

**Thought for Today: November 29, 2007**

**Psalm 70 (NASB)**

**O God, hasten to deliver me;  
O LORD, hasten to my help!**

**Let those be ashamed and humiliated  
Who seek my life;  
Let those be turned back and dishonored  
Who delight in my hurt.  
Let those be turned back because of their shame  
Who say, "Aha, aha!"**

**Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;  
And let those who love Your salvation say continually,  
"Let God be magnified."**

**But I am afflicted and needy;  
Hasten to me, O God!  
You are my help and my deliverer;  
O LORD, do not delay.**

Help me. Protect me. Deliver me. This is one of dozens of psalms with these kinds of requests. We've heard it before, but I suggest that we pause and hear it through someone else's ears. Imagine—and I mean no disrespect or indignity by this activity—that you are God for the moment. Instead of hearing the psalmist's pleas like they are your own, hear the pleas as if you are God who hears the cries of people who are victimized, oppressed, sick, anguished, afflicted and needy. If you could hear these cries and could help this psalmist, would you?

God is still our helper and our deliverer, but we don't have exclusive rights to His compassionate care. Since we are His people, His children, His ambassadors, and His servants, surely we must tune our ears to hear the cries of those around us. If this is what God does, then so should we. And we must be ready to rush to their aid. That's what this psalmist asks for. He asks God to hurry up and help him without delay. We've seen enough trouble in our own lives to understand this plea.

We are not God, but we are His instruments through which He does great things in this world. At least, we should be His channels through which flow compassion, mercy, love, healing, reconciliation, justice, and everything holy.

But this requires sacrifice. It means that we not only hear the cries of the afflicted, but we share their sorrows. We not only talk about the needs of those who don't have a relationship with God, but we become the servants who build the relationship bridges which can begin to span the divide between the lost and the One who seeks them. There are people in our congregation and in the larger community who cry out today for God's help and deliverance. May it never be the case that God alone is the one who hears them. O Lord, give us ears to hear, hearts to care, and hands to do your work.

Let God be magnified through us,  
Patrick Barber