

## God is in Control

**Main Idea: We can trust God during any circumstance because God is always in control.**

Good morning, Image Faith Family. I hope you are well today. It is always a joy to worship with you. For those of you that do not know me, my name is Nathan Neufang and I am a pastor at Hebron Baptist Church over in Dacula Ga on the other side of Atlanta. I'm grateful that your pastors trust me to come out here and preach. I love your pastors and I'm grateful for their friendship.

Today we are going to continue in our series of Summer in the Psalms. And today we are going to be studying Psalm 121 today.

Illustration: I love summertime. I love going to the pool with my family. We have a pool in our neighborhood, and it is always fun hanging out with my kiddos. They love the pool. When my kids were younger, they were afraid of swimming and jumping in the water. They would stand on the side, and I would stand in the water and hold out my hands and beg them to jump. I would ask them to trust me, to assure them that I would not let harm come to them.

Restate main idea: **We can trust God during any circumstance because God is in control.**

Background: Psalm 121 is one of the fifteen "Songs of

Ascents” or “Pilgrim Psalms” (120-134). These are a collection of psalms that were sung as travelers came to Jerusalem for the important Jewish holidays.

**Application: Aside:** They are singing these songs to prepare for Worship. Do we take time to prepare for worship or do we just show up? We are missing out on the gracious gifts that God is giving us if we are not spending time with God and preparing for worship throughout the week.

What we learn from this Psalm is that it is very God-centered. We learn about the character of our God and how he cares deeply for his children. We learn that God never sleeps, is always there, and is our keeper and protector.

Psalm 121 is a movement that starts with doubt and ends up being a psalm of encouragement for the reader. **Main Idea: We can trust God during any circumstance because God is always in control.**

Transition: The first reason we can trust God is in control is because God is our help.

## **I. We can trust God because He is our help. (vv. 1-2)**

*1 I lift my eyes toward the mountains.  
Where will my help come from?*

*2 My help comes from the Lord,*

*the Maker of heaven and earth.*

So here we see that the Psalmist seems to be having a conversation with someone as he is walking to Jerusalem. And this is a strange way for the psalm to start off, but there is doubt for the psalmist.

John Calvin said that the Psalmist seems to be speaking as if he is an unbelieving man. He is honestly asking the difficult question of who is going to help me in my time of need.

The psalmist is looking with anxiety at the hills. During those days, travelers would be traveling from the valley up to Jerusalem, which is a city among the hills. And as he was walking; he would notice that the hills bring anxiety. He knows that there are robbers, vagabonds, and mobs that would cause trouble for travelers. The psalmist knows there are dangers, but within these dangerous hills there is also the city where the festival would be held, and God would be worshiped. The hills provide a place to worship the one and true God.

So, we see that both thoughts may be in the mind of the traveler: **Anxiety but also anticipation.**

**Illustration:**

- 1) Riding a roller coaster
- 2) Going to a new school or starting a new job
- 3) Getting married

Have you ever been in a situation where you have both anxiety but also anticipation?

So, in light of the anxiety and anticipation, there is a question that the psalmist has, “Where does my help come from?” The word help there is concerned with protection, guidance, and blessings. He desires to prosper in his pilgrimage as well as in life so that he may enjoy a sense of harmony in all his endeavors.

When you feel this way, you tend to lean on something for help, because you are worried about how you feel.

### Application

What are we trusting in for our help?

- 1) Money
- 2) Power/ Popularity
- 3) Friends (click)
- 4) Ourselves

And as the question is asked, the psalmist seems to immediately remember that it is God, the Covenant making God has always promised to take care of his own people. He has said that he would provide help for his covenant people. This is the thing that gives them comfort during difficult times.

*Application: But do you believe that it is God that helps you? How do you know?*

And then the psalmist roots who God is by remembering

that he is the creator of heaven and earth. This is a large grand statement. He is looking to the hills and remembering the creator of the hills. This is the doctrinal statement that is indisputable that God is creator. It is rooting who God is by the things that we learn from creation. He can be our help because he:

**Application:** Creation shows us God is in control of all things. Two truths that reveals God's control:

- 1) God is powerful/ God is able to do what cannot be done.
- 2) God is creative.

These are reasons to remember How and Why God can help us. These things are there to comfort us when we don't understand why things are happening? When we are anxious about situations, we remember that God is the creator of all things. He is in control.

This is also a shot at all other supposed gods that are being worshiped. Our God is not a created being, but instead created all things. In those days certain people believed that their gods lived on the mountains. But our God created those mountains. There is no God like Him.

**Illustration: My dad can beat up your dad. Relating to God.**

God alone is God, and he alone is able to help out his people. There are no others that are showing up. The source of power comes from the same God that is powerful enough to create all things.

Transition: The second reason we can trust God is in control is because God is our protector. We can trust God is our help, but he is also our protector or keeper.

## **II. We can trust God because He is our protector. (vv. 3-6)**

*<sup>3</sup> He will not allow your foot to slip;  
your Protector will not slumber.*

*<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the Protector of Israel  
does not slumber or sleep.*

*<sup>5</sup> The Lord protects you;  
the Lord is a shelter right by your side.*

*<sup>6</sup> The sun will not strike you by day  
or the moon by night.*

There is a change of tone from verse 2 to 3. There is talk of I and My in the first 2 verses (1<sup>st</sup> person). However, in verse 3 the psalmist switches to you and your language (2<sup>nd</sup> person).

This is also the place when the psalmist steps out from saying me and I and now starts to say you. Most commentators believe that the Psalmist is talking to his own soul. Saying hey remember who your God is who can help you. Now this is not some psychology mumbo jumbo. But it is important for us to talk to ourselves. For us a lot of

times this is preaching to ourselves.

We tend to forget who God is and we tend to forget the gospel. But when we are dealing with life situations and we are unsure, we need to be reminded about who God is and what he has done. This is especially vital to us as believers.

Illustration: There are some people who often drive without their seat belts buckled. Car makers figured this out and put sensors in the buckles to assist with those that forget to buckle their seat belts. Most people, even those that don't often buckle their seat belts probably believe it is important to wear one. If they knew they were going to be in an accident, they would probably remember to wear one. Yet, carmakers felt they need to put a sensor to constantly remind people of the importance of buckling.

In the same way we become numb to the gospel and can forget. We need to be reminded of the goodness of God. The Gospel is for us during good times and bad. Sometimes like the beeping, we need a reminder of the importance of things. This passage acts as a sensor to drive us back to recognizing what Jesus did for us through the cross and resurrection.

A protector or keeper is a guardian or someone who watches over. And this verse is clear that the Lord is watching over Israel. In the original context, the psalmist is talking about the Israelites, God's chosen people. But today we know from the New Testament, that this is not talking about ethnic Israel, but instead the redeemed from Israel.

The ones who faithfully believe in the work of a saving God. Isaiah tells us about the remnant of faithful Israel. John tells us about the inclusion or graphing in believers. So, from this passage we know that the Lord is watching over us if we are believers in Christ.

**Illustration: My son when we go into the store. Constantly grabbing him from carts, trying to make sure that he is not getting hit.**

So, what does it mean that God is a protector for us as believers?

- 1) Protects- From Sin/Jesus is stronger and paid our price.
- 2) Guides- Power of HS. Through prayer we listen to HS.
- 3) Blesses his own- Fellowship w/ believers, salvation, God is the greatest blessing.

The psalmist continues to develop the character of the God that we serve. The verse 3 says that God will not let your foot be moved, or your foot slip. Remember that they are going up a mountain at this time, so there is always the danger of falling down. Not necessarily fall off the mountain but slip on the path and be susceptible to robbers and dangerous people. This psalmist is reminding himself that God will not allow his foot to slip. This could have been literally for him, but for us today what does this mean?

When we remember who God is and what he has done, he will guard our steps. Though it is literal steps in their day,



for us there is a spiritual application. He is praying for those that have accepted Christ Heb. 7:25 so that we will not fail. Our God is upholding our salvation (Rom. 8).

I love the word Indeed, or in some translations behold. This is a way for greater assurance of who God is. And we see that he also guards, and he never sleeps or slumbers. Pagans often allowed their gods to sleep, but their gods are not like the God of Israel. He does not need to play, eat, or sleep.

**Illustration: He is always there to help no matter what the situation. 1 Kings 18 of Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel.**

He is the perfect picture of what a guardian does is a shepherd for the flock. Think about what it would be like to have to stand guard for someone and never feel tired or sleepy or get hungry or have to go to the restroom. Our God is always vigilant. No matter what is going on in our lives, our God is alert and willing and able to help and protect. This is truly a God worth serving.

He will also be in the shade and protect his own from the dangers in both Day and Nighttime, we see that this is represented here by the sun and moon. Shade is an image of protection. I mean think about what it would be like to travel through the desert with a group of people. Besides maybe water, what is it that you long for most... Shade. Shade would have been vital to have a good trip, and it brings about relief from the heat of the day.

Illustration: I remember growing up playing football, and this was always about the time of year when 2 a days got started up. For those of you that do not know, 2 a days are when teams practice 2 times during the day. So, we would meet out at the field and practice from 7-10, take a couple hour break and practice from noon-3. The 7- 10 practice was never that bad. It was warming up and then running through plays. The afternoon practice was brutal! It was a lot of conditioning. And Texas in August was never kind. There were days when we would be running, and it would be 105 outside. There was nothing more that we longed for at that time than water and shade. Shade was a comfort for us who were running and a comfort from the heat of the day. It was a protection for us.

In the same way God gives us shade from the heat of the day. There is comfort in him, it is almost as if his hand is continuing to be over us to give us comfort.

And we see that He keeps/protects them throughout the day and the Lord keeps his own at his right hand. This is a sign of sonship. This is a way of expressing how God views us as Children.

Whether I am playing a game with my sons or walking in a store, I am their keeper, and they know that I love and care for them. Not because of anything they have done, but because they are my sons.

This is how God views you if you are a believer. You are

His Son or daughter. He loves you. He cares for you. He wants to keep you and protect you. (Sit Here)

Transition: So, we have seen that God is our help, he is our keeper in the present, and finally we see that God will continue to be our keeper forever.

### **III. We can continue to trust God forever. (vv.7-8)**

*<sup>7</sup> The Lord will protect you from all harm; he will protect your life.*

*<sup>8</sup> The Lord will protect your coming and going both now and forever.*

Notice that there is a change in the verb tense in these final 2 verses. This is a change from the present tense to the future tense. This is a subtle change but a big ordeal. So, it is almost as if the psalmist now trusts the Lord so much in the present that he now is looking towards trusting God long into the future. The peace that comes for believers is that we can continue to trust God into the future.

**Illustration: It's kind of like riding a roller coaster the first time and not being afraid anymore because you know what to expect.**

We should have peace as believers. We can trust God is in control! God is seen as sovereign over all of life affairs. No matter the adversity that comes in our life, God is able to care for his children and we can have peace. And we see

from this verse that God will keep our lives. And this will extend from now until forevermore. It will last forever! You will have peace forever!

But this doesn't mean that adversity and trials will not come. We see that even in Psalm 23 that God doesn't simply spare us from the valley, he walks with us through the valley. The greatest gift is not a lack of trials, it is the joy of a trusted savior.

There are some pastors that say this means that you will just get health and wealth and prosperity. But keeping your life or protecting your life doesn't mean that difficult times will not come. It just means that God is always with you, and you will accomplish exactly what you need to accomplish according to His perfect plan.

**Keep our life:** God is in control of even our lives. No one dies early. After I survived a horrible car accident, I remember laying in my bed late at night not being able to sleep. I would read or hear about other people that got into a car accident and died. And I asked God multiple times, sometimes crying out to God asking Why not me? Why do others die, and I am still here? These are tough questions, and I really never got a good answer, but I do know one thing. It is the Lord that holds my life, and I had a ministry here on earth. It was not my time. But the reality is that I do not know, and you do not know when God will call you home, but we have a ministry that we are able to do today. The question is are you fulfilling your ministry.

The fact that God controls our lives gives us freedom to live everyday for Jesus. God loves his children and wants to see his glory echo throughout the earth. He is a good God, and he is working all things for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purposes.

You can be brave for the Gospel because He will keep you. Believers are you living this out? God is your protector and your help. He holds your life. There is nothing you cannot risk for the Gospel.

Unbeliever? Will you repent and believe and start living for Christ? He died for you. He wants your life and wants to give you a purpose.

No matter the circumstances in our lives now or in the future, God is in control.

His promises always come true.

As I have already stated, I love summertime and this past weekend my family went to hang out with another family in our church at the Lake. We did all the things: swimming, jet skiing, tubing. It was a blast.

But it was the first time that my kiddos had a chance to be pulled on the tube behind a boat and my kids loved it. I was so proud of my older son who is usually more cautious. He rode the Tube and never got thrown off when the boat was going. But there was one moment when the tube was starting, and he fell off and he was afraid that the boat was

going to leave Him. So, we were about 30 yards away, but he was really upset and scared. So, I grabbed a life jacket and dove into the water and swam out to Him. When I got there, I held Him. I reminded Him that the Life Jacket was there and was keeping Him afloat. But He didn't just have the life jacket that kept Him afloat, He had Me. I was there as His Dad.

Jude says that the Lord will keep us.

**Jude 24-25** <sup>24</sup> Now to him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy, <sup>25</sup> to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all time, now and forever. Amen.

We have a life preserver but only if you have trusted Christ. You have to repent of your sins and believe. You do not get life outside of believing in Christ.

But God doesn't just give us a life preserver- a get out of Hell card although he does provide that salvation. The greatest Gift is that he gives us himself. We get the HS living inside of us and we get God. A real genuine relationship with God.

Conclusion:

Today if you are a believer, you need to be reminded that God is in control of all things and can be trusted. He walks

through life's most difficult situations with you. God is your keeper. He protects us from sin, hell, the grave, and the wrath of God that we deserve eternally. He will keep you today and can be trusted to keep you in the future. The trust in Jesus leads to peace. Peace is not the only thing you get at salvation, but it is an awesome thing. Peace allows you to be able to sleep well at night and trust that everything might not seem ok, but it is in control.

If you are a believer that means that you need to realize that God is your help, protector now and forever. He deserves our trust because he is in control.

If you are not a believer, you are under wrath and the only thing that you can do is call upon the lord who will help you. Today might be the day for salvation for you. He is strong and able to save you.

Pray