

Say What?

God Helps Those Who Help Themselves (Week 2)

LifeNotes

TALK IT OVER

Main Idea

Our weakness is the best opportunity for God's power and grace.

Key Scriptures

One of the criminals who had been hanged [on a cross beside Him] kept hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us [from death]!" But the other one rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? We are suffering justly, because we are getting what we deserve for what we have done; but this Man has done nothing wrong." And he was saying, "Jesus, [please] remember me when You come into Your kingdom!" Jesus said to him, "I assure you and most solemnly say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:39-43

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Ephesians 2:8

God is a helper to the helpless.

Freedom from self-reliance:

1. Admit your weakness
2. Ask Jesus for help
3. Accept the Grace of Jesus

Start talking.

- What are some silly examples of taking things into your own hands?
- Joel said, "We live in a culture where the goal is to prove to the world around us, 'I got this.'" What examples do you see of that?
- How does the, "I got this" mentality result in exhaustion, disappointment and pain?

Start thinking.

- What are the elements of the phrase, "God helps those who help themselves" that may be true?
 - Joel mentioned three ways the statement goes sideways
 - It puts you in the driver's seat.
 - God becomes a Genie doing our bidding.
 - It turns the good news into a gospel of works.
- Which of the three is more destructive? Why?
- Read Luke 23:39-43. Why does this story stand in stark contrast to the idea that God helps those who help themselves?
 - The thief moved from self-reliance to total dependence on Christ. Of the three steps described, which is the most difficult? Explain.
 - Read John 15:5. How is their freedom in understanding we can do nothing apart from Christ?
 - Read Matthew 11:28. How can Jesus give you rest?
 - Read Ephesians 2:8. How would you describe grace?

Start sharing.

- What are areas that are difficult for you to admit you are weak?
- What keeps you from trusting and relying on Jesus more?
- How has Jesus demonstrated grace in your life?

Start doing.

- What is one tangible action you can take from the list of "Freedom from self-reliance?"

Closing prayer.

Father forgive me for the ways I fool myself into thinking, "I got this." Help me to lean closer and deeper into you; your mercy and grace. Thank you that you love me and pursue me even though I am helpless and a mess. Help me to be a beacon of your grace to others that they might be drawn to you.