

**Where Does My Help Come From?
Worship the King: Psalm 121
Sunday, May 11th, 2025
By Ryan Perry**

Scripture

Psalm 121

A Song of Ascents.

[1] I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

***[2] My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.***

***[3] He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.***

***[4] Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.***

***[5] The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.***

***[6] The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.***

***[7] The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.***

***[8] The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore.***

Let's Pray

Introduction

As summer is almost upon us, I can imagine that many of you have plans to travel to various places throughout the state, the country, or even the world. And as the time draws near to go, there is the inevitable anxiety and worry that comes with making sure you've checked all the boxes. Is my work in order, is the house taken care of, did I pack everything, do I have the itinerary and plane tickets, or is the vehicle ready to go?

These are the kinds of things that can be so stressful about getting away that when we come back from traveling or vacation, we feel like we need a vacation from the vacation.

In our Psalm for this morning, we are going to encounter two men. One who is either on a journey or is getting ready to go on one (V. 1-2). And another, who is helping him to prepare for what's ahead (V. 3-8).

Now, the one who's going is dealing with a lot of worry and stress surrounding his travel plans, because he knows that this excursion will be filled with various stressors and dangers.

So he asks a very real question that we all would probably ask in similar circumstances: **who's going to help me through this? And of course, because he's a good Jew, he gives the right answer, the LORD (Yahweh).**

But that doesn't mean he is fully prepared to meet the challenges ahead. So this other man chimes in to remind him of all the ways that God will take care of him on his journey.

Because he wants to make sure that this man is trusting that the Lord will take care of him throughout his life and travels.

And my hope is to do the same thing this morning.

So, on this Mother's Day, if you find yourself asking the question, "who is going to help me through _____?" That you would leave here with the confidence that the God of the universe, who sent his son to the cross for you, will watch over you, he will protect you, and his love and care for you will never end.

But before we get there, let's start with the Traveler's opening question.

1. Where does my help come from?

Psalm 121:1-2

[1] I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where does my help come?

***[2] My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.***

Illustration

Imagine that you're on a long drive in the middle of nowhere and in the distance, you begin to see really dark clouds. Then all of a sudden a National Weather Service announcement comes on the radio and says that a really bad thunderstorm with heavy rain, hail, and high winds is headed your way.

How do you think you would respond?

Now, there are probably a few of you who don't ever get rattled by things like this. But for the rest of us, there would be a little fear and worry that would creep in as we get ready to go through the unknown dangers of the storm.

Text

In Psalm 121, this may have been exactly what the Psalmist was facing in the first two verses. But instead of dealing with the perils of weather, he was dealing with the possible dangers that awaited him in the hills.

In the ancient world, hills were a common hiding spot for mobs, bandits, and robbers who could be lying in wait to mug the Psalmist, or worse, kill him. So seeing these hills in the distance, was causing him a great deal of worry, fear, and probably doubt in his life.

So he asks a very straightforward and simple question. **Where does my help come from? Who's going to protect me and get me through this?**

Application

I fully realize that none of us have probably ever been mugged or experienced bandits like those in the ancient world, but we've definitely all asked the question, at one time or another, **"how am I going to get through this?"**

How am I going to get through this health crisis? How am I going to get through the loneliness I feel? How am I going to get through the loss of a loved one? How am I going to get through this jam-packed season of life that is full of work, kids, activities, homeschooling, church, etc...? **Who is going to help me with this?**

On some level, even though your life isn't in danger like his, you can probably understand the stress and anxiety that this man was experiencing.

Text

However, as I said, this man is a good and God-fearing Jew. Which means that he knows the right answer to his question, at least on an intellectual level. **That in this time of possible impending doom, his help will come from the LORD (Yahweh), the one true God who made heaven and earth, and everything in it.**

You see the hills in scripture can also represent the dwelling place of the pagan or false gods like Baal or Asherah. So the psalmist wants to be clear about the fact that he isn't trusting in these fake gods, but that he is looking to the one true God, the creator of all things, as his source of help.

Because he knew that Yahweh was a promise-keeping God who made a covenant with the Jews to be their God.

As it says in Exodus 6:6–7:

[6] Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. [7] I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

This is a firm promise from God that the psalmist can lean on in his time of need. That he belongs to God and that God will be with him. And it's a promise that also applies to us, because of the new and better covenant that God made with us through his Son Jesus Christ.

As Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:11–13:

[11] Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—[12] remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. [13] But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Because of Christ, we are not only God’s people, but we have been brought near to him, and his Spirit now lives within us. **Therefore, he will be the one who will help us in our time of need.**

Application

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, this morning, I know that you know this already. You know what the Bible says about your relationship with God. You know that he will never leave you nor forsake you (Deut 31:8), that he is working for your good (Rom. 8:28), and that he will take care of you (Matt. 6:30).

And yet, we can still functionally live a life where worry consumes us and eats at our soul. Because we can have an intellectual belief in God versus one that is lived and experienced.

So, like the man in the opening two verses, we need to be reminded of God’s tender love and care for us, as his people..

That we would be able to take what we know about God (in our heads), and have it affect our hearts and the actual lived moments of our day-to-day lives.

This is where another wiser and more seasoned voice comes in and says in verses 3-8: **You need to trust in the Lord’s care.**

2. Trust in the Lord’s care.

To be honest, we don’t know anything about the person who responds in verse 3. But I think it’s probably a man who is an older and wiser Jew.

Someone who, like the Preacher in Ecclesiastes, has experienced the myriad of joys and pains of a life under the sun. Who can look at this young man, on his journey, and can say, *“I’ve been there, I know what you’re going through. But trust me, it’s going to be okay, **God will take care of you.**”*

Application

As a side note, I just want to say that we all need people like this in our lives, don’t we? Whether you’re young or old, a new or seasoned parent, single or married, we all need people who have a little more life experience to help us along in the journey of faith.

Those people who can tell us, “it’s okay, I’ve been there, and God will help you just like he helped me.” These people are such an indispensable blessing to us, especially when we are so prone to forget that God is working in our lives.

Text

This is exactly what the older man in verses 3-8 does for the younger and less experienced man of verses 1-2. He comes alongside him to show him all the ways that God will take care of him as he faces the unknown dangers of the hills ahead.

The first thing he tells him is that God will watch over him.

He will watch over you.

Psalm 121:3–4

***[3] He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.***

***[4] Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.***

Illustration

When our oldest Josh was only about a year or two old, we went on vacation with some friends to the Outer Banks in North Carolina.

It was amazing. We stayed right on the beach, and every day we would spend our time sitting in the sand, digging deep holes, and enjoying the sun and the ocean water.

But one of the things I remember most about that trip was taking Josh into the water. I would either take him by the hand and go to the edge of the waves, or I would carry him into the ocean so that he wouldn’t be toppled over by the force of the water.

Now, unfortunately, I remember it so well because one of the times I didn’t do a great job, and he definitely got toppled by a wave.

But one of the reasons that he was even willing to go in was because he knew that I was with him, and wasn’t going to let anything happen to him.

Text

Church, do we understand that we serve a powerful and triune God who says the exact same thing to us.

Look at Jesus words at the very end of the book of Matthew in 28:20. He says:

[20] And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Our God and Savior, the one who died for us, is always and will always be watching over us. **This is true no matter where we go or what happens in our lives.**

This is why the wiser voice in Psalm 121:3, ***“he will not let your foot be moved.”***

Application

Now, you’re definitely going to experience weaknesses in your life, and there will, for sure, be times when you feel like giving up.

Maybe you're dead tired because your kids won't sleep. You're frustrated because the disobedience in your home feels like it's at an all-time high. You struggle with heartache because you have grown children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren who are walking away from the Lord.

You're stressed and at a loss for solutions as struggles continue in your marriage. Or maybe you're here on a day to celebrate moms, and you want nothing more than to have kids, but for whatever reason, you can't.

And in the midst of these things, you feel like your faith is weakening, your hope is decreasing, and frankly, you feel alone.

Text

But this wiser man, who more than likely understands and has experienced the dangers and stresses of the hills ahead, says, ***“Our God will keep you.”***

Which means that he will tend to us, care for us, and sustain us, because his loving gaze is always upon us.

He is the God and Keeper of his Israel, who has become our everlasting Father, Savior, and Helper through Christ, and he is the God, as it says in the Psalm who never sleeps or slumbers.

He never gets drowsy or tired and there is nothing in our lives that is too difficult for him.

Application

Therefore, we need to trust that he's got a hold of us, and that we can cast all of our weaknesses, worries, and cares upon him.

As Jesus said in John 10:29:

[29] My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

And as David wrote in Psalm 55:22:

***[22] Cast your burden on the LORD,
and he will sustain you;
he will never permit
the righteous to be moved.***

I hope you find this encouraging this morning. Because even if life feels great right now, weaknesses and struggles will come. It's unfortunately part of living in a fallen world, that is marred by sin.

But at those times, we have a great God who is telling us, that we are never alone. **He is always with us, he is always watching over us, and he will always sustain us, no matter how challenging the road ahead may feel.**

Because he's not merely watching over us, but he is also protecting us.

He will protect you.

Psalm 121:5-6

***[5] The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.***

***[6] The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.***

Illustration

We're currently in that part of the year when we get all excited about the weather. It's finally warming up, the sun is shining, and it feels like new life has been put into our souls.

So we are out walking, hiking, biking, kayaking, boating, etc... just trying to soak up the rays of warm sun that felt like they were missing for so long.

But then something happens around July. We get these ungodly hot days, where it's 90-95 degree, the humidity is high, and the sun that we once loved now feels like this foe we're desperately trying to get away from.

And on a hot day like that, a tree that we would otherwise never give a second thought to, can serve as a shelter and refuge from the sun as it protects us with its shade.

Text

That's the kind of picture that the wiser man is trying to paint for us here. Israel for a good part of the year is a dry and arid place.

So it can get very hot during the day, and yet at night, it can become fairly cold. So any time someone could find physical shade or protection from the elements, it was a welcomed reprieve.

But the shade that this older man has in mind isn't merely physical shade or protection, but it is the protection of God.

His point is, whether we are facing the scorching heat of the day or the cold temperatures, or robbers, or even the natural dangers of the night, the Lord is always with us, his power is always working for us, and he will always protect us.

This is similar to what David said in Psalm 16:8:

***[8] I have set the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.***

Application

The beauty of living in the Western world is that most of us don't have to continually experience the harsh realities of the hot summer sun or the cold winter wind. We all live in homes where we can find shade from the hot sun, we can turn on the air conditioner, or we can shut up the house and turn on the heat in the winter.

But that doesn't mean we don't need the same protection from God that this man is talking about.

Because living in an imperfect world, with imperfect people, will always be wrought with dangers. For instance, there are going to be people in your life who desire nothing more than to tear you down.

It could be a family member, a friend, a neighbor, or a co-worker, but you will experience a person like this at some point in your life.

These are the kind of people who consistently live with a negative worldview. And anytime you don't agree with them or anytime they see you being happy or joyful, they try to tear you down and bring you into the depths of their own despair.

But even within fairly healthy relationships and families, we can still experience strife and disunity. This could be unresolved friction or infighting, which can lead to hurtful wounds upon our souls.

Or what about the darkness of the night when we're alone with our thoughts? We can find ourselves awakened with anxious thoughts about our kids, finances, future, health, or any other number of fears.

And it is within these moments that we need to remember a couple of things. One, that our battle isn't against another human being, and it isn't even necessarily against our own mind. It's against a spiritual enemy, the devil, who is doing everything in his power to tear us down and pull us away from Christ.

As Paul writes in Ephesians 6:12:

[12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Two, that God will protect us as we experience the enemy's attacks, even when they come through other people.

As it says in 2 Thessalonians 3:3:

[3] But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

Our Lord and Savior will keep us from being overwhelmed by our fears and anxieties. He will be our shelter when we experience the dark storms of the soul.

And he is the one we can run to with our relational hurts and stressors, because he will bring about an outcome that is for our good as he will heal the wounds within our souls.

He will guard and protect us from the attacks of the enemy no matter how, when, or where they come. Whether they happen in the day or in the night, or if they come from people, or from within our own inner thoughts, his power and protection will always be with us.

But this isn't simply a momentary protection or a momentary care. But instead, the wise man ends his advice to this younger man by reminding him that God's tender care and protection will last forever.

His care will last forever.

Psalm 121:7–8

***[7] The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.***

***[8] The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore.***

Text

Now look, I wish I could stand up here and tell you that God is going to preserve a long life for you into your 90's, and that he is going to keep you from experiencing evil and harm in your life.

But you already know from your own life experience that isn't true, and it isn't what the wiser man in this psalm is trying to communicate.

In fact, it's the exact opposite. The reason he is giving this young traveler this advice in verses 7-8 is because he will experience these things.

He will experience evil. He will experience pain, suffering, and sorrow. Hardships will more than likely be a part of his travels.

But the promise, from God, to his covenant people, is that in all these experiences, he will be our keeper. He will sustain us, he will protect us, and he will care for us.

And this care isn't just for today, tomorrow, a week, a month, or a year, but it is for a lifetime.

Application

I understand that Mother's Day brings with it a set of mixed emotions for many.

- Some of you are experiencing the joyful, but tiring reality of raising young families.
- Some of you may be on the other side of that and you are trying to wade through the treacherous waters of how to love and guide adult children.
- Some of you are experiencing the pain and loneliness of losing a parent or spouse.
- Some of you might be dealing with the unfulfilled longing to have children that may or may not be in the cards for you.

All of these realities are a part of living under the sun in a fallen world. This side of eternity, nothing will go as planned, nothing will be perfect, and even the good things will be a lot of work and at times a struggle.

But remember, we serve a good and gracious God, who made us his children through his Son Jesus Christ. Which means that he is our perfect and loving Father who holds our lives in his hands.

Therefore, he is always watching over you, and there is never a time when he doesn't see everything perfectly and completely in your life.

When you feel weak or like you can't go on, he is always sustaining you and is keeping you from giving up.

Though the hurts may be many and the anxieties can feel overwhelming, he will protect you and help you through them. They will not consume you, even when they're really hard.

Because he cares deeply for you, which is why he sent his son to redeem you. And so his tender love and care will always be with you until he receives you into his loving arms in his eternal kingdom.

As it says in Psalm 73:23-24:

***[23] Nevertheless, I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.***

***[24] You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me to glory.***

And finally in 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24:

[23] Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[24] He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

Let's pray