

Jesus said to her,
"I am the resurrection and the life."
-John 11:25



Immanuel Lutheran Church & School

1449 34th Street NW, Winter Haven, FL 33881
www.WinterHavenLutheran.com

Rob Sauers, Pastor	(920) 602-3242
Neil Bernthal, Teacher	(863) 967-5145
Katie Naumann, Teacher	(253) 230-4184

As We Gather

When heartbreak strikes, our souls cry out, "Lord, come quickly!" Mary and Martha knew this desperation. They sent urgent word to Jesus, trusting He would rush to their dying brother's side. Instead, Jesus waited. As we gather this Fifth Sunday in Lent, we confront a painful reality: sometimes our loving Lord delays His help. To our frail flesh, this waiting feels like pure agony. We naturally wonder if He even hears us. But what if God's delay is not a denial? What if His waiting is actually setting the stage for a glory far greater than our immediate rescue? Today, we explore "The Beautiful Agony of God's Delay," preparing our hearts to discover the profound, unexpected comfort hidden within our Savior's perfect timing.

✠ Preparation for Worship ✠

Hymn

151 (1, 3, 5, 7) – Christ, the Life of All the Living

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Opening Sentences

Lamentations 3:25; Psalm 27:14; 30:15

P The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,

C **To the soul who seeks Him.**

P Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage,

C **And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!**

P For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life;

C **Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.**

Confession and Absolution

P Beloved in the Lord! We often find ourselves crying out in the darkness, "Lord, if You had been here, this tragedy would not have happened." We face illness, grief, and trials, and we wonder why our heavenly Father seems to delay His help. In our flesh, we grow impatient. We let the dry bones of our circumstances dictate our hope, and we despair as though the grave has the final word. Yet, our Lord invites us to bring our doubts, our fears, and our sins to Him, trusting that His timing is perfect and His mercy is sure. Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess to You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You. I confess my impatience and my lack of trust. I have doubted Your goodness when my prayers seemed unanswered and Your help seemed delayed. I have let the sorrows of this world overshadow the hope of the resurrection, and I have lived according to the flesh rather than the Spirit. Have mercy upon me, O Lord. Forgive my unbelief, and teach me to wait on You, that I may see Your glory.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. He who wept with us in our sorrow has conquered the grave for us, that His Spirit might dwell in us to give life to our mortal bodies. As a called servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

✠ The Service of the Word ✠

Glory be to the Father

Gloria Patri

P In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Lord, Have Mercy

Kyrie

Lord, have mer - cy on us. Christ, have mer - cy
on us. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of text: "Lord, have mer - cy on us. Christ, have mer - cy". The second staff contains the melody for the second line of text: "on us. Lord, have mer - cy on us." The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes.



Glory to God in the Highest

Gloria in Excelsis



Glo - ry to God, we give you thanks and praise; Of
Lord Je - sus Christ, the Fa - ther's on - ly Son, You
A - lone, O Christ, You on - ly are the Lord, At



heav'n - ly joy and peace on earth we sing. We wor - ship
bore for us the load of this world's sin. O Lamb of
God's right hand in maj - es - ty most high: Who, with the



You, to You our hearts we raise, Lord God, al -
God, Your glo - rious vic - t'ry won, Re - ceive our
Spir - it wor - shipped and a - dored, With all the



might - y Fa - ther, heav'n - ly King.
prayer, grant us Your peace with - in.
heav'n - ly host we glo - ri - fy.

Salutation

P The Lord be with you.

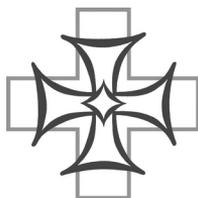
C And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray...

... who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.



¹ The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. ² Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. ³ And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know." ⁴ Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!' ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD." ' ' ⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' ' ¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' ¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. ¹⁴ I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it," says the LORD.' "

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 130

- P** Out of the depths
- C** I have cried to You, O LORD;
- P** Lord, hear my voice!
- C** Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.
- P** If You, LORD, should mark iniquities,
- C** O Lord, who could stand?
- P** But there is forgiveness with You,
- C** That You may be feared.
- P** I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
- C** And in His word I do hope.

- P** My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning
C **Yes, more than those who watch for the morning.**
P O Israel, hope in the LORD;
C **For with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption.**
P And He shall redeem Israel
C **From all his iniquities.**

Epistle Reading

Romans 8:1-11

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ¹⁰ And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Response

- P** Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.
C **Amen.**



Confession of Faith

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn

651 – Be Still, My Soul

Sermon Text

John 11:1-45

¹ Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³ Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.” ⁴ When Jesus heard that, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. ⁷ Then after this He said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” ⁸ The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?” ⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” ¹¹ These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.” ¹² Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” ¹³ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.” ¹⁶ Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.” ¹⁷ So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹ And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. ²⁰ Now Martha, as soon as she heard

that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹ Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” ²⁸ And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” ²⁹ As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, “She is going to the tomb to weep there.” ³² Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³ Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ³⁴ And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!” ³⁷ And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?” ³⁸ Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴² And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.” ⁴³ Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” ⁴⁴ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.” ⁴⁵ Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.



Sermon

The Beautiful Agony of God's Delay

- I. The Delay that Feels Like Denial
- II. The Delay that Demands Dialogue
- III. The Delay that Delivers Divine Glory

Offertory

Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir-it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from Your pres - ence. Take not Your Ho - ly
Spir-it from me. Restore to me the joy of Your sal -
va - tion. Up - hold with Your Spir - it free.

Hymn

355 – Thou Art the Way; to Thee Alone

Offering

Offering Hymn

441 (1-2)

1 We give Thee but Thine own, What -
2 May we Thy boun - ties thus As
e'er the gift may be; All that we have is
stew - ards true re - ceive And glad - ly, as Thou
Thine a - lone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.
bless - est us, To Thee our first fruits give!

General Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

C Amen.

Hymn

144 – Jesus, Grant that Balm and Healing

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✠ Announcements ✠

Upcoming Schedule – winterhavenlutheran.com/church-calendar

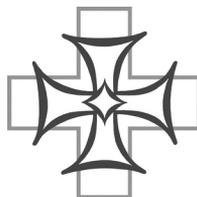
March 22	8:00 am	Worship Service (Orlando)
	10:15 am	Worship Service (Winter Haven)
March 25	2:00 pm	Midweek Lenten Worship
March 27	10:30 am	Learning with Littles
March 29	9:15 am	Bible Class
	10:15 am	Worship Service
April 2	7:00 pm	Maundy Thursday Worship
April 3	7:00 pm	Good Friday Worship
April 5	9:00 am	Easter Breakfast
	10:15 am	Worship Service w/ Holy Communion
	11:30 am	Quarterly Voters' Meeting

Upcoming Meetings: Here is a schedule of our upcoming meetings:

- **April 5** – Quarterly Voters' Meeting
- **May 3** – Education/Elders
- **June 7** – Trustees/Church Council

In Our Prayers: Please keep our shut-in members in your prayers: Don Beymer, Bob & Joan Doriot, Johanna Jaehnigen, David & Elsie Kleinschmidt, Shirley Rosenberry, and Mike Sheffield.

Looking Forward to Next Sunday: Next Sunday is Palm Sunday! In our worship, we will join the Jerusalem crowds in crying out, "Hosanna!" Yet, we know how quickly the cheers of that fickle crowd turned to vicious cries of "Crucify Him!" If we are honest, our own hearts are often just as fickle, wavering in our devotion to the Lord. Thank God our salvation does not depend on our steadfastness, but on His! Next week, as we enter Holy Week, our sermon text will be Isaiah 50:4-9a. We will behold "The Flint-Faced Savior for a Fickle People." Come and see how Jesus set His face like a flint toward the cross, willingly giving His back to those who struck Him, all to win your forgiveness.



Midweek Lenten Series: Set Free: The Gospel in Exodus: This Wednesday, we reach the final installment of our midweek Lenten series. This season, our meditations on "Set Free: The Gospel in Exodus" have richly reminded us how the Old Testament account of Israel's rescue from Egypt beautifully foreshadows our own ultimate deliverance from sin, death, and the devil. Just as the Lord heard the groaning of His people in bondage, He hears our cries and answers us definitively in the cross of Christ Jesus. Please join us for this final midweek opportunity to pause, gather around God's Word, and prepare our hearts for Holy Week as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior's passion.

Final Service Schedule: Wednesday, March 25 at 2:00 PM – The Good News of a God Who Sustains on Our Journey (Exodus 16:1-18, 35)

Learning with Littles – We're putting together special Easter bags for the children to enjoy at our March 27th Learning with Littles Session! We're aiming to make about 70 bags for children ages 4 and under, and we'd love your help. Below is a list of items that we could still use. We'll assemble the bags next Sunday, March 22nd.

- **Food Items:** Cutie oranges, granola bars, Animal crackers (No more candy needed.)
- **Non-Food Items:** Small containers of Play-Doh, mini slinkies, stickers, cross pop-its (from Amazon)

Thank you for supporting this outreach and helping us share the love of Jesus with young children and their families in our community!

Easter Lilies for Easter Sunday: We invite you to help beautify our sanctuary for Easter Sunday by purchasing an Easter lily in honor or memory of a loved one. Each lily is \$10. If you would like to participate, please sign up at the back of church by March 29.

ILC Dorm Supervisor: Jaqi Bredehoft will be resigning as girls dorm supervisor at the end of this school year. We thank her for her faithful service to the LORD and for being such a positive role model to our dorm students. ILC is accepting applicants for this position to begin the 2026-27 school year. This role is vital to our campus, given how dorm supervisors provide spiritual counsel and a fatherly or motherly role to those students who are living away from home. Females who are CLC members in good standing and are able and willing to fill this position may contact ILC President Daniel Schierenbeck (dan.schierenbeck@ilc.edu/660) for more information about the responsibilities and compensation for this position. An application is available online at ilc.edu > Forms and Applications > ILC Employment Application. Review of applications begins April 15.

CLC News: Pastor Rob Sauers of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Winter Haven, FL, has received the call to Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ. <> Pastor Jonah Albrecht of Redemption Ev. Lutheran Church, Lynnwood, WA, and Ascension Lutheran Church, Tacoma, WA, has received the call to Living Hope Lutheran Church, Appleton, WI. <> Dr. Daniel Sullivan has accepted the call from the CLC Call Committee for Educational Institutions to serve as a professor at Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary in Eau Claire, WI. <> Teacher Levi Schaller of Messiah Lutheran School, Hales Corners, WI, has received the call to Redeemer Lutheran School, Cheyenne, WY. <> Dr. Daniel Schierenbeck has accepted the two-year call from the CLC Call Committee for Educational Institutions to serve as the President of Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary in Eau Claire, WI. <> Teacher Lane Fischer of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran School, Mankato, MN, has received the call to Faith Lutheran School, Markesan, WI. <> Pastor Tom Naumann of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Madison Heights, MI, has accepted the call to Grace Lutheran Church, Fridley, MN. <> Teacher Noah Ohlmann of Grace Ev. Lutheran School, Valentine, NE, has received the call to teach grades 3-4 and serve as associate principal at Messiah Lutheran School, Eau Claire, WI. <> Pastor Nathanael Mayhew of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN, has been appointed by President Michael Wilke and has accepted the call to serve as the Secretary of the Church of the Lutheran Confession through June 30th of 2026. Pastor Mayhew is filling out the two-year term of former CLC Secretary, Pastor Wayne Eichstadt. Previously, Pastor Eichstadt had accepted the appointment to serve as a member of the ILC Board of Regents. He is filling out the term of former ILC Regent board member, Pastor John Hein.

Fruits of Faith		March 15, 2026	Attendance: WH – 38	
<u>Immanuel Lutheran Church</u>		<u>Church of the Lutheran Confession</u>		
<i>General Budget</i>		<i>General Budget</i>		
\$1,182.00	General Budget	\$0.00	CLC General Budget	
\$1,362.00	Weekly Need	\$67.31	Weekly Need	
-\$180.00	-Under / +Over	-\$67.31	-Under / +Over	
\$13,646.72	Year to Date Offerings	\$500.00	Year to Date Offerings	
\$14,982.00	Year to Date Need	\$740.41	Year to Date Need	
-\$1,335.28	Year to Date (+/-)	-\$240.41	Year to Date (+/-)	
<i>Non-Budgetary</i>		<i>Non-Budgetary</i>		
\$40.00	Benevolence Fund			

As announced by email, Pastor Sauers has received a call from Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Phoenix, AZ to be their pastor. In this time of deliberation and prayer, we do well to review what God says concerning the Divine Call.

The Divine Call

“The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps” (Proverbs 16:9). When met with decisions in life (whether a pastor with a call or anyone making an important decision), we use our God-given sense and abilities to evaluate those decisions. As we do this in prayer, seeking direction from God’s Word, and with a humble desire to follow God’s will, **we can be confident that the decision we reach is from the Lord.**

Our life’s purpose is to make the best possible use of the gifts God has given to us and to do so with thankfulness in service to Him and His kingdom. With this in mind, a call decision is based upon a careful consideration of this question: **“How can I best use the gifts and abilities God has given me to serve Him and His kingdom?”**

In evaluating this question it is helpful for an individual to seek advice from other people. Others may be better able to assess a person’s gifts and personal limitations. Others may also be able to recognize factors which the individual himself might overlook.

God’s call does not always match what human reason might suggest. Several of Jesus’ disciples were fishermen, and none were trained Bible scholars. Yet the Lord chose and equipped each of them to do His work.

A person considering a call will frequently pass through 1) an initial reaction either to accept or return the call; 2) confusion as the various factors are considered; and 3) a clear conviction and decision. If a person is convinced of God’s call, there should be no hesitancy to accept the call because whom the Lord calls He also equips (Exodus 4:10-17).

If a pastor returns a call, one might wonder why he received the call in the first place. Was the Holy Spirit wrong? No, God did not make a mistake. **There was a purpose for the call...perhaps to remind the congregation of their work, or as an encouragement to the pastor, or to cause those involved to appreciate their current situation.** Regardless, the Lord will use the situation for His good and glory.

*“How can I
best use the
abilities God has
given me to serve
Him and His
kingdom?”*

✠ Daily Bible Readings for Home Devotions ✠

March 23 – March 28, 2026

Monday - *John 8:46-59*

Accused of having a demon, Jesus responds, "On the contrary, I honor my Father" (verse 49). And when He said, "Before Abraham was born, I AM" (verse 58), they were ready to stone Him.

Tuesday - *Hebrews 9:11-15*

The high priests of old were mere illustrations of Christ, the high priest who is the mediator of a new covenant, and who sacrificed Himself to cleanse us from sin and give us eternal life.

Wednesday - *Genesis 12:1-3*

The LORD calls Abram out from his country and his father's family to a land new to him. He promises great blessings to Abram and great blessings to all families of the earth through him.

Thursday - *Psalms 27:1-6*

Because the LORD is our safe stronghold, we need not fear evildoers advancing against us. If we can see the beauty of the LORD (verse 4), we will be lifted up above the enemies around us (verse 6).

Friday - *Psalms 27:7-14*

With David (and Christ) we call upon the LORD in the day of trouble. Guided by the light of His Word we are taught His ways (verse 11). Confident of His goodness, we wait for the LORD! (verse 14)

Saturday - *Psalms 54*

When David was betrayed to Saul, who was hunting him down, he looked to God his Savior. Indeed, his Helper (verse 4) was the One who had power over every enemy, and could lift him up (verse 7).



