



# SUNDAY SCHOOL AUGUST 24, 2025

Prayer:

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## Old Testament

### Psalm 71:1-6

#### PRAYER FOR LIFELONG PROTECTION AND HELP

*(Thought to be David appealing to God)*

In you, O Lord, I take refuge;  
let me never be put to shame.

In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;  
incline your ear to me and save me.

Be to me a rock of refuge,  
a strong fortress to save me,  
for you are my rock and my fortress.

Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,  
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

For you, O Lord, are my hope,  
my trust, O Lord, from my youth.

From my birth I have leaned upon you,  
my protector since my mother's womb.

My praise is continually of you.

#### OVERVIEW

Psalm 71:1-6 is a **prayer of trust, protection, and hope**. The psalmist—traditionally thought to be an elderly David, though authorship is not explicitly stated—appeals to God for refuge. The first six verses establish themes of dependence on God's righteousness, deliverance from enemies, and trust since birth. This section emphasizes that God has been faithful throughout the psalmist's life, from the womb to old age, and therefore is the only secure refuge.

#### BIBLICAL CONTEXT

- **Literary Setting:** This psalm fits the category of a **lament mixed with trust**, similar to Psalms 22 and 31. It weaves together pleas for help with affirmations of confidence in God.
- **Connection to Other Scriptures:**
  - Echoes Psalm 22:9–10, where God is trusted “from my mother's womb.”
  - Anticipates the later verses (71:9, 18), which explicitly focus on aging and God's continued presence.
- **Key Themes:**
  - **Refuge in God** (v.1–3) – God is a rock and fortress.
  - **Deliverance from enemies** (v.4) – God's justice contrasts with human oppression.
  - **Lifelong faithfulness** (v.5–6) – God has sustained the psalmist from birth, ensuring trust through old age.



## HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

- **Israelite Society:** In ancient Israel, old age was often a time of vulnerability, especially in a world without formal social safety nets. The elderly depended heavily on family, clan, and faith in God.
- **Political Unrest:** If linked to David, this psalm may reflect periods of political instability late in his reign (such as Absalom's rebellion). Enemies might not only mean foreign adversaries but also rival factions within Israel.
- **Wider Ancient Near East:** Many cultures tied divine protection to birth and destiny. This psalm asserts that Israel's God, not fate or other gods, has sustained the individual from birth.

## HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

- **Likely Composition:** If Davidic, the psalm could reflect his later years (~10th century BCE, around 970 BCE). If not Davidic, it may have been written or adapted in the **post-exilic period (6th–5th century BCE)**, when the community emphasized God's past faithfulness as a guarantee for future deliverance.
- **Liturgical Use:** This psalm was likely used in worship as a personal prayer of an aged believer, resonating with Israel's collective experience of exile, return, and renewal.

## SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY & GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

- **Metaphor of Refuge:** God as a "rock and fortress" symbolizes unshakable security. In modern terms, it reflects how individuals seek stability amid uncertainty—whether in health, finances, or social pressures.
- **From Birth to Old Age:** The psalm's imagery highlights God's lifelong presence, reminding us that faith is not seasonal but enduring. In Grant County, Indiana—a community with aging congregations and generational ties—this resonates deeply. Elders often feel overlooked in a fast-changing world, yet this psalm affirms their value and God's abiding care.
- **Against "Enemies":** While the psalmist faced literal adversaries, today's "enemies" might be illness, loneliness, economic hardship, or cultural divisions. The prayer becomes a metaphor for perseverance and trust when systems fail.
- **Modern Application:** Just as the psalmist looks back over life and sees God's hand, communities today can reflect on how faith has sustained them through economic downturns, factory closures, or the decline of local institutions. This psalm encourages turning memory into hope.

## SUMMARY

Psalms 71:1-6 is a declaration of trust in God's faithfulness from birth through old age. The psalmist appeals for protection and deliverance, affirming that God is a rock and refuge amid life's threats. Historically, it reflects the vulnerability of aging in ancient Israel and possibly David's later years or post-exilic struggles. Metaphorically, it speaks to modern believers about God's lifelong presence, especially for older generations who feel forgotten or vulnerable. In a Grant County context, the passage reminds the faithful that, despite cultural and economic shifts, God remains steadfast—a fortress through every stage of life.

This psalm could be printed on a bookmark or note on your refrigerator, giving you opportunities to reflect or seek God's guidance and comfort during any trying times you have.



## Gospel

Luke 13:10-17

JESUS HEALS A CRIPPLED WOMAN

*(Jesus teaches on his way to Jerusalem)*

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight.

When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.”

When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.

But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured and not on the Sabbath day.”

But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it to water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?”

When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame, and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things being done by him.

### OVERVIEW

Luke 13:10–17 recounts the story of Jesus healing a woman who had been bent over for eighteen years due to “a spirit of infirmity (a physical or mental weakness.” This healing occurs in a synagogue on the Sabbath. The synagogue leader objects, accusing Jesus of violating Sabbath law. Jesus responds by exposing the **hypocrisy of the religious leaders**: they would untie animals to give them water on the Sabbath, yet begrudge freeing a woman bound by suffering. The people rejoice, while Jesus’s opponents are shamed.

Using Religion and Religious Laws as a weapon is, in my opinion, the most hypocritical activity of so many of our Biblical understandings. When we do this, we are judging others. Let’s not do God’s job.

### BIBLICAL CONTEXT

This section of Luke comes amid Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51–19:27), where He teaches about the kingdom of God, repentance, and compassion. **Healing on the Sabbath was a recurring controversy in the Gospels (cf. Luke 6:6–11; John 5:1–18).** For Luke, who often highlights the marginalized, this story reinforces Jesus’ concern for women, the afflicted, and the socially disregarded.

The “daughter of Abraham” phrase is also significant—it stresses her covenantal worth, elevating her dignity as equal to that of men, countering cultural diminishment of women.

### HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

- **Sabbath Law:** In first-century Judaism, the Sabbath was not just about rest—it was a marker of Jewish identity under Roman rule. To “break” it was seen as dishonoring God and risking the nation’s covenant status. Leaders feared laxity would bring divine judgment. Jesus broke the rules!



- **Women's Status:** Women were often socially and religiously marginalized. A woman bent over, unable to stand upright, would be seen as physically and spiritually diminished, perhaps even stigmatized. Her physical status may have been viewed as more than physical, but possibly even a punishment from God.
- **Roman Context:** While Rome allowed Jews to practice Sabbath observance, it was politically charged. Leaders clung tightly to traditions as a form of resistance and survival under Roman oversight. Jesus's actions could thus feel like threats to communal stability, not just personal affronts.

#### HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

- **Approx. 30 CE:** Jesus is in the midst of His public ministry, teaching in synagogues on the way to Jerusalem.
- **Luke's Writing (80–90 CE):** Early Christians are wrestling with how Jewish law applies to followers of Christ, especially as Gentiles join the movement. Luke highlights stories that show Jesus redefining the law in light of compassion, to reassure Christians they stand in continuity with God's purposes.

#### SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY & GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

Metaphorically, the bent woman represents anyone bowed down by burdens—physical, physical appearance, emotional, economic, or spiritual. Her inability to stand upright mirrors how injustice and despair weigh people down.

- **Modern Application:** In today's context, this story challenges systems that prioritize rules or appearances over compassion. Legalism (the strict adherence to laws) in churches, bureaucracy in institutions, or rigid social hierarchies can all "bend" people over, leaving them unable to flourish. Again, if we are using a law to keep someone "in their place," then we are using that as our weapon. If you believe the Bible says something, then maybe the stance you should take is to not do that ... but, it's not our place to tell someone else not to do that. That's their relationship with God and his judgement, not ours. Let God do his job.
- **Grant County Context:** Think of how some in Grant County (and rural America more broadly) are weighed down by poverty, addiction, or generational struggles. Institutions (even churches) can sometimes prioritize rules, appearances, or tradition over healing and restoration. Jesus's act shows that dignity and liberation matter more than the fear of "breaking tradition." Just as Jesus loosened the woman's bonds, the church today can "untie" people through acts of compassion, support groups, and community service, even if it challenges entrenched ways of "how we've always done it." What does this tell us about following traditions? We should sometimes question our own thoughts and motives ... are they driven by Christ-like actions?

#### SUMMARY

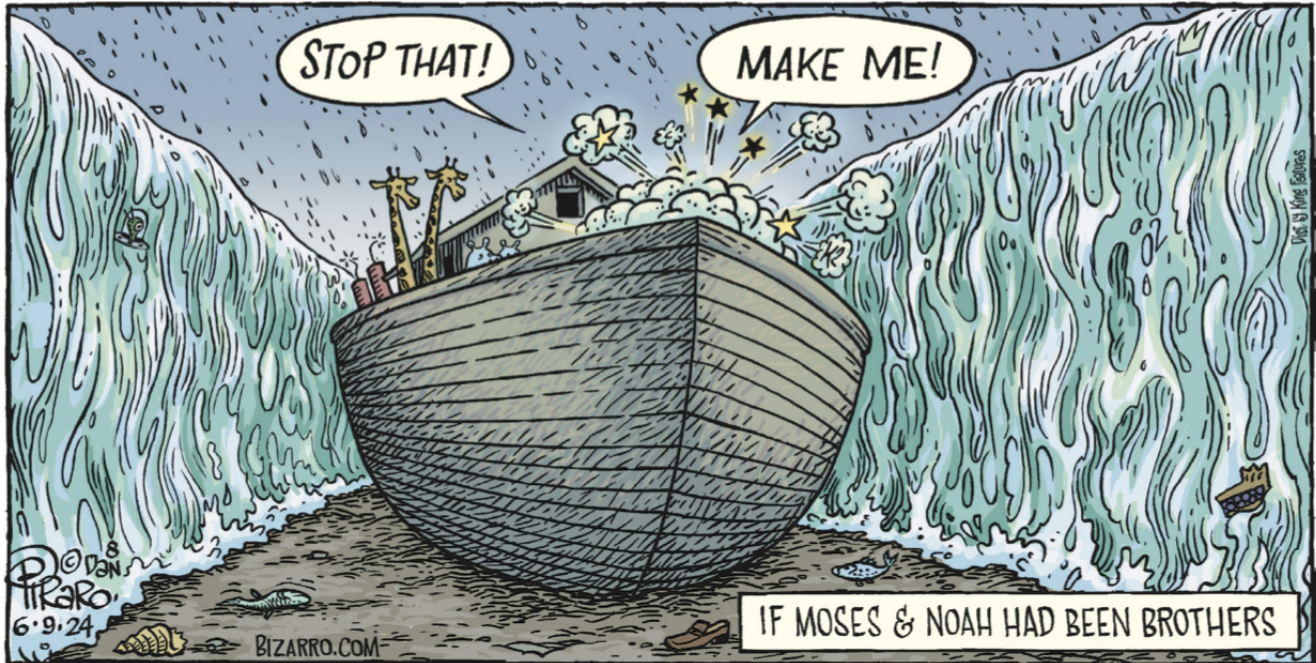
Luke 13:10–17 is a story of liberation. A woman, bound for eighteen years, is healed on the Sabbath. Religious leaders, clinging to rules, object. Jesus reorients the debate: if compassion for animals is permitted, how much more should compassion for a "daughter of Abraham" be shown? The people rejoice at God's power and mercy.

The passage affirms that God's kingdom *prioritizes people over rules, dignity over tradition*, and liberation over legalism. For readers today, it challenges us to examine where our communities—whether churches or local institutions—may be binding people under unnecessary burdens, and how we can join Christ in freeing them.



## Addendum:

### If Noah and Moses were Brothers



Couldn't resist.