

Hand of **HELP**



December 2024 - January 2025

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Dross

I will try to put into words that which the Spirit has been convicting me of these past few weeks. The Biblical truths I want to share are unappealing to the flesh, but in my current heart state, they are precisely what I need to cling to and perhaps something you also may need to take to heart. I liken the following to the sting of a disinfectant on a wound already raw and painful, the often-needed “it has to get worse before it can get better” approach.

As much as my flesh wants to play the victim, deflect, and point the finger at others, the Spirit wants to address sin and shortcomings in my own heart, bringing light to and exposing dark areas of my life where I have questioned Him and instances when I have failed to trust Him fully.

During the furnace of life’s trials and ministry difficulties, the enemy would like nothing more than our capitulation. Weary saint, please know that your trials are not accidental, nor are they without purpose.

1 Peter 4:12 speaks to the expectation we should have pertaining to fiery trials. Depending on the translation you use, “do not think it strange” or “do not be surprised” is the wording Peter uses, which, in essence, is the same thing. Let no charlatan fool you; trials are part of the believer’s life to establish God’s purposes and to refine His own! Our testing, purging, and cleansing are taking place by His divine design.

Not only are we to expect persecution, but we are to rejoice in it and keep on rejoicing! Don’t stop! Let our rejoicing start now, and may it continue until the revealing of His glory when He returns!

1 Peter 1:6-9, “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise,

honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.”

I find myself praying something I can’t recall ever voicing before, “Father, strengthen me to welcome the refining fires that rid me of my dross.”

For clarity’s sake, I am welcoming that which our Sovereign God has established for my sanctification and maturing, not inviting that which He has not.

As we look to a new year, may we do so with the expectation of trials that might come so as to not be surprised, and may it be with peace and not anticipatory anxiety. Yes, we will be tried, but He has revealed these things to us in His Word – we need not be caught off guard.

Yes, the refining flames will sting, but we will not stop rejoicing! Though the fires blaze, He will provide timely grace; we will remain steadfast in faith, knowing that though painful, they are indeed purposeful; He is ridding us of the dross and conforming us into the image of His Son, our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Less drossy than yesterday, drossier than tomorrow,
Daniel Boldea



Steadily Forward

As Hand of Help is inching towards its 40th anniversary, the reality that we are not getting any younger is upon us. Even so, as achy and crackling as our joints have become, our resolve to continue in the work the Lord has entrusted to us is stronger than ever.



Proverbs 4:25-27, “Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.”

A short trip down memory lane brings to mind difficult times in the ministry’s history, times when the need around us far outweighed the resources available. It is those not-too-distant memories that reinforce our dependency on Him and our increased gratitude for the manner in which the work is blessed and continues to this day.

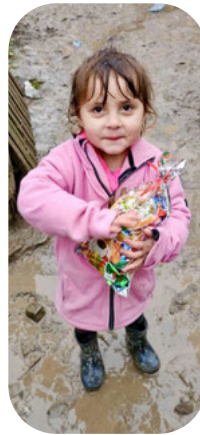
For those who have weathered those storms with us, our words of gratitude are too few! A special and altogether unique bond is formed between those who have been in the trenches together, who fought together, bled together, sacrificed, and persevered together; we are grateful for you!

For all of you who are newer to the work of Hand of Help, we pray that we are able to encourage you in the work of the Lord and challenge you to a closer walk with Him as we set out on this journey together to reach the lost, “... warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, and be patient with all” (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Together and steadily forward for our Master,
Hand of Help Staff







Beautiful Feet

Bunions, callouses, warts, hammertoe, and nails thickened by fungi that no amount or layers of polish can hide; how can anyone call feet beautiful?

Their beauty is certainly not in what meets the eye but rather in the purpose they serve.

Isaiah 52:7, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”

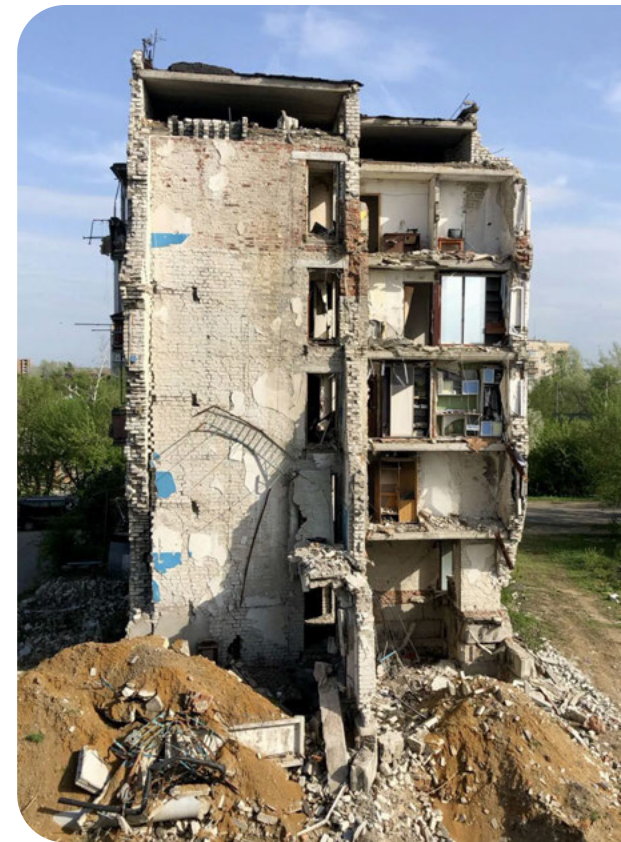
Throughout the variety of projects we tackle both in Romania and Ukraine, the Gospel is front and center. Without the Good News message, all of our work would be for naught, much like putting a band-aid on a dying man.

The beauty of feet is brought up again in Romans 10:14-15, “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!’”

We continually thank God for the diligent workers who are relentless in their pursuit of lost souls, those who bring beauty to their feet. Last but certainly not least, we thank you for your faithful participation in furthering the Gospel message through the work of Hand of Help.

Romans 10:17, “So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”

Hand of Help Staff



Common to Man

It's hard to plan for a disaster or utter devastation even when you have advanced warning and you have a handful of hours or, at best, a day to pile the sandbags, board up the windows, move your earthly belongings upstairs, and pray you've done enough to get through it with minimal loss. It's quite another when the disaster comes suddenly, unexpectedly, and is so complete in its destruction that all you have left after a lifetime's worth of labor is the memories you hold in your heart.



While America was dealing with its own devastation, other regions throughout the world were enduring similar hardships, seemingly at the same time, as though the storms had colluded and decided to unleash their fury all at once. Terms such as a storm for the ages or a once-in-a-lifetime event were being used not only here in the States but also in various parts of Europe, including Romania.



We don't get hurricanes, and rarely do we get tornados, but we do get storms. Given the crumbling infrastructure and the building materials used for most homes in rural areas, even a moderate storm can have devastating effects. The storm that descended upon the county of



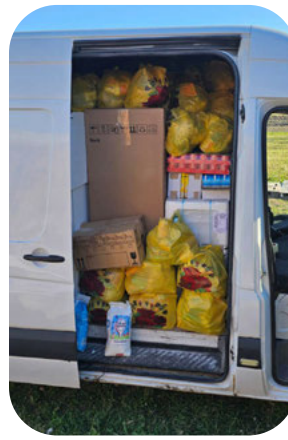
Galati was no moderate storm. The rainfall set a new record, and as an elderly woman who survived the subsequent flooding said, "It's as if the heavens opened up and a waterfall fell on our heads."

That the half-finished dam which was supposed to keep the floodwaters in check hadn't been worked on in thirty years didn't help matters, and within a forty-eight-hour span, thousands of homes were washed away, leaving the survivors to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives, and find shelter. Even after the waters receded, there wasn't much left to salvage since anything that was built out of mudbrick and straw was unable to withstand the floodwaters, and the few homes that remained were filled with mud and detritus.



Roads, bridges, and the overall infrastructure also suffered catastrophic damage, but seeing the need, we did what we could and delivered emergency food, cleaning supplies, and appliances as they were needed.

While there, we also committed to helping with a rebuilding project for the Bandeanu family, who lost their home, and the workshop the husband worked out of, the proceeds from which were their only source of income.



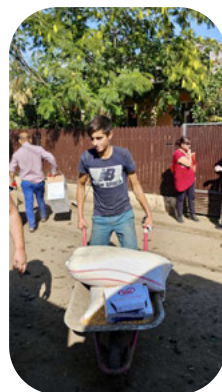
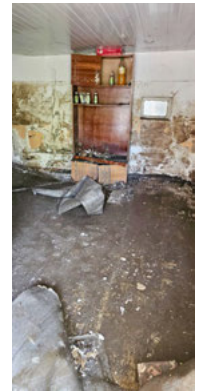
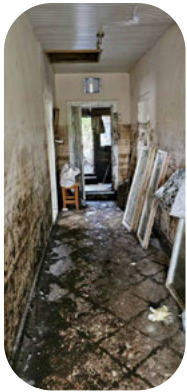
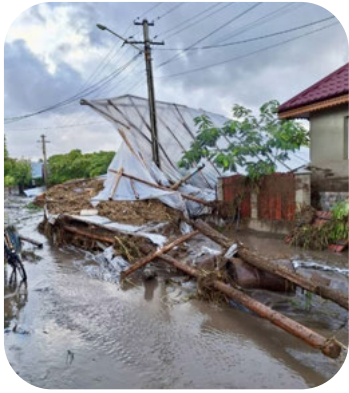
The need is nearly overwhelming, and it doesn't stop when the waters recede. Once the waters are no more and the dead are counted, it's the beginning of a long journey to some semblance of normalcy. As we continue to be a hand of help to those affected by these floods, please keep the people of Galati in your prayers.



In His service,
Hand of Help Staff



Common to Man (cont.)



Child of the Month

Rebeca C. was born in May of 2007. After turning 7, Rebeca moved from her small village home to a large city where she could train for gymnastics. Because of the distance, she was only able to come home during her extended summer breaks. Those years offered Rebeca the chance to study in a good school while pursuing her passion for gymnastics. In the 3rd grade, she moved back home and continued her studies at a local school.

Her first year of high school proved to be extremely difficult. She was not able to adjust to the new environment, and she drifted into a very dark state; she decided to skip classes, refused to eat a proper diet, and was in an extreme state of depression and anxiety. An area pastor suggested that Rebeca be transferred to a Christian high school. Although it was further away than anyone wanted to travel, and Rebeca no longer wanted to continue her education, after much fervent prayer, she agreed, and God made a way for her to attend the new high school.

Despite her frail health and continued depression, Rebeca slowly started getting better. Her improvement was incremental, but there was progress and she was heading in the right direction. She got baptized in the summer of 2023, but her struggles returned soon after. Rebeca stopped attending school and refused to talk to anyone except her parents. God once again worked in her life and pulled her out of her spiral, and she was able to return to class in January of 2024.

Her grades soon improved; she was able to help her parents with chores around the house and also take on jobs in the village for some extra income. One day after returning from work, she came home to find her mom bedridden and feeling unwell. Her health continued to deteriorate, and the local authorities stepped in and decided to take the mother to the hospital and the children to a local Child Protection center. In September of 2024, while at that center, she found out she could stay with us at Hand of Help, along with her fourteen-year-old brother, David.

Rebeca's father suffered a head injury when he was young, due to which he is unable to care for the children alone. The children talk to him daily. Soon after being admitted to the hospital, Rebeca's mother was diagnosed with cancer, a battle she continues to wage.

This fall, while on her hospital bed, with her children in attendance, Rebeca's mother declared her faith in the Lord and was baptized. Despite her extreme physical suffering, she understood the loving kindness of our Father and the sovereignty He has over all aspects of our lives. She decided to follow Him for the rest of her days, however long or short He determines them to be.

Praise God for allowing Rebeca and David to witness such a blessed moment!

Please pray for Rebeca, David, and both parents! May the Hand of Help staff also be granted wisdom on how best to minister to them during this time of testing.




Dear Brethren,

Tomorrow and what it will bring may be a mystery to us, but not so to the God we serve. Although wars and rumors of war abound, peace seems to have been snatched from the earth, and the world is akin to a bubbling cauldron ready to boil over, we, as His beloved, are at peace, free from the tumult, knowing that God is able and faithful to keep His own and shelter them from anything and everything. It is a priceless comfort.

Had we not had the promise of His providential protection and guidance through the storms of this world, chances are we would have been as despondent and skittish as everyone around us seems to be. There is this constant sense of uncertainty and dread that nothing seems to dispel, and although those in power with the ability to tailor the narrative insist that all is well and there is nothing untoward happening, most people just don't believe them anymore.

At some point, no matter how insistent one is that you shouldn't believe your lying eyes, you tune them out, let your eyes focus, and see reality for what it is. For some, it's a shock to the system, like being plunged into an ice bath from a dreamless sleep; for others, it's confirmation that the Word of God is true and what He said would occur during these last days wasn't a guess but a certainty. God wasn't throwing darts blindfolded, hoping He'd hit the mark eventually. Being outside of space and time as we know it, He knows the end from the beginning and, in His love and grace, tells us what to expect in the coming days.

He does so not to scare us or get us to buy buckets of gruel from some shady website but to confirm the truth we know in our hearts that if He knows what tomorrow will bring, He has also made a way for His children through it. God is not in the dark about anything. He is not in the dark about tomorrow, next week, next month, or next year. He is detail-oriented to the point



of keeping count of the hairs on your head, so the notion that He has not prepared a place for His own to be safe and protected is anathema. Geographically speaking, as individuals, your place may be different than mine, but the end result will be the same. We are the children of God, under His protection, trusting in His sovereignty and omnipotence.

It is no sin to see and acknowledge the events taking shape around us, but it is a sin to fear what effect they will have on us. If I'm fearful about tomorrow, all it means is that I don't trust God today. I know my Redeemer lives. That's all the hedge I need against the chaos of the world. He is faithful and true, and none who have put their trust in Him have felt shortchanged or thought it misplaced.

Yes, dark days are on the horizon, but the light of His presence must shine all the more in the hearts of His children as the world begins to unravel. In Him, we have peace and joy that surpasses understanding, and we take strength in the knowledge that He will never forsake us.

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea, Jr.