

I. INTRODUCTION

I was thinking as I came up here today that for the last five weeks, every Wednesday we have been addressing individual Psalms that Dare to Hope.

Hope for what? Psalms capturing that hope that God is listening!

People need help, folks are in crisis

- chasing after answers in so many ways
- on the run from their troubles
 - Not knowing where to turn

And this morning – this Psalm is no different

- where can HELP be found?

Why??? Because they are really going through it!

My grandmother used to say, and I heard my mom quote her often!

God never said life would be easy, but He did say He would go through it with us!

This remains so true for me today even in either my moms or my grandmoms voice!!

When our world turns dark

When the journey turns rugged and steep

When your heart is racing **where do you turn for help?**

Our lives are in a constant barrage of challenges and hardships,

none of which ever feel that are easy. Things like

- Challenges from our jobs
- Hardships in our finances
- Trials in our health
- Hardships in our relationships, with one another
- Even failures in our relationship with the Father

This morning - we are continuing our look at the Psalms

- Like Psalm 23 for many this one is a favorite ... and maybe

SLIDE>

If Psalm 121 were a novel, at your local book store, the back cover might read like this:

*David is back with a profound exploration of **faith and divine protection**.*

Join our protagonist in the battle of his life, as he looks to the hills, recognizing the grandeur of creation and accordingly the greatness of the Creator.

Explore this intimate prayer of trust, acknowledging that help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth ... no matter how bad the circumstances of your life happen to be!

Have you ever noticed that just below the Psalm there is a sub-title!?

For Psalm 121 most of your modern translations include this..

a psalm of ascent.

- What does it required to ascend a 4K mountain in New Hampshire?
- the bunker hill memorial or the statue of liberty?
- Stairs to the Philadelphia Art Museum that so many run up like Rocky?
- A cathedral at the top of high steps even?
 - It Requires focus in your footing, so you do not trip.
 - It Requires endurance.
 - It Requires your heart to pump faster and your breath to be shortened.

With word imaging.... David wants to embrace that in our lives,

the climb is real and we must make the hike to the summit of our circumstances!

Also some have called this a soldier's psalm.

Why? Because David wrote this while in camp during a time of war!

David was navigating the theatre of battle,

and, was truly pressing in to trust God to cover his head in the day of battle.

There is one more assigned label for Psalm 121!

A travelers Psalm

to pray as to provide covering or better yet.... a companion in the journey of your life!

- A Song of Accent
- A Song for the traveler
- Or even a soldier's psalm

We hope that we all can grasp this morning, maybe related to one of these deep in your heart even!!!

That we all need to know no matter if we are at home or away...

- We all need to remember that WHAT WE TRULY need is
 - divine help!

David purposed in drafting Psalm 121...

- Was to help us
- To direct us
- And was to encourages us
 - To rest ourselves in our confidence in God
 - To have faith to put ourselves under his protection
 - To commit ourselves to his care!

AGAIN, REST IN / HAVE FAITH IN and COMMIT ourselves to God's care!

with an entire acceptance

with the fulfillment that our ever-present help is from God!

Let's break it down, shall we?

My Help Comes from the Lord!

II. PSALM 121 -MY HELP COMES FROM THE LORD!

Psalm 121

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

¹I look up to the mountains—
does my help come from there?

² My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth!

We opened this service and well every service with a time of worship...

This very Psalm was sung by Jewish pilgrims as they traveled to worship in the temple in Jerusalem!

- They prepared themselves with a time of worship as they traveled to the Temple!
- They were swelled with confidence that celebrates God's care for his people!
- And how.... By looking at the hills
 - recognizing the magnificence of creation and therefore the greatness of the Creator.

I look up to the mountains—does my help come from there?

Is much as David eyes were looking up –

David reminds us it was not high enough we to look further!

Verse 2 states that My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth!

This is a level of intimate prayer of trust, at a much higher level than the hills!

- It is acknowledging that help comes from the Lord, the creator the hills... the Maker of heaven and earth

Like these travelers who were braving dangerous roads to Jerusalem

we today are using google maps

trying to avoid getting into traffic congestion

maybe a jack-knifed tractor trailer

or worse, tragic trouble?

We really need is to hear well beyond technology

where the promises of Yahweh's Himself reside!

PSALM 121 - "My help comes from the Lord!"

The Lord who created these mountains, this planet and the entire universe.... is David's sole source of help.

Here in 2024....can we take hold of, that this same GOD of David's Psalm

It the same God who remains our SOLE SOURCE of HELP too!?

THE SAME RESOURCE OF DIRECTION

THE SAME RESOURCE WHO HAS ALREADY SEEN WHAT IS AHEAD!

David truly brings us to such imagery with consideration of heavens in Psalm 8

The spectrum he would know very well even able to map himself from tending the sheep during his midwatch care!

And in the midst of that embracing who God really is

David the shepherd...

Perhaps David sung this in his best Keith Green voice!!!

Oh Lord, our Lord,

How majestic is thy name in all the Earth.

Oh Lord, our Lord,

How majestic is thy name in all the Earth.

And skipping down to verses 3 and 4

3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,

The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

4 What is man that You are mindful of him,

And the son of man that You visit[c] him?

Our LORD the artist who by the works of His fingers created everything you can see and much your naked eye can't yet see----- is mindful of you!

Our Lord is so aware of you and what is happening that this verse 4 states he visits you!

--- he visits like Adam of old you! Walking in the cool of the day!

What is going on where in your life's circumstances where the climb is steep...

So steep of a challenge you are motivated to sing this Psalm of ACCENT, reaching beyond the mountains of your troubles!!!

knowing that GOD HIMSELF from beyond the Heavens – and is mindful of you!?!?!?

- where God wants to ordain strength because of your enemies about you...
- where God sees you in your time of great need or anxious feelings and bring peace to your circumstance!?

As the psalmist looks up to the mountains,

it's as if he sees God the Creator of heaven and earth.... seated there on His heavenly throne.

The Prophet - Zechariah felt the same way and recorded this thought!

3 "And now the Lord says: I am returning to Mount Zion, and I will live in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City; the mountain of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will be called the Holy Mountain. Zechariah 8:3

The Bible often refers to the heights of Jerusalem as the holy mountain where God dwells!

How great is the Lord,
how deserving of praise,
in the city of our God,
which sits on his holy mountain!
2 It is high and magnificent;
the whole earth rejoices to see it!
Mount Zion, the holy mountain,[a]
is the city of the great King! Psalm 48:1–2

We need to approach God with Thanksgiving and Praise!

- With a true attitude of gratitude for who God IS
- And next for what He has already done for us!

Psalm 95 the psalm of thanksgiving offers up that we have to approach him with praise on our lips!

Psalm 95

Thanksgiving and Praise

- 1 Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before Him with thanksgiving
and extol Him with music and song.
- 3 For the Lord is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
- 4 In His hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to Him.
- 5 The sea is His, for He made it,
and His hands formed the dry land.
- 6 Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;
- 7 for He is our God
and we are the people of His pasture,
the flock under His care.

He is worthy of our approaching Him with an Authentic Gratitude,

With Genuine Thanksgiving and with praise!

Why??

Because he is worth it all ---- **God is GOD!**

- **when we call upon His name HE SHOWS UP!!!!!!**

From this high place help comes from the Lord: "I call out to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain"

- The LORD surrounds you and provides you with mountains of everlasting security: Psalm 125 verse 2!

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people both now and forevermore Psalm 125:2

Pastor addressed trouble with sleeping just last week with his sharing of Psalm 77

With the COVID crisis, teleworking sheltering at home for many including me, it did not take long for cabin fever to set in!

sleep patterns have been truly messed up.

- To this day... I am up once in a while for periods in the middle of the night.

Are you at times feeling alone like David was tending sheep in the middle of the night?

- Like nobody is there? Nobody is listening...
- that nobody truly cares?

David felt this way in the midst of his many crisis. How do we know...read the Psalms where he pours out his laments to God!

He felt alone and needed a not only rest – but a relief from the pressure and strain!

There in that place --- it is where Holy Spirit reminded David he was not ever alone!

Even for this very sermon, weeks ago, I was woken up... alone, and I was reminded I am not alone ----

God breathed PSALM 8 in my dreams I got out of bed and typed in that section into this sermon at 2:30 AM < ask Ray Laurenza for confirmation as I sent the power point to him after 3AM>

David wants you to know you are not alone! Even in the middle of the night!

Picking up Psalm 121 at Verse 3 for where I am going!

3 He will not let you stumble;
the one who watches over you will not slumber.

4 Indeed, he who watches over Israel
never slumbers or sleeps.

5 The LORD himself watches over you!
The LORD stands beside you as your protective shade. PS 121:3-5

- **He will not let you stumble;**
- **God never sleeps.**
- **He who watches over the nation**

- **He watches over all of you**

God even wants you to know **THAT HE, the LORD himself watches over you!**

He stands beside you as your protective shade.

- The arid terrain of the middle east and a lack of freedom from the sun!
- Danger also came in the form of the burning rays of a blazing sun.

What do you need the shade of God to protect you from?

Even right now, what is relentlessly affecting

- how you think,
- How to move or even
- what do I believe?

David was in such a place

The LORD HIMSELF was the protective shade here!

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty Psalm 91:1

Dwelling in the shadow of the Almighty is the everyday experience of someone who,

- in spite of being persecuted
- or in the very malice of being threatened by danger

The protective shade of the Almighty provides a peace of being thoroughly at home on strange terrain!

Remaining in the protection, comfort, and safety of the God of absolute power.

This results in a dwelling in a dwelling of TRUST!

This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. Psalm 91:2

In continuing reassurance (Psalm 121:3–4), these verses note God's provision against these dangers.

3 He will not let you stumble;
the one who watches over you will not slumber.

4 Indeed, he who watches over Israel
never slumbers or sleeps.

- Like a shepherd, or a caretaker, God "watches" His people!
 - He is there for you with His foresight and protection!
 - Alongside you and over you in every way you need!

This symbol of shade:

Is something which blocks the punishing rays of the sun (Psalm 91:1).

This is a subtle echo of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross:

which "blocked" God's wrath on our behalf (Isaiah 53:4–5).

The NKJV verse 5 stating that the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.

- When the right hand is noted within the word of God, it implies strength and authority.
 - Jesus sits at God's right hand.
 - The Lord's right hand speaks of His protection and power.
 - **God here is strengthening you the shade is on YOUR RIGHT HAND!**

No matter what is going on...God is providing the power and protection you truly need!

Moving on to verses 6 – 8

6 The sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon at night.

7 The LORD keeps you from all harm
and watches over your life.

8 The LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go,
both now and forever. Psalm 121:6-8

This protection is a 24-hour day alarm system both day and night!

PSALM 121 - "My help comes from the Lord!"

Ever vigilant, never wearying, sleepless All-knowing God, is a great thing as both a warning to us and to others who have come to harm you!

- He sees the terrain coming up no matter if you can't even in the dark!
- To even keep your foot from slipping!

In every danger, whether from sunstroke in the heat of the day or exposure to the cold of night, "the LORD himself watches over you!"

Whether we face threats to the body or soul, in every situation of life!

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble Psalm 46:1

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, God has you covered.

"My help comes from the Lord," because God keeps and protects His children at all times and in all dangers!

The LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever" Psalm 121:7-8

The LORD keeps you from all harm and watches over your life.

Can we grasp that the Word of God contains and offers us so many incredible promises of help from the Lord?

God's presence and provision remain the same - - no matter what you see, and no matter what your feel!

- But you have to do your part. YOU MEAN I HAVE A PART a responsibility to get help!???
 - What is that?
 - What is your part?

These promises are for those **who hope and trust in Him**

"You who fear him, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield Psalm 115:11

You have to HOPE AND TRUST in HIM!

Faith is an essential aspect of being a Christ-Follower.

PSALM 121 - "My help comes from the Lord!"

- It involves trusting in God's promises and character,
 - even when we cannot see the outcome.
- Faith means believing that God is who He says He is
 - Faith and trust defines for us all...
 - .that He will do what He says He will do.

WHEN GOD SHOWS UP SOMETHING HAPPENS!

It is a fundamental part of our relationship with God

- It is so crucial for our spiritual growth
 - David truly wants us to grasp this growth is based on putting trust in the Lord's HELP!

We put our hope in the Lord.
He is our help and our shield. Psalm 33:20

Jesus offered this thought:

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.
12 A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. 13 The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, 15 just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.
John 10:11-15

My help comes from the Lord today... and why because Jesus is our Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.

Do you know your good shepherd? Jesus says, my sheep know me!

III. CLOSING

In this closing thought from Psalm 121...

The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go,
both now and forever. Psalm 121:8

David King of Israel, drafted a similar thought in PS 139!

2 You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
3 You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
4 Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely. Psalm 139:2-4

We as all believers of every generation it is essential to have this same awareness!

To embrace and secure this hope and trust as we come and as we go.

God see your as you come and go, even knowing what you are thinking before you even speak!

PSALM 121 - "My help comes from the Lord!"

God moves in both time and space!! Before we even chose our outfit you are wearing and where you are sitting right now - - - HE already has been there.

He knows your thoughts in this moment and hopes you can find his presence!

God so desires you and I to trust like in Him where we can also proclaim, "**My help comes from the Lord!**"

- No matter what trouble we face in this dark world, God is with us, shining His light into the darkness (John 1:4; 2 Corinthians 4:6)
- He is providing everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).
- Whatever setbacks, whatever hardships, or no matter what evil we encounter,
 - our faithful God will transform these challenges to contribute toward our good (Romans 8:28).).
- All of our days, He is our Helper and the God who sustains our lives (Psalm 54:4).).

No matter what trouble we face in this dark world, God is with us, shining His light into the darkness

All of our days, He is our Helper and the God who sustains our lives

Can the keyboardist return to play something in closing.

PSALM 121 - "My help comes from the Lord!"

This morning can we stand as one and cry out as one voice

Let's stand and proclaim, "**My help comes from the Lord!**"

I want you go continue to shout it out until you are convinced.

Even as you drive home today!

We want to help you in the midst of your challenges and hardships to find the trust and faith to know that God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

This morning as I close in prayer... and our team comes forward...

- Your help comes from the LORD!
 - To provide all you need!
 - To shine light into the darkness
 - To be OUR HELP and a GOD WHO SUSTAINS!