

## Confidence in Disturbing Times

### Psalm 121

Greetings to those worshiping with us in our “Online Community” – Web, FB, Youtube, and ASL.

*“Thank you for continuing to provide the online option and for putting in the extra time for two services! It has been an incredible blessing to be part of **a church that didn't miss a beat**, continued **offering opportunities to praise God** the entire closure, while finding **ways to serve its congregation**. **We love you New Hope friends!**”*  
(Email, New Hope)

And we love you! And **greetings to those In-Person**; It is a joy to see the church beginning to gather.

**\*During the last 11 weeks of CULTURAL INSTABILITY**, we have been grounding ourselves in the Psalms, remembering **“our confidence is in the Lord.”**

\*Last week was the famous **Ps. 23**, and one woman had just lost her mom the day before:

*“My mother...passed away Saturday. She was 94...**She never wavered** from her desire to see her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren know and serve Christ...One of the scriptures that was chosen to be read at Mom's burial **was Psalm 23**. Even in her last days, as we would read the passage to her, **she would mouth the words**. So when you started to preach Sunday, **I was moved** that it was that passage...**My heart was touched**...How fortunate we are to have Him as our Shepherd! Thank you for opening the Scriptures...We are rejoicing that my mom has reached her final resting place, and we know that we will all have a great reunion one day!”*

(Email, New Hope)

And we rejoice that God is our Shepherd...and Protector. For that we turn to our **12<sup>th</sup> Psalm: Ps. 121**

\*One New Hope woman writes that Ps. 121 has **“long been my favorite Psalm”** and her Bible **(Picture) bears the names** of every family member who she prays this over regularly.

\*It's a **Psalm for the Road**, sung by **Jewish pilgrims** as they travelled the road to Jerusalem.

\*It is a **Psalm of the People**, rejoicing that God is a **Guardian watching over our** coming/going.

\*It is a **Psalm for the Nation**, reminding us that our **security/stability** comes from the Lord.

**\*Let me say:** In the current distress of our nation, **this Psalm needs to be prayed every day - over our families – our churches – our businesses – our cities – our state – our leaders.**

\*Speaking of our nation, let me **read the words of our 23<sup>rd</sup> U.S. President:**

*“Entering thus solemnly into covenant with each other, we may reverently invoke and **confidently expect the favor and help of Almighty God--that He will give to me wisdom, strength, and fidelity, and to our people a spirit of fraternity and a love of righteousness and peace.**”*  
(Benjamin Harrison, President 1889)

\*That was part of his inauguration speech, and before he spoke, Harrison took the oath of office with his hand on an open Bible...the **book and chapter he chose? Ps. 121: The Lord our Helper.**

Ps. 121 goes like this: (Quoted)

*"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."*

1. **The Lord is our helper,** (v.1-2)

*"From where does **my help** come? **My help comes from the Lord...**"*

\*David asks a rhetorical question to make us ponder **times we need HELP**.

\*Let his question sink in...where do we go for **HELP** as a **people or a nation** in distress?

\***HELP!** It's a **simple four letter word**, with HUGE LIFE implications.

\*When we need help, it implies we have reached a point in life outside our control.

\*When we say "HELP," we need SOMEONE from **outside with power** to come and assist

\*Help says: "**I can't do it alone; my need is too big; my strength too weak; my resources too little....**

\***Where do you go for HELP?**

\*Some call **moms** – our children call their mom their "**unpaid therapist.**"

\*Some call **dads** – **I do**. Nobody is better at helping with **home projects than dad**.

\*Some call **doctors/psychologists** – to talk through pain; get a prescription; surgery.

\*Some call **911** - **I recently had a broke down vehicle on a desolate backroad of the U.P**

\*With "**no cell service**" the first thing I told my son: "**Ask God for 1 bar.**"

\*There are many places we go for help...but **Above all of them** is the **maker of heaven & earth**.

\*He is the **True/Better Helper**, who created the universe by the word of his power, and also cares for the needs of widows and orphans...and people like you and me.

\*And **Jewish pilgrims** who traveled by foot to their **Capitol City, to Praise not Protest**, would sing together this **national anthem**: "**MY HELP COMES FROM THE LORD!**"

**It is remarkable that out of all names our Lord could choose for the Holy Spirit: "HELPER"**

*"I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Helper**, to be **with you forever...**"*

(John 14:16)

\*It is a guarantee that we will never **walk alone**, but always have the Lord as our Helper.

\***As you watch the news of rioting & looting...**remember that every believer and every church has been given a Helper – **the person and work of the Holy Spirit**.

\*He comforts us in affliction; gives direction for future; sends help in need.

\*We can seek Him **day or night**, call on Him **rain or shine**, and **no matter what need we have**, our Help comes from the Lord.

**\*Next time you need HELP, remember this acronym:**

**H.E.L.P. His Ever Loving Presence**

Listen to Heb. 13:5-6: "...he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So **we can confidently say**, "**The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?**"

**2. ...and watches over us, (v.3-7)**

**"...keeps you...keeps Israel...your Keeper...will keep you from evil...will keep your life..."**

\*NIV: "**Watches over you.**"

\*NKJ: "**Preserve you.**"

\*Message: "**Your Guardian God.**"

\*As Jewish **travelers made their way to Jerusalem, they faced specific dangers:**

\***Accidents** – the danger of slipping; stumbling; falling.

\***Exposure** – the danger of heat during day and night that threatened health.

\***Evil** – The danger of people who may steal or take advantage of them.

\*But as they traveled, they **turned with confidence to the Lord, describing him as: "KEEPER"**

\***Keeper is not** a word we often use today, except maybe in sports (like Soccer, Ice Hockey)

**"Goal-KEEPER"** is the **GUARDIAN** responsible to **protect the net, block shots on goal, and prevent** opposing teams from scoring.

\***This is the idea behind the word "Keep":**

\*God is our **GUARDIAN**; He protects us; He blocks the attacks of the enemy;

\*He is **vigilant**; He **never sleeps; never dozes off**; never **abandons his post**.

\*He is able to **Guard all of Israel...and is certainly able to Guard America**.

**"Keep" primarily means: "To HEDGE about with thorns; to guard; protect."**

\*Have you ever prayed (or heard someone pray): "**A Hedge of Protection.**" This is **Ps. 121**.

\*It reminds me of **Job 1, where Satan accused God of guarding Job with a Hedge:**

*"Does Job fear God for no reason? 10 Have you not **put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land...**" (1:9-10)*

\***How awesome to know** that God is our Guardian and establishes the boundaries of protection

**\*Stephen Ambrose, in his WW2 book “Victors” has an entire chapter: “Hedgerows”**

*\*After our troops landed in Normandy, they discovered: “the dominant feature of the battlefield was **the maze of hedgerows** that covered the western half of Normandy... mounds of earth...enclosed by hedgerows”*

*\*The Hedgerows presented massive difficulties for our troops:*

*“On the sunken roads the brush often met overhead giving the GI’s **a feeling of being trapped** in a leafy tunnel. Wherever they looked **the view was blocked** by walls of vegetation. Undertaking an offensive in the hedgerows was **risky, costly, time-consuming, fraught with frustration**. Platoons found themselves **completely lost**...Squads got **separated**...the hedgerows were proving to be almost **impassable obstacles**...The Germans were **geniuses at utilizing the hedgerows**.”*

*\*Here’s the remarkable thing. **Before D-day**, with all the preparation, aerial photography, and intelligence gathering, not **one military division** had ever been told about Hedgerows.*

*Ambrose calls it: “One of the greatest intelligence failures of all time.”*

*\*Here’s the good news: Even **better than Germans** at using Hedgerows is the Lord...who is a genius at defending and guarding his people with **Hedgerows of protection**.*

*\*One New Hope woman has prayed **Ps. 121** for decades as a **Prayer of Protection**:*

*“This [Ps. 121] has long been **my favorite Psalm**. I called it simply the ‘**protection over my family Psalm**’. I think I found it in the early 90’s when my kids started driving...I realized I needed to **entrust them to God for protection** as they were growing up...I couldn’t be with them all the time...but He could be...and I needed His help. This Psalm has given me reassurance and peace...”*

*\*My desire for you is that **Ps. 121** becomes your **Prayer of Protection** for family & nation.*

**3. ...day and night, forever. (v.8)**

*“The Lord will **keep your going out and your coming in** from this time forth and forevermore.”*

*“**Going out, Coming in.**” A gorgeous phrase meant to **encompass all of ones’ life**.*

*\*IOW “This God who watches you will do it **all the time; Day In/Day Out; from the moment you leave to when you return; time after time; On and On and On...forever**.*

**Maybe as you watched the news last week, your heart has felt HEAVY, SICK, WORRIED:**

*“I think of everything that has taken place in the past week in our nation. I sat in my family room last night with **a heaviness I hadn’t felt in years**...As I asked God why this is happening and how to make sense of it all, **I realized my FEAR**, and then I remembered 1 John 4:18: “perfect love drives out fear...” The picture God put in my mind, last night, was of Satan in hysterics with glee. He had **wiped away the Confidence in God** you have been preaching about for weeks...all he had to do was set the nation on fire.*

*I went back and reread all those Psalms and my sermon notes...I started singing...I reminded myself **GOD is the one in charge** and if I trust in Him— whom then should I fear? I prayed for Him to forgive my lack of faith and **thanked Him** for being my hope."*

\*My friends, this is still the **song of Christian pilgrims**: *"The Lord is our helper, who watches over us (guarding us with a hedge of protection) and He does it **all day, every day, forever.**"*

### Action Steps:

#### Ask for HELP:

*"the Spirit **helps us** in our weakness." (Rom 8:26)*

\*The question Jesus asks is actually an invitation: *"What do you want me to do for you?"*

\*Use your words. What need do you have? Where can the HELPER enter in and assist you?

\*If you have never trusted Christ as Lord, do you realize that you can ask repent of sin, trust Christ, and invite the Holy Spirit to dwell in you as your HELPER?

#### Be a Helper

\*How will God send help to you? Often His Spirit will prompt His people to act.

\*The Scripture is full of commands to **be a helper** those in need:

**Church Leaders:** *"Help her in whatever she may need from you." (Rom. 16)*

**Hospitality:** *"Help me on my journey." (1 Cor 16)*

**Missionaries:** *"Help him on his way." (1 Cor. 16)*

**Prayer Support:** *"Help us by prayer." (2 Cor. 1)*

**Reconciling Differences:** *"Help these women..." (Phil. 4)*

**Financial Assistance:** *"You sent me help for my needs once and again." (Phil. 4)*

**Emotional Needs:** *"Help the weak..." (1 Thess. 5 & Acts 20)*

**Urgent Needs:** *"Help cases of urgent need." (Titus 3)*

Do you realize: When the Holy Spirit prompts you to HELP someone...He likely is prompting you to meet a very specific need that someone else has prayed about.

#### Pray a Hedge of Protection

Pray Protection for your Family – A hedge around those you love.

Pray for the church. The chairman of our Elders wrote a note to our leadership, and ended with:

*"KEEP PRAYING for God's protection and a hedge of protection around New Hope."*