of my prayers, knowing that they cannot be answered upon any goodness of prayers of self or upon any merit, there is something about it I feel.

I have a little glimpse at time of the great high priest there in glory. And I have to say, Lord Jesus, pray for me. I know the Father will hear you.

Pray for me. Bring my cause and my wants before them. And so there is the prayer, hold thou me up and I shall be saved.

[32 : 55] And without this holding I shall fail. Ah, friend, we have to be held up against the spirit of pride, against the spirit of self-wisdom, the spirit of self-esteem.

We have to be held up to hear what it is, the simplicity of the gospel, the simplicity of the word, regardless how it's brought forth. Ah, we have to be held up.

Well, I trust for the most part, we're all pretty feeble. And I don't, and I believe, I can truthfully say that. I think most of us can say we are kept from comparing one minister with another minister.

Of course, we're so limited anyways, but it is a mercy. But friends, may we know what it is not to hear a servant necessarily, but to hear what he's got to say, that is the words which are spoken.

In other words, that prayer being there unto the Lord, hold thou me up, we may come very low. The Lord may see that he brings us into a very low state of fear and of want in the soul, so that the word of the Lord might be received as the engrafted word of truth, that we might know what it is to come as a little child, there to under the means of the ministry, to hear for my salvation.

[34 : 19] Can you understand how the Lord answers this prayer? Hymn 295 certainly describes it, I ask the Lord that I might grow in grace and love and truth and so forth.

And then he went on to speak. How he says, I hoped that in some favored hour that once he would answer my request and by his love's constraining power subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, he made me feel the hidden evils of my heart. And the rest of it, I believe, we're all quite well acquainted with it.

Then he cried out, Lord, why is this? I trembling cried, wilt thou pursue thy worm to death? And the Lord answers, in this way, the Lord replied, I answer prayer for faith, grace, and faith.

Yes, friends, what a mercy. When we can say, in truth and insincerity, Lord, hold thou me up at any cost, and teach me what to pray for and what to listen for, and so that I, regardless of what calamity, sorrows, and disappointment I might be brought into, that I might feel the sustaining hand of my God upon me.

[35 : 44] Oh, without a doubt, I believe the great apostle Paul, he felt sure that he would fall under that sore temptation which he had.

And that was a thorn in the flesh. Satan would come and buffet it and use and swiggle that thorn, whatever it was, we don't know. And I believe on three occasions he had such access before the throne of grace.

were figuring it was nothing more than a hindrance to his ministry. Hold thou me up and I shall be safe, was I without a doubt to the cry of the apostle.

And the Lord answered in a far different way than what Paul thought he would ever receive it. The Lord gave him grace, grace to sustain him.

Ah, friend, do you know what it is to come under some trial, some temptation, some bereavement, and how that the Lord kept you from murmuring, from complaining.

[36 : 49] Maybe someone had thought, why don't you complain? Why don't you do this? All because you were held up by God. And then of course there is the spiritual part of it, which I have dealt on, I guess, from time to time this evening.

But now another thought comes to me. There is that terrible load and weight of our sin, that thought of our being and condemned sinner in his sight, that hopelessness, and thinking we shall thus sink, as it were, under the debt of our sins, the hopelessness.

And so there is a cry to the Lord, maybe not in these particular words, but seeking that the Lord might have mercy, but yet looking to the Lord, hold thou me up.

And oh, how blessed and precious friends, he holds his people up by the gospel. Can you look into your own soul how the Lord has held you, as it were, from almost despair over your sin, when at that time and at that moment he came and spoke a word to your soul, a word of comfort and a word of consolation that brought you peace, he held you up.

Or maybe like Jehoshaphat, as it were, so being tempted with some particular resentment, sin within you, feeling you shall be overpowered by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

[38 : 22] And you cried unto the Lord and said, Lord, I have no might nor power against all this sin, the corruption of my nature, my wicked way. And the Lord says, you need not to fight in this battle, the battle is the Lord's.

Oh, isn't he a good God? Is there any other safety beside him? Is there any rock for why we might find protection? Oh, on him almighty vengeance fell that would have sunk a soul to hell.

What a safe rock! That's why David says, from the ends of the earth, will I cry unto thee, lead me to the rock which is higher than I.

Thou art my fortress, thou art my savior, thou art my hope. Can you see the cause and the need of such a prayer? And may there be my prayer and your prayer in our absence.

Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe. And we could go on without a doubt in speaking of many blessed examples in the scriptures.

[39 : 34] But as we hope to, of course, remember the Lord's supper this evening, we can't go much longer. But may the Lord bless these few remarks and use it for his name sake.

And that we might know what it is to remember each and every one continually before the throne of grace. That as we are absent one from another, we can pray this, Lord, hold thou me up, and I shall be saved.

Hold thou up the cause of truth. Keep us of love to thy word, to thy testimony, and one to another. May we ever esteem each and every one better than ourselves.

May we all seek to take the lower seat until we are bidden by God's grace to come up higher. And if we come up higher, we're going to come up trembling. So may the Lord bless these few remarks and use it for his dear name's sake.

Amen.