

HELP ME, LORD

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To all those
with whom I have stood
at the bedside of
loved ones

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1

HELP ME, LORD

Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.”

Mark 5:22,23 (NIV)

How anxious that father was! Though she was 12 years old, she was still his “little daughter.” And now his precious child was seriously ill, even dying. But Jairus knew where to turn. To Jesus he hurried with his humble prayer, “Please come and put your hands on her. Help me, Lord,” he pleaded, requesting healing for his beloved child but receiving much more. Before that fretful day was over, Jairus would embrace a daughter who was brought back from the dead, and a loving Savior, who had so wondrously shown his power over death.

The helper of the helpless—that’s who Jesus is. Seldom do we feel more helpless than when a loved one is near death. Sometimes that dreaded moment comes after a long siege, at other times very suddenly. But the effect is still the same. Over us, almost drowning our souls, flood the horrible feelings of our own inabilities, the bitter taste of our frustrations, the fearful concerns for our own futures. What a mess life would become and what a fail-

ure death would be if we didn't have Jesus to turn to as Jairus did in his day.

Jesus could easily keep death at bay or bring our loved ones back from death, as he once did for Jairus' little daughter. Doesn't he teach us, though, to expect even greater help from him? Hasn't he told us that, on his eternal scales, never-ending life in a perfect heaven far outweighs our prolonged existence in a sin-flawed world? that sorrow caused by the loss of a loved one will be erased by the joy of finding each other again in heaven at his side? that the grand love which reddened Calvary's cross—to redeem us from sin and death—surely knows when and how to carry our loved ones safely home?

Yes, but we need the reminder. That's why we turn to God's Word as we do in the devotions of this little volume. We can never be reminded too often that God hears and answers when we plead, "Help me, Lord." Especially when our prayers come from the bedside of a dying loved one.

Prayer

Lord, you know my situation. You know that my loved one is sick, even to the point of death. You know how feeble and frustrated I feel. How I need answers from you—and help to continue. Take me back to your cross, and remind me of your great love, which has freed my loved one and me from eternal death. In your love, let me find the power and peace I need in this time of trouble. Help me, Lord. Amen.

2

IT CAN'T BE TRUE

When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands and my soul refused to be comforted.

Psalm 77:2 (NIV)

“No, no, no,” Earl moaned. “It can’t be true. I don’t believe it.” That morning his wife had left for work as usual. By midmorning she was in the hospital trauma center, struck down by a cerebral hemorrhage. The prognosis was less than poor. And Earl, shut down by the sudden shock, just couldn’t believe it. Denial was his initial reaction.

Like a dentist’s injection of Novocain, shock can serve a useful purpose. It can hold back the waves of pain that come from thoughts of losing a loved one. It gives us time to absorb disturbing news and to adjust our defenses for the distressing journey ahead. Whether we gather around a loved one who lingers with an illness or who was laid low by some sudden incident, we still experience denial. When the thought that a loved one is going to leave us finally penetrates, shock sets in.

The psalmist experienced denial too. His problems, though unstated, were heavy. He was in distress. His soul refused to be comforted. “It just can’t be” was his reaction also. But the psalmist didn’t remain in the state of shock. As