

# The Day of Trouble

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“Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Ps 50:15).

It has been said that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. So then we may be quite sure a text such as this appeals to a great many. It presents to us four points, each of which is worthy of consideration. First, “The day of trouble.” Second, what we are to do in it: “Call upon Me.” Third, what God will do in answer to our call: “I will deliver thee.” Fourth, the end God has in view: “Thou shalt glorify Me.”

Let us notice, first, how comprehensive is the statement, “The day of trouble.” It is not any particular trouble that is mentioned. This is a great comfort, for if any special kind had been referred to, it might not have been ours. Troubles are so varied, and the thing that is troubling you at the present moment may be altogether unknown to others. Indeed, someone may be reading these lines who is ready to say, “Surely no one else has endured what I am now called to pass through.” Even so, the text applies in your case, for does it not say, “The day of trouble,” without specifying what may be its nature? “Call upon Me in the day of trouble.”

There is the trouble of ill health. How many wish they had never seen this day! Time was when they could go where they would and do what they would. Like Peter, “Thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest.” But now all that is changed. Nights of pain and days of weariness are a matter of constant experience. It is the day of trouble. Lately we called to see one who, though once a very strong man, injured his spine and is paralyzed. He frequently suffers intense pain and for years has been confined to bed. This verse has been his comfort: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” Often it is said by those similarly placed that they cannot understand why God leaves them here. This is the explanation: “Thou shalt glorify Me.” No one can preach such a powerful sermon as a bedridden saint. Without uttering a word, he or she may be a living sermon on patience, fortitude and joy in the midst of suffering, setting forth the way in which the grace of Christ can enable them to endure. How is it to be done? “Call upon Me ... I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” Not deliver thee perhaps from the infirmity, but a greater deliverance — from being under the power of it.

Some time ago, in the neighborhood in which we live, a man who owned a motorcycle with sidecar took his wife out into the country on the weekly half holiday. On the road they were run into by a heavy motor lorry, and his leg was smashed so badly that when taken to the hospital the doctors said they had seen nothing like it since the war. But he was a Christian, and lying in bed he preached his sermon. His peace and quietness, his happy face, told their tale.

But there are other troubles — troubles which arise from poverty, or loss of property, or, what is far worse, some loved one; trouble in connection with business and a thousand other things; trouble brought upon ourselves by our own failure, or what is even a darker trouble sometimes, through the sin and failure of others. Thank God, it is all included in “the day of trouble”—the anxious parent solicitous about the welfare of a child; the individual who finds life a long-continued struggle; the tempted, the tried, the down-trodden and the oppressed are all referred to here: “Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”

But we surely need not enlarge upon this. "The day of trouble" is familiar to most of us in some form or other; we rather need to pay attention to the precious injunction with which the verse commences, "Call upon Me." What an immense relief to be able to speak to anyone about our trouble, and especially when that One is able to succor as well as sympathize.

It does not say how many times we are to call. Simply, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." A call does, however, imply earnestness. It is not, "Speak to Me." We may sometimes speak to God as though we hardly meant what we said. But here it is more vehement: "*Call* upon Me," as though we were in real earnest to make God hear. The psalmist says, "In the day when I *cried*, Thou answeredst me." When a child in danger or fright calls to its parent, it does not speak as though nothing was the matter. Now while God knows everything and can hear even a whisper and read even our thoughts, yet His direction here is, "*Call* upon Me." If you have called many times before and not yet been delivered, still continue calling. Deliverance will surely come in *some form or other*, and in the meantime the blessing to your own soul will be immense. You will learn more of God, for it says, "Call upon Me" — upon God Himself.

"*I will deliver thee.*" "**I will**," not "I may," not "perhaps." It is definite, certain: "*I will* deliver thee." Mark, it does not say *when*. We often fix a time; it must be immediately, and so we get disappointed. It does not say *how*. We would like deliverance brought about in a way of our own, and because it does not appear to be coming in our way, we are tempted to rebel. Nor does it say what form the deliverance will take. We have already made up our minds, perhaps, what form we would prefer, but it may be God has something better for us. Let us leave the form of the deliverance — the how and when — all to Him, resting only in the certainty of the fact, "*I will* deliver thee."

There may be reasons why deliverance is delayed. God has other aims in connection with your life beside the immediate deliverance you are seeking. And He sees how He can in the end use the waiting time to achieve those ends. Lord Roberts could have relieved Mafeking weeks before he did if that had been his sole aim.[1] But he wanted that relief to work in with and subserve his other plans, his greater plans, and so that beleaguered town had to wait many a weary week. But at last deliverance came, and it came on the very day that had been mentioned. And who can imagine the joy of the delivered? So it may be you waited, not only days and weeks, but months or even years, and you are still waiting. Sometimes you are almost tempted to think God has forgotten you, but remember that like the English commander-in-chief, God is not to be hurried. He has His eye upon the whole of your life — yea, upon eternity, and God wants everything to work in for eternity.

*"There with what joy reviewing  
Past conflicts, dangers, fears;  
Thy hand our foes subduing,  
And drying all our tears;  
Our hearts with rapture burning,  
The path we shall retrace,  
Where now our souls are learning  
The riches of Thy grace."*

May we learn then to take a larger view of life and not to be occupied too exclusively with one

point. The hour of our deliverance is fixed. It may take the form of actual deliverance, or it may come in the form of such an abundance of grace that, like the Apostle Paul, we shall be enabled to take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in distresses, for Christ's sake. In either case, may we remember these words, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

Yes, there is more than mere deliverance in view. "Thou shalt glorify Me." When the commander-in-chief delivered Mafeking, he not only wanted them to be saved from being any longer harassed and ill fed, but that it might serve some larger end. It is not otherwise when God effects deliverance for us. It is to come about in such a way that He shall be glorified, not only in the deliverance itself, but afterwards. How blessed! We thought ourselves almost neglected, as though God had completely withdrawn His former loving-kindness, and we seemed like so much flotsam on the ocean of time. But now deliverance has come, and we learn the amazing fact from the very lips of the One we thought had left us to drift hither and thither: "Thou shalt glorify Me."

Can we desire anything more than this? When we discover that God is working in and through our life, is it not complete? Is the day of trouble a mistake if it leads to the glory of God? When we see the end, can we regret the way which led to that end? Not only was it not a mistake, it was a necessity. And that "day of trouble" is encircled with a threefold cord for the Christian: "Call upon *Me*," "*I* will deliver thee" and "thou shalt glorify *Me*." That threefold cord is God Himself.

The day of trouble may lead some to call upon God who have never done so before. May such learn how true it is: "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, and He heard me."

Many of God's brightest saints have known full well the meaning of "the day of trouble": Abraham, when he had to cast out Ishmael and when called upon to offer up Isaac; Joseph, when hated by his brethren and sold to the Midianites, who took him down into Egypt, where he became a servant, "whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him"; Moses, when rejected and obliged to flee. But they were all delivered, and God was glorified. And it was not otherwise with David. Think of him at Ziklag on that day when he and his men found it burned with fire and their wives and children carried away. The people, too, spoke of stoning him — and this coming upon the top of all he had been suffering for years at the hands of Saul. Surely never did a mere man suffer more acute anguish than David at that moment. But we read he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God." Yes, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." This was eminently true in his case, for he was delivered, and shortly after he ascended the throne — one day to be stoned; the next, we might say, crowned. Such are the vicissitudes of God's people.

Reference might be made to Elijah, to Paul, and many others in a similar connection, but most wonderful of all is it to think that the Lord Jesus was not exempt from "the day of trouble." One of the most reassuring and comforting truths is this that the Son of God Himself was acquainted with grief and that He passed through a darker day than we can ever know, with unshaken trust and confidence in God. Of Him it is written, "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." It is not the human family alone which knows what sorrow and

suffering man; God has taken His part in these in the person of His Son, and in a deeper way than any of us can know.

Can anything be sweeter to the heart that knows God than this: "Thou shalt glorify Me"? Who would have supposed "the day of trouble" could have yielded such rich fruit? There are many men, and women too, on earth today who would not be what they are but for "the day of trouble." It may seem a dark foreground to the picture, but God's pictures have glorious backgrounds. What a cluster of jewels does this verse contain, and "the day of trouble" is like some dark stone in the center that makes the others shine brighter. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones" (Isa 54:11-12). In this way God will be glorified.

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*Angels in White — OR — Words to the Worried. P. 45*