

My Help Comes from the LORD - Psalms 121 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

Pilgrim's Progress was written by English pastor John Bunyan is the second best selling book of all time (behind the Bible), has been translated to over 200 languages, and is considered one of the most influential Christian books of all time. He began writing the allegorical fiction from prison where he spent several years for preaching the Gospel. The story is the tale of a man named Christian who leaves his home in the City of Destruction searching for the Celestial City also called Zion in the book. On the journey Christian finds the place of deliverance where he encounters the cross and empty tomb and all his burdens and shackles fall to the ground (a picture of salvation), The rest of the book reveals the story of this journey toward the Celestial City. The journey is wrought with dangerous people and places that could shipwreck the journey. Of course the story ends with his arrival at the city, but not without difficulty, loss, heartache, and so many potential fails.

Our Psalm for this week is part of a collection of songs included in the Psalter that are called the Psalms of Ascent, 14 Psalms made up of Psalm 120-134. These songs were sung by the Hebrews during specific occasions, the Hebrew pilgrimage festivals. Three of these were on the Jewish calendar each year, the Passover, Feast of Weeks, and Feast of Tabernacles. It was the call for every Hebrew male (and therefore the whole fam) to leave their home and make the trek to Jerusalem where they would be joined by the whole nation. These festivals remembered the redemption they had as the Hebrew people in the story of the Exodus and they also reminded the people to give thanks for the gifts and provision God had given them in the crops, rains, and safety they had. The journey was difficult, but God inspired writers to give them songs for the journey. Imagine a Hebrew family leaving their home in a small Galilean town, meeting up with a few other families from their village as they begin their 3-5 day trek to Jerusalem and the Temple. They start singing as they travel. Along the way they meet up with other weary travelers who are also singing. Eventually, as they near Jerusalem the road is full of people from all over their nation singing the tunes as they march up the small mountain called Zion where Jerusalem and the Temple sit. These songs and the journey they encompassed reminded them that their God was with them on this journey. But it was also a reminder that they were exiles and sojourners in this world, that the Temple and Mount Zion were an earthly picture of a better city they would some day enter, and a call to stay on the journey no matter how difficult it became.

Our Psalm today is a cry early in these Psalms. The singer looks to the hills before them. This is not a cry of comfort but of fear. They will have to traverse some of those hills and mountaints which will be difficult. This hills also pose the danger of wild animals and possible thieves. On top of many of these mountains in Israel stood the High Places, temples of worship to idols, false gods who beckoned people to abandon the True and Living God for a cheap and easy alternative. The cry for help here is a reminder for the journey that the only way we will make it to Zion is the help of the Lord. But the song is also a promise that as long as we are marching, moving toward the city and the presence of God He is with us, guarding us, and caring for us. The song reminds us that the God of Scripture, the Maker of heaven and earth. This phrase is repeated over and over in the Psalms and the Scriptures as a reminder that our God is true, He made and owns everything. If God made the stars, He is more than capable of sustaining me in my journey. But the Psalmist also reminds us that He is the LORD. A quick refresher here, this is the translation of Yahweh, which is Israel's covenant name for God, the name that reminds His people that He is their rescuer, that He loves them, that He will be faithful, and that He will keep His promises! It is this God who is our keeper. The word is used six times in the text and is the core idea. The word simply means to keep, watch over, guard. The CSV version

of the Bible translates this word “Your Protector” each time the word is used, I like that. Your protector will not let your feet slip, He is not taking a nap because He is worn out, He is your shade when the sun beats down and your safety when the night is scary. Your protector will get you through the journey and keep you from all evil, and He protects your life. Nobody can snatch the follower of Jesus from His hand. And your protector will get you to Zion, your destination.

We are travelers and we need this song. If the journey depended on me I would fall, give up, and head to a different mountain. What gets me up every morning and keeps me marching is the promise that my help comes from the LORD, and the reality that I get to sing this song with fellow travelers on the journey.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Deuteronomy 5	Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7	Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 9	Deuteronomy 10	Deuteronomy 11

Reading from this past week: Psalm 121

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Psalm 69

Family Worship

Song - *I Lift My Eyes Up*

<https://youtu.be/fSmDy7yfJlw>

Gospel Project

Story: New Life in Jesus

Story Point: Jesus gives new life to people who trust in Him.

Big Picture Question: Why does the church exist?

Answer: The church exists to glorify God by worshiping Him, showing His love, and telling others about Jesus.

Scripture: Colossians 2-3

New City Catechism

Question #8: What is the law of God stated in the Ten Commandments?

Answer: You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and your mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. You shall not covet.

Verse: Exodus 20:3

Scripture

Psalm 121

- Why are the hills a problem? What sort of things do the hills represent in your life?
- Why do the promises of this song only really work for those who are pilgrims on a journey to Mount Zion?
- How does the Psalm promise help from the LORD? How do these promises relate to our lives?

Prayer

*Pray for the women in our church and for the Women’s Bible Study that recently began.

*Pray that you and your family would find God to be your help on your journey of faith.