

“I’m in Trouble Again!”

Psalm 4

As we continue our journey through the Psalms, we come to a plea for help. And I’m sure that we have all said these same words at some point in our lives. I’m sure that at some point in our lives, we have all hung our heads, run our hands over our faces, taken a big sigh and simply said, “God, I’m in Trouble Again and I need your help!” I’m sure that we have all come to that moment when we just felt deep in our hearts that we were at the end of our rope and didn’t know which way to turn.

I’ll be honest, it is in moments like those that I wish I wasn’t a grown up, I wish that somebody else was the grown up in the situation. In moments of deep soul stirring trouble, I wish that I was still able to hold on to the illusion that somebody else was going to come in and take care of the problem. Sometimes I still really wish that a grown up, you know, those people who are supposed to know all the answers to all the problems, would just come in and say, “Oh, don’t worry about that. You can go back to the simple life where 2 plus 2 will always equal four and I’ll take care of it. Don’t you worry about a thing.” In moments of trouble and crisis, sometimes that is my fervent wish.

But now that I think about it, I’m not sure that is exactly what I want in those types of situations. I think in reality, when I hit those moments in life when I

am at the end of my rope and I don't know which way to turn, in reality, all I want is to crawl under the covers, maybe a big well loved quilt, have a cup of hot chocolate, sit in my thinking chair, wrapped in someone's arms while they tell me it is all going to be okay. Maybe all I really want in life when I get to those moments, those moments when it feels like the world is crashing down around me, all I want is to have someone gather me up on their lap and say "Tell me what's troubling you"; to have someone say, "Climb up here in my lap and tell me what's bothering you; to have someone say "Maybe between the two of us, we can make things right again."

Yeah, now that I think about it, I think that's what I really want. I want to have that feeling again, that feeling like when I was a kid, when I was able to crawl up in my parents' lap, and I could tell them what was bothering me. In that moment, I just knew no matter what, things would be okay. I just knew that no problem was too big that a well loved quilt and a cup of hot couldn't fix.

Sometimes I just wish I could recapture that feeling of warmth, that feeling of security, that feeling of knowing that no matter what, things would be okay. Sometimes I wish I could just recapture that child like knowledge that all troubles in life could be fixed with a quilt and a cup of hot chocolate.

But life moves on and we grow up. And as we grow up we soon discover that yes, there will be some problems that are too big even for the well loved quilt to fix and we find ourselves saying, "I'm in trouble again and I need some help."

However, as people of faith, the thing we need to remember is that as soon as we say those words, we do recapture the feeling of crawling on someone's lap. We do recapture the child like knowledge that there will always be someone there, listening to us share our trouble, and telling us that it is going to be okay. That's what gives us hope. That's what gives us the strength for the journey. Sometimes, that is all we've got going for us in the midst of life's troubles.

As people of faith, we have the promise that we will always have someone there for us and we should never forget it, no matter how big our troubles may seem. We have this promise. God will always be there for us saying, "Tell me your troubles and maybe between the two of us, we can make it right."

As people of faith, we need to hear this promise time and time again. We need to remember this promise every time we hear God's word of grace for us as God's own beloved children, claimed and named as God's own, just like we are hearing again today.

I invite you to hear this promise again today as we turn in our pew Bibles to Psalm 4. I'll be reading from the Message version.

(Read the Text).

“Lord, I’m in trouble again!” When we read this Psalm that is all we really need to know about it. We don’t need the details. We don’t need to go in depth. We don’t need to go on a fact finding mission about this guy’s problems. And we certainly don’t need to go back to the original Hebrew to figure out what this guy is saying. Because let’s be honest, trouble translates the same in all languages in all cultures around the world, regardless of time period. Trouble is always translated the same: despair, worry frustration, fear and finally, pleas for help! No matter what language or situation, trouble is always translated into pleas for help. So when we turn to Psalm 4, All we need to know is that there is trouble. This person has reached the end of his rope and he doesn’t know which way to turn. The storms of life are raging and he is calling out for his God to come. We don’t need the details. All we need to do is hear the pleas for help!

But as we look closely at this person’s pleas for help, we realize that this guy isn’t just calling out for God to make things right. He is also calling out for God to create a sanctuary for him, to create a place where he can get away from his troubles for a while, to create a space where he can gain perspective on the situation. The pleas for help go beyond the typical make it right statements. They turn into a partnership, into a relationship.

That’s the beauty of this Psalm. Sure the plea for help is universal but this person isn’t just sitting back, waiting for God to fix everything. This person is just

waiting for God to make things right. This person isn't some passive bystander in the midst of all his troubles, just waiting for God to give him his cue to enter into life when things are all good.

No, in the midst of the pleas for help, this person is also turning to God and saying create for me some space. Calm down the voices of negativity. Help me block out the stuff that is preventing me from seeing which way to go. This person isn't treating God like some genie or someone who with a snap of fingers, can clear the slate and start all over. This person is treating God more like a confidant, more like a trusted mentor. This person is treating God more like a sounding board rather than a problem solver.

This person realizes that the basis of their relationship with God isn't that God will solve everything without any action on the part of the other. The relationship is more than that. God loves that person too much, respects that person too much to treat that person like a puppet on a string.

The relationship is built on trust. It is built on grace. It is built on peace. Part of our relationship with God is knowing that God will always be there for us but it is more than that. It is also knowing that God will not move us around like pieces on a chess board. God gives us the room and the space to be ourselves, to figure out things on our own, to make mistakes, to learn and grow from our mistakes, to learn and grow from our troubles.

