



I need Help Lord?

Psalm 121

If you have your bibles with you, you may notice it says: a song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem or just A song of ascents.

What does that mean? Psalm 120 through to Psalm 134 are called the Pilgrim Psalms or songs of ascent. They were sung by those who journeyed or ascended to the Temple for the annual festivals.

You may wish to read through them as a means of understanding their trek through a hostile land to reach Jerusalem.

The people undertook these long treks, all by foot and the singing helped through along the way. I am not sure if you have tried that yourself when you have been walking a long distance – to sing or pray as you go along – especially if you have lost your way.

And these Psalms or songs become metaphors for our own spiritual journey, through the good and the difficult times to reach the higher place to where God has called us and thus eternity.

Psalm 121 comprises just 8 verses yet once again we are encouraged to trust God when life gives us what we haven't asked for.

It expresses assurance and hope in God's protection day and night. He not only made the hills but heaven and earth as well.

God discourages us from putting our trust in a lesser power – He encourages us to trust only in Him – the Higher power.

God is all-powerful and He watches over us. Nothing can ever happen that would cause His care to be diverted elsewhere – we are always safe. We never outgrow our need for God's untiring watch over our life.

This is what we need to hear and understand as we are living with tighter restrictions and natural fear over the changes taking place and wondering when things may go back to some semblance of normality.

We are assured that we can trust the Lord to help us through every single step we take along this journey – through the sunny and dark times.

You know when we are struggling we often look down, maybe even hunch our shoulders or wrap our arms around ourselves in an effort to protect us and shield us from harm.

But what does the first line of this wonderful Psalm say?

It tells us to lift up our eyes, not to the mountains to give us help, but to the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

I can understand that at times we may feel like no help is coming. The Bible never claims that our life will be easy all the way – there will be ups and downs, challenges, losses but also joys and wonders.

But I urge you, during these difficult times, that the presence of trouble does not imply the absence of God. As I said – fix your eyes upwards – on God. If you are just focussing on the road

before you, seeing twists and turns, darkness and pressure – you will stumble.

Do you like to gaze upon mountains? I do, I love to trek the many tracks and push myself to reach the summit. Yes, it can be challenging and at times I have thought about stopping and returning the way I had come. But as I push myself onwards – wow what a magnificent view before me. Sometimes, especially if there is a little fog or low cloud, I feel I can just reach up and touch God's toes – if He has them.

You may be a person who loves to gaze upon the oceans – watching as the sun sparkles across the water and listen to the lapping or perhaps crashing of the waves. Maybe that is where you gaze upwards towards God.

I think it is important to find your own special place that calms your spirit and helps you get things in perspective.

Isaiah 55:12 says: You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

Psalm 125 tells us that those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion which cannot be shaken but endures forever.

But this Psalm is not telling us to continue looking heavenward – then we would truly stumble. We are encouraged to then look inward and ask ourselves – **where does my help come from?**

If you think of the pilgrims the surrounding land, hills and valleys would have had their share of uncertainty – what if I am robbed, attacked, a wild animal comes or I run out of water and food?

We can get stuck in our whirling thoughts, going round and round. This is our internal “talking to myself” routine that never does us well.

We are loved by a Creator who created heaven and earth. God never sleeps, He watches over us every single second of every single day. His loving arms shade us and protect us.

Since God is the creator of all things and sustains all things, we should never question His power.

Paul writes in Colossians 1:16-17 For in Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rules or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.

Have you ever used superglue on something and accidentally got some on your fingers and they stuck together? It is very difficult to pull them apart. I always think of superglue with the ending of verse 17 – **in Him all things hold together.**

Unlike superglue which you can eventually remove – God’s glue holds us to eternity – He will never break it apart – only we can if we turn away from Him and His love and protection.

There are three important points contained in this short Psalm.

God Sees You: In Matthew 10:30 we are told that God even knows how many hairs we have on our head! This is intimate knowledge – God knows you and me and He sees us always.

How many times have you woken up during the night – unable to sleep because of things running through your mind – worries; sickness; needing answers to problems?

Now recall verses 3-4: God will not let you stub your toe; God never sleeps. So next time you have trouble sleeping because you are worrying about something – give it over to God. After all, why should both of you miss out of sleep – God has got your back – He loves you.

God protects you: Verses 5-6 says that the Lord provides shade to us so that the hot sun can't burn us or the moon at night.

The word shade is very important to the pilgrims who travelled the roads because of the hot desert heat.

Also note the verse tells us – the Lord is your shade at your right hand. Scriptures often talk of the right hand of the Lord indicating His power.

Psalm 98:1 says: sing to the Lord a new song for He has done marvelous things: His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.

You may think the reference to the moon doesn't fit – it can't harm like the sun, However in ancient times people believed you could be moonstruck – that it could bring dangers. The work lunacy or lunatic come from the word luna or moon. Many people suffer nightmares but God is there providing protection from any terrors in the night we may experience.

God keeps you: Verses 7-8 tells us that God watches over us for our entire life – when we are going out and coming back in – today and forevermore.

Perhaps during this lockdown phase you wake in the morning and think – what am I going to do today? Your usual schedules may have been cancelled or you may find your schedule is over-booked.

But God watches over us as we go in and out in our regular life routines. God's care extends to every place we go, every circumstance, every environment and its spans time and eternity. Time is the tool that God uses to mature us in wisdom and perspective.

Eugene Peterson wrote: Christians travel the same ground that everyone else does – the only difference is that each step we take, each breath we breathe – we are preserved by God, accompanied by God, ruled by God and preserved from evil.

During COVID 19 when life feels scary, no matter what the future holds, our help comes from God.

In Romans 8:38-39: For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prayer: Gracious Heavenly Father, we are struggling to understand and to accept what is happening in our world today – not only this pandemic, but many other climatic and tragic experiences.

However, we know and are assured that You have it all under control. Father, help to comfort our fears, hold us up with your loving arms, instil Your peace within our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit.

May we never let go of You because we know You will never let go of us.

Father, grant us the ability to continue to care for each other – in our own families; in our local communities; within Australia and worldwide.

May we always follow Jesus' example – whenever there is a need – may be STOP, turn and listen and do whatever we can to help our brothers and sisters during our shared grief and pain.

You are a wonderful, compassionate, consistent and patient Heavenly Father. We praise You in the name of Your Son and Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.