

Hebrews 13:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Analysis

This verse presents the believer's confident response to God's promise of unfailing presence (v. 5), quoting Psalm 118:6 to express the practical courage that flows from divine assurance. The construction 'so that we may boldly say' (ὥστε θαρροῦντας ἡμᾶς λέγειν, *hōste tharrountas hēmas legein*) indicates that God's promise of presence is the sufficient ground for fearless confession. The verb 'tharreō' (θαρρέω, 'boldly') means to be of good courage, confident, or fearless—the opposite of timidity or anxiety. 'The Lord is my helper' (Κύριος ἐμοὶ βοηθός, *Kurios emoi boēthos*) uses the emphatic pronoun—not merely a helper among many but my personal, covenant helper. The Greek 'boēthos' (βοηθός) means one who runs to the aid of another crying for help, emphasizing active assistance rather than passive sympathy. The rhetorical question 'what shall man do unto me?' (τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος, *ti poiēsei moi anthrōpos*) expects the answer: nothing of eternal consequence. Human opposition, however fierce, cannot separate believers from God's love (Romans 8:31-39) or thwart His purposes. This is not reckless bravado or denial of real danger but faith-grounded confidence that prioritizes God's power over human threats. The verse transforms fear of man—one of the most pervasive human anxieties—into confident trust in God's superior power and faithful presence.

Historical Context

Psalm 118:6, quoted here, was sung during Passover celebrations and likely was familiar to every Jewish believer. The psalm celebrates God's deliverance from

surrounding enemies and was understood messianically—Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22-23 regarding the rejected cornerstone (Matthew 21:42). For Hebrew Christians in the first century, the fear of man was intensely practical. Confessing Christ publicly meant potential: excommunication from synagogue (John 9:22), loss of livelihood and property (Hebrews 10:34), social ostracism from family and community, imprisonment, and execution. Nero's persecution (AD 64-68) had demonstrated Rome's capacity for brutality against Christians. Jewish zealot movements were gaining strength, leading toward the Jewish revolt (AD 66-70) and subsequent destruction of Jerusalem. In this volatile environment, fear of man could easily overwhelm faith. The author grounds courage not in human strength or favorable circumstances but solely in God's covenant promise. Historical martyrs demonstrated this confidence: Stephen (Acts 7:54-60), James (Acts 12:1-2), and countless others throughout church history have embodied this verse, declaring through word and deed that God's help matters infinitely more than man's hostility.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's promise to never forsake us (v. 5) specifically enable bold confession in the face of human opposition?
2. In what areas of life are you most tempted to fear what people might think, say, or do?
3. What is the difference between healthy prudence and the fear of man that this verse addresses?
4. How should understanding God as your personal helper affect your response to criticism, rejection, or persecution?

5. What practical steps can cultivate the fearless confidence expressed in this verse rather than people-pleasing anxiety?

Interlinear Text

ὥστε	θαράρουντας	ἡμᾶς	λέγειν	Κύριος	ἐμοὶ	βοηθός	καὶ
So that	may boldly	we	say	The Lord	is my	helper	and
G5620	G2292	G2248	G3004	G2962	G1698	G998	G2532
οὐ	φοβηθήσομαι	τί	ποιήσει	μοι	ἄνθρωπος		
not	I will	what	shall do	unto me	man		
G3756	G5399	G5101	G4160	G3427	G444		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 41:10 (Parallel theme): Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Romans 8:31 (Parallel theme): What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Psalms 124:8 (References Lord): Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Hebrews 4:16 (Parallel theme): Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Psalms 56:4 (Parallel theme): In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

Matthew 10:28 (Parallel theme): And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Psalms 54:4 (References Lord): Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.

Psalms 33:20 (References Lord): Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield.

Psalms 63:7 (Parallel theme): Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

Psalms 94:17 (References Lord): Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.

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