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Hey, it's so good to be with you. My name is Ryan. I'm one of the pastors around here. And to everyone at the campuses and everyone watching online—welcome.

If this is your first time with us, let me just catch you up and let you know where we are going to be going today. We're in this series of messages called *6 Words that Can Change Your Life*. And what we've been doing in this series is really doing a deep dive into all of our lives and looking at some of those things that we wish could change. Maybe it's a relationship, maybe it's a habit that we would like to alter.

What we've said is that a lot of times that change begins with the disposition of our hearts. And all of that change can begin with one word. And it's not just saying the word, but it's the courage that it takes to say the word, it's the space that the word creates that allows God to do incredible things in and through us.

So each week we've been exploring a new word. And today, no different, we're going to jump right in. And the word for today is:

### Help

Amen. It's a beautiful word, isn't it? Kind of pretty. It's okay. Alright, it's gross. It's hard to say. A lot of us when you saw it were like, "Speak for yourself. I don't need any help." Help is a tough word, especially when someone asks you, "Hey, do you need help?" Right? That's one that can get to you.

My wife, beautiful woman inside and out, I will be in the living room putting something together for one of the many children that we have. And it doesn't matter what it is. They all come the same way—disassembled in a million different pieces all of these different bolts and screws and pieces of plastic. Have you seen these things? Yeah, it's ridiculous. For those of you who don't have kids, imagine IKEA on steroids. But the thing that you're putting together will never be useful to you at all.

I'm sitting there. I'm doing my best. I'm trying to put this thing together and I'm lost. I'm trying to figure out how A goes into B and B goes into C... You ever start saying things out loud? Not directly to anyone but you just start saying things like, "Hey, I don't think I have all of the instructions. I think I'm missing one of these pieces of paper around here." Or, "Why wouldn't they give me all of the pieces? I'm missing the C4 bolt on this one. Anyone check the box? Has anyone seen the box for this?" All we're trying to do is justify why it is taking us so incredibly long to put this thing together.

And then my wife will walk in. And she'll walk in and she'll say, "Hey, you need some help?" Now, if you want to know if you might have a little bit of a problem with saying the word help or asking for help, what happens when someone asks you, "Do you need help?" Does the hair on the back of your neck stand up a little bit? Mine either, right?

That should be a normal thing, a normal adult would have heard, "Hey, do you need help?" "Hey, two heads are better than one." "Hey, let's do this thing together. We can knock it out twice as fast." But that's not what I heard. When I heard, "Do you need help?" I heard, "Hey, hey you little dummy, you okay buddy? Oh, no. You can't figure this out? Oh, okay. Why don't you go top off mamma's diet coke, I'll get working on this and we'll find something else for you to do."

Help has got a bad rap. It's become corrupt. This idea that it should be wrong to ask for help or to need help—it's just crazy. Help is not a bad thing, but I think what's happened is that within our world, kind of one of the driving forces for a lot of us is to know that we've made it... Is to say that we don't need help, right? That's the over-arching goal for a lot of us. That's how we know what success is—it's to be self-sustaining. To not need help from anyone or anything.

That's why we're taught things like: Work harder. Do better. Work harder. Do it again. Like, pull yourself up by your boot straps—whatever that means. My boots are strapless, I don't know about you guys. But you get the idea of it. So this idea of needing help kind of goes against everything that we've been taught. It's a negative rap.

But let's just wipe the slate clean with it, alright? Let's just start with a fresh note. What is help? What's the definition for help? Here it is:

Help: Make it easier for (someone) to do something by offering one's services.

Who wouldn't want that? That's rational. That's logical. That is a good thing to have. That is what help is. And another definition, and this is when it's used to ask for help. Here's the definition:

Used as an appeal for urgent assistance.

I need help. That's what it is. And just as a side note, I love—you know how they give you the definition and then they give you an example sentence? Here's the example sentence. "Help! I'm drowning!" That's what the word is.

But it doesn't exactly fit. If being self-sustaining is what success looks like, then needing something from anyone or anything doesn't really fit the mold. So we've kind of found a way around help and we've created a new word, right? And the new word is less vulnerable. It kind of makes you feel good. It fits everything else we say, and it's called Self-Help, right? Self-Help. Look at the definition of Self-Help:

The use of one's own efforts and resources to achieve things without relying on others.

We're like, "Yeah, I can get behind that. That fits the total picture of everything." And I'm telling you, Self-Help was a 12-billion-dollar industry last year. That's our common ground. So it is safe to say we need help. That's not the question in order—the question of should we be asking for help or do we need help with anything. We do, clearly. The question is where do we go for help? Do we go to one another? Do we go to God? Is Self-Help the future of what it looks like to get help? Are we invested in that? Or, is there something different?

In the world of help, is there something that kind of separates itself from the pack? Is there a kind of help that only one person or one thing can provide that separates itself from everything else? Is there help that can really change our lives, both for now and for all of eternity? That's what we're going to be looking at today.

If you have a Bible you can go ahead and get there—we're going to be in Luke, chapter 7, starting in verse 1. And what we're going to be dropping in on is an interaction between this Roman officer who desperately needs help. And we're going to see how he goes about it in this interaction that he has with Jesus.

Take a look with me. We'll kind of explain it as we go. It says, "When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people, he returned to Capernaum. At that time the highly valued slave of a Roman officer was sick and near death. When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some respected Jewish elders to ask him to come and heal his slave. So they earnestly begged Jesus to **help** the man. 'If anyone deserves your **help**, he does,' they said, 'for he loves the Jewish people and even built a synagogue for us.'"

So who is this guy? We don't know a lot about him, but we know that he is a Roman soldier. There are other parts of the Bible that kind of distinguishes him a little bit more. He's a big deal. He's a successful guy. He probably oversaw about 100 men in the Roman military. But still he comes to this spot where he needs help and it's some kind of help that all of his training can't provide. And that causes him to go looking for something that he doesn't have. He needs immediate and urgent assistance. So he went to them and he says: Hey, go ask Jesus if he can help me.

Keep reading. It says, "So Jesus went with them. But just before they arrived at the house, the officer sent some friends to say, 'Lord, don't trouble yourself by coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor. I am not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, "Go," and they go, or "Come," and they come. And if I say to my slaves, "Do this," they do it.'"

This guy is just full of surprises. Just think about the faith and the humility that it would have taken to make this request. He is a Roman soldier requesting help from the Jewish people. He's asking for help from a group of people who he is oppressing. Times are desperate and he needs help.

So he goes through all of this and then he takes it a step further when he finds out Jesus is actually going to come and help him. He says: No, no, no, no—I'm not worthy of that. Just say the word, just say it and it will be done.

Look at what happens next. It says, "When Jesus heard this, he was **amazed**. Turning to the crowd that was following him, he said, 'I tell you, I haven't seen faith like this in all Israel!' And when the officer's friends returned to his house, they found the slave completely **healed**."

What a God! Jesus heals. This is unbelievable. God is so powerful that Jesus doesn't have to be there, he doesn't have to be in the room. He just says it and it is done. It is so powerful what's going on here.

But what's also fascinating is Jesus' response. His response to this Roman soldier who is stepping out and saying: I need help. I've come to the end of myself. I need you to help me. And the reaction that Jesus gives is that it says he was amazed.

Another translation says that he marveled, he marveled at this man's faith. It stops him in his track. And he turns around to all of the people he is with and he says: I'm telling you, I've never seen faith like this in all of Israel. Nobody has faith like this guy.

What was that? What was it that separated the Roman soldier, what was it about his faith, what was it about his interaction where he asked for help? There are a few things in there that I think if we can lock on to them, we can get help, the kind of help that changes our lives—if we can get to the place where the Roman soldier was, then it won't be hard for us to ask for help and we can recover the word altogether.

So what did he have? We don't know a lot about him, but we know that he had these two things:

He believed that Jesus could help him, and

He was humble enough to ask for help.

He believed. There was something that happened throughout his life... To grow up in the Roman military, he didn't grow up with any kind of religion, but there was something that happened along the way that caused him to say: There is something different about this God of the Jews. And it caused him to cash in all of his chips. It caused him to help build them a synagogue.

There was something that was going on that he saw, and he said: I believe. I believe that Jesus can help me. I believe that he is powerful enough to. So even when it came to this big request of healing his friend who was dying, he felt good about it: I believe. I believe he can do it.

And the second thing is that he was humble. He was humble enough to think about how big of a request this was and to whom he had to go to. Like I said, he was going to a group of people who his government was oppressing. And he says: I know this is going to sound a little crazy, but I need your help.

And then he humbled himself to another layer when he heard that Jesus was actually going to come. He said: This is wild. No, no he's coming? Tell him to stop. Tell him to quit playing. Don't even come. You don't need to. I believe that if you just say it from where you are, this guy will be healed. Just say it and it will be done. He's humble. And we see the results. We see that his faith saved this man's life.

And when it comes to all of us here today, we need what this Roman soldier had. Maybe one or both of them as we kind of look at this. So here it is. This is what we need to get the help that we so desperately need:

We need to believe that Jesus can help us.

We need to be humble enough to ask for help.

We need to believe. And I know that there are probably some people in the room here today and the campuses and online, maybe that's where they are getting stopped, because they can't say that they truly believe. They've seen enough in their life that makes them think, "I don't know. I don't know if God can help me, or at the very least I don't know if he wants to help me."

Can we just say that from me, from the church, to you thank you for being here? Even if you don't believe what we believe, you belong here. Even if you never come to believe what we believe we're so glad that you're here. Keep coming, because what we truly believe is that if you have an interaction with Jesus, just like this Roman soldier did, that you can come to this spot where you say, "I believe because I've seen enough about this Jesus that's it's changed everything about my life." So believe. Keep coming.

And the second thing that we need is to be humble. And this is tough, because there's this hard thing, this tension, that is created when we start following Jesus. That day, that day when we said, "Jesus, I believe you are who you say you are. I'm going to follow you for the rest of my life," is a day filled with humility. You're dependent on God completely. You go and get baptized, which is the most humbling thing—you let an adult dunk under the water. It's so humbling.

But then we come out and some of those old ideas start circling in the back of our minds. Like Self-Help, that idea that I can do this on my own. "I don't need anything, or I shouldn't need anything. I can do this. I'm good. I've got this."

And the second thing that kind of strips us of our humility is when we have to ask for help for the same thing over and over again. We get to this place, "I don't even want to ask for help anymore."

Students in the room, you know what this is like. To raise your hand and to ask for help is so hard. I still remember where I was, the classroom, the teacher, when I asked about

independent and dependent clauses. She tried. She told the class this is what they are, this is how you use them, and I knew I had no idea what she was talking about.

So I said, “No, I can’t live like this. I need to know the difference between these independent and these dependent clauses. So I went up there and I said, “Hey, really quick, I have no idea what you are talking about. Can you break it down for me again?” And she did. She gave the real, public school effort. And she said, “Hey, this is independent, this is dependent,” went through the whole thing. And she looked up at me and we made eye contact and we both knew I had no idea what she was talking about. Still don’t know what she was talking about. And don’t even get me started with semi-colons because today is not the day for English.

It becomes so hard to ask for help and then to ask for help again, because we buy into this lie and it is straight from the Devil. People don’t want to help us. For sure God doesn’t want to help us. Not again. But we still need help so what do we do? We just hold onto that. But we still need help.

“I need help, but I can’t say anything. I need help with this addiction—still. The last time I brought it everyone did meet me with love and everyone was there for me, but I can’t bring this again: no, no.”

“I need help. I can’t stop looking at this screen, but I already told my wife that I wouldn’t do this again. I can’t bring it up again. It’s too much.”

“I need help with this anger that I can’t seem to get rid of.” “I need help with this depression.” “I need help with this anxiety.” But the lie creeps in there and says, “No, no. Don’t ask for help. Stop. Who’s going to help you? They don’t want to help you. And God, for sure, doesn’t want to help you.” Those are lies of the Devil.

Can I say this out loud for myself first and for everyone—God is not done helping you. God is not on the verge of walking away. God is not on his last attempt to try and help you. God is ready and locked in. Ready to help every single time. God’s not asking you to be perfect. God’s asking you to be humble, to not hide with it but to bring it to him over and over and over again. And he’s going to respond in the same way: Yes, my son. Yes, my daughter. I will help you. I will give you the strength you need. I’m here for you.

And when we have that—come on, we get to celebrate some more today. When we have that it becomes so much easier to ask the people who are around us for help, because we know God’s behind us, God’s with us, and God’s given us people who can help us as well.

Which is it for you? Is it belief? Are you having a hard time getting behind this idea that God is with you? Is it humility? Just so hard to ask and to ask again—to need help. Which one is it for you?

I also know there are probably some people in the room who are wanting to raise your hand and say, “No. I did both of those. I asked for help. I did. I mean I believed that God could help me. I was humble. I’ve never been more humble and I was never more in need when I came to God and I asked him for what I needed and it seemed like he was silent. It seemed like he didn’t do anything to help me in my moment of need.”

Can I just say, I hear you? I’ve been in those situations where it becomes so hard. And you really begin to wrestle with these doubts and these fears and these worries, “Is God there? Does he really want to help?” And we believe that he does. We believe that he’s an active God. We believe that he is present in every single thing. He is there and he wants to help.

But I think we have to get to a foundational level and look at a question that will bring so much clarity and remove so many doubts and questions. It’s getting to this spot where:

What is God trying to help us do?

Because I think that if we don’t start here it can cause so much confusion. What is God trying to help us do as we’re going through life? What is God’s goal for me and you? What does he want to help us do? If we can get that right, I think that so many other things can begin to make sense. Here it is. This is what God is trying to help us do:

God is trying to help us look more like Jesus.

At the end of the day, if you’re ever in a situation and your asking for God’s help—whatever it is: relationally, financially—whatever it is, just know God’s primary concern isn’t giving you and me what we need in the moment, it’s to help us look more and more like Jesus. That’s why a lot of times it’s hard to even see how God is responding and what he’s doing behind the scenes until after the fact.

I remember when I was going in to ministry and I remember getting a text message asking, “Hey, do you want to come interview for a spot—full-time ministry?” And I thought, “This is unbelievable.” I went through the interview process and I got to the end of it and I got the job. And the offer came in, but the offer was less than what I was currently making.

And things were already tough. I mean, we were a young family. We were just getting things going. I remember leaving work that day, this big day that I’d been looking forward to, this day that I felt that God was calling me to this thing. But then I wasn’t so sure. And I’m driving home that day. I’m on the interstate and I’m going 60—whatever the speed limit was, that’s what I was going but I’m driving down the road, right?

And I’m wrestling with all of these thoughts. And so much doubt is coming in and so much confusion. It was like, “God, I asked for help. I asked for you to help me go into

ministry. I feel like this is where you are calling me, what you want me to do and here I am and it's not making any sense on paper. Help me understand."

And I promise you. I'm driving down 465 in the middle lane and my car shuts off, completely. Not like puttering, "Oh, I better find a gas station somewhere." The car shut off. And it took everything I had—no power steering... I get it over to the shoulder and I'm sitting there and I'm like, "What is going on?"

And I'm telling you, in that seat I had this moment with God. It wasn't audible, but it was undeniable. He said, "Do you trust me? Do you trust me?" He was saying, "Do you know who I am? I'm the God of this universe. I'm the God who can stop your car amongst all of the other cars. I'm the God who can move it from the middle of the road to the side of the road and bring you here safely so that I can have a conversation. I'm the creator and sustainer of all things. Do you trust me? Do you believe that I will help you? You're worried about a few dollars; do you trust me?"

And I said, "Yes, sir. I do. I trust you. I believe."

And the car was still in drive. I put it in park. And I turned the car off. I turned it back on. It started right up, and I drove home. And I knew that I was going to do it and I knew God was going to help me. You couldn't tell me nothing.

I was right that God was going to help me. I was wrong in how he was going to help me. I got home and I was like, "Babe, check the mail. Check the mail. Money is coming." Alright? I don't want to rush it. We're about to be rich though. I just had this moment on the interstate with God—the whole thing. I'll tell you about it later. Just let me know when it comes.

Maybe a phone call? He didn't tell me how he was going to do it, alright? But he's going to help. And I take the job. And I go into it. And God helped. He just didn't help me the way that I thought he was going to help me. You see, I wanted immediate resources. I wanted the thing that I wanted right then and right there. That's not what God did. You see, God was after my character. God was after me looking more like Jesus.

So what he did was he gave me opportunities to ask for help. He put me in a spot that I've never been in before—a young father, a husband, provider. And I was brought to this place at the end of myself where I had to ask people, I had to ask my parents for money.

And what God was doing was scraping pride out of my heart and he was showing me, "This is bigger than you. You're going to have to rely on other people. You're going to have to rely on me." And through those opportunities, the disposition of my heart changed. And that whole thing happened with one word: Help. Can you help me? And I've never been the same since.

God actually has a word for this process of helping us look more and more like Jesus. The word that we find is:

### Sanctification

And really what it is is just a two-dollar word that means that we want to look more like Jesus tomorrow than we did today. And I'm telling you, the hits just keep on coming. This is a process that we can't do alone. We need one another for it and we desperately need God for it. And he knew that.

All this time as he was getting to the end of his ministry, Jesus would tell people: Hey, listen. I'm about to go. But don't worry because when I go it's actually going to be better for you, because when I go, I'm going to send my Spirit here to be with you. And do you know another word for his Spirit? The way he says it:

### The Helper.

I'm going to help you every single step of the way. You believe in me? I'm going to help you look more like me. I'm going to help you love like me. I'm going to help you have the kind of faith that I have. I'm going to help you care about people like I do. He sends this Helper to help us look more and more like Jesus.

I love the way 2 Corinthians puts it, "So all of us who have had that veil removed," we know who Jesus is, we know that he died for us, we know that he is for us, we know how good he is, we've seen him, and we "can see and reflect the glory of the Lord." And here it is, "And the Lord—who is the Spirit—**makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.**"

Church, have you seen him work in this way? If you know that he is transforming you to look more and more like him, can we celebrate that today? Oh, he is a good God. He is a God who is here for us, he is a God who is so... Man, we need to celebrate him! Unbelievable.

So if that's what God is looking to do, if God is trying to get us to look more and more like Jesus, maybe the question that is on your mind is: Why is that helpful? Why does that mean that that's a better life for me? Why does that mean that it's better for the planet? What does that even mean? What does that look like? To look more like Jesus, how is that a good thing? How does that separate itself from every other thing that the world offers?

Let me try and paint the picture for you. If you could imagine thousands of people like we have every single Sunday at our campuses and watching online—a group of people who looked like Jesus, a group of people who walked in love, a love that showcases itself by saying, "Hey, I'm willing to die for you," that's the kind of love that we are talking about, heavy love, a group of people who aren't isolated by pride but they are filled with

humility so they are asking God for help, they are asking one another for help it is a beautiful, beautiful picture.

A group of people who look like Jesus, who believe in Jesus, so they have something that transcends every single social construct that separates us. Whether that's race, background, ethnicity, social... If we're looking more like Jesus, we're saying, "You're my brother. You're my sister. I'm here to live for you, to care for you, to carry your burdens—no, your problem is not just your problem, your problem is my problem, my problem is your problem." Imagine that.

Now imagine that those just aren't words. They are not just good intentions that we wait for one day. But then imagine if we are looking more like Jesus and that we have the power to be like Jesus in his Spirit, so not only do we think these things, we have the power to do them, we have the strength to do them, we have the patience, the wisdom, we have the endurance to go through life and to help people as we go—can you imagine?

Can you imagine that kind of help and what it would do to the world? Where we could love one another and help one another and we are fueled by the Holy Spirit, his Helper, every single step of the way.

And we actually have an opportunity to help. If you've been around here for a little bit, then you know this is what we're all about—helping. Helping other people look more like Jesus and to do that a lot of times we have to remove unnecessary barriers that are keeping people from him. And there's a very specific group of people we want to help, and they are vulnerable children here in our city. And we want to help them, not because it's just a good thing to do but it's what Jesus commanded us to do and we want to look like him.

And here's how you do it. Go to this link:

[tpcc.org/worshipnight](http://tpcc.org/worshipnight)

Take a picture of it right now. Write it down and go to this website today. Here's where it's going to take you. It's going to take you to an Amazon wish list that corresponds with the campus you attend. And on that list you will see all kinds of essential items that vulnerable children here in our city need. They need help. These items help keep families together. And these items help kids as they begin their journey to foster care.

We want to help every single step of the way. Go today. Buy these items. And then bring them with you Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at our next worship night. We're going to come together. We're going to assemble all of this and we're going to pray like crazy for vulnerable children in our city. Are you guys with us in this? Serving vulnerable children. Helping vulnerable children here.

Let's kick it back. Everything that we do and why we do it—the reason we help vulnerable children, the reason we help at all is because Jesus first helped us. Jesus helped us do what we could not do on our own. He saw us struggling. He saw that we needed immediate assistance and we needed it now.

We needed a resource we didn't have. So he left heaven. The God of this universe would wrap himself in skin and bones and he would help. He would help show what God is really like, what he's looking for, how we can look more like him. And then he would help even when help meant dying for you and me—that's exactly what he did. Jesus would go to a cross and he would die, paying the penalty for our sins defeating death once and for all. He helped.

But he didn't remain dead. Church, Jesus rose three days later and he said, "Come to me." And if you have faith in me the same can be true for you. Trust me. Believe in me.

You see, nothing has changed about Jesus in the 2,000 years since he's been here. He's still responding in the same way. We're still saved through faith. That's why the Roman soldier's servant was healed, because of faith. We need what he has. One more time:

We need to believe that Jesus can help us.

We need to be humble enough to ask for help.

Church, we need to believe. If you're here today and you're wanting to believe, you're wanting to know why you should believe, what separates Jesus from everything else—there is no one in this world who was willing to die for you, there is no one in this world who went to a cross for you, who paid the full penalty of everything. There is no one else that fills every single need, both in this life and in the life to come. We have perfect help in Jesus.

And because of Jesus, we have permission to be humble, because this whole situation is predicated on the fact that we need help. It's okay to ask for it. We need help from God every single day and we need help from one another. We need help coming before God, being reconciled, so God sent Jesus. We needed help looking more and more like Jesus, so God sent his Spirit. We needed help to do all of that, so God sent his church.

We have every single thing that we need, everything that separates itself is found in Jesus. So what we want to do today is just to create an opportunity to respond. To maybe ask for help for the first time. To say, "Jesus, I believe." To cry out with a humble heart and believe Jesus died.

Believe: "You've done everything that I needed. That you continue to do everything that I need. I believe that faith in your finished work on the cross will bring me your Spirit and that Spirit will transform me. He will change me. Day in and day out I will look more and more like Jesus—from day to day, from month to month, from year to year until I pass,

until the day I come face to face with you, God, in all of your glory and me in all of mine. And you will say that this is what I saw all along. This was what I was trying to help you do. I was never on my way out. I was here to help.” We get to respond to that today.

Do you need help? Be vulnerable enough to say it. Maybe it’s been a long time since you’ve said the word *Help*. Let God work through your heart in these next moments. Reflect on it—what do you need help with? And trust that Jesus can bring it.

Pray with me.

God, we thank you for today. God, we thank you for this help. There is nothing like it. There is nothing the world can offer. There is no Self-Help industry, there is nothing that can get to the root of our problems except for you, except for your love, except for your Spirit. So, God, let this be a moment of response. Let this be a moment where we are knocking down heaven’s door saying we need help. And we’re okay to ask for it, because you’ve called us to be humble. We’re not hiding.

God, in these moments give us the courage to say it, maybe for the first time say it out loud. God, help our unbelief. God, help us to look more like Jesus. We beg all of these things in your perfect name. Amen.