

Small Group Guide

"A Long Obedience in the Same Direction"

Psalm 121: Where Does My Help Come From?

OVERVIEW

This week's sermon drew from Psalm 121, one of the ancient Songs of Ascent that Jewish pilgrims sang as they traveled uphill toward Jerusalem. The central question of the psalm — "Where does my help come from?" — is just as urgent for us today as it was for those ancient travelers. The sermon reminded us that following Jesus does not mean our troubles disappear, but that we are never walking the road alone. God watches over us, guards us, and is transforming us through the journey itself.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Christian life is not an escape from the journey. It is learning to walk the journey with God.
 - When life gets hard, we are all tempted to look to "high places" — money, relationships, control, entertainment, politics — for help and relief instead of turning to God.
 - God's promise in Psalm 121 is not that we will never suffer, but that nothing we suffer will have the power to separate us from His love or His purposes in us.
 - God is actively watching over, guarding, and keeping us every step of the way — not occasionally, but continually, both now and forevermore.
 - Suffering and difficulty are often the very tools God uses to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ.
 - The table of communion is a weekly reminder of where our true help comes from — the cross of Calvary.
-

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question

Use this question to help your group ease into conversation. There are no wrong answers here.

1. Think of a long road trip or a physically demanding journey you have taken. What made it hard? What or who helped you get through it?
-

Digging Into the Sermon

2. The sermon described the Christian life as "a long obedience in the same direction" — a lifelong pilgrimage rather than a quick fix. How does that framing either challenge or encourage you personally?
3. The psalmist looks out at the surrounding hills and high places — shrines to false gods that promised protection, prosperity, and pleasure — and asks, "Where does my help come from?" What are the modern-day "high places" that our culture points us toward when life gets hard? Which ones are you most personally tempted to turn to?
4. Read Psalm 121 together as a group. What word, phrase, or image stands out most to you, and why?
5. The sermon made the point that God's promise is not that we will never stub our toes, but that nothing we suffer will have evil power over us or be able to separate us from God's purposes in us. How does that reframe the way you think about a current difficulty in your life?
6. Eugene Peterson's quote was referenced in the sermon: "The promise of the psalm is not that we will never stub our toes, but that no injury, no illness, no accident, no distress will have evil power over us — that is, will be able to separate us from God's purposes in us." Do you find that promise comforting, challenging, or both? Explain.
7. The sermon warned against a "Sunday-only Christianity" — confessing that God is our help on Sunday but living as if we are on our own the rest of the week. Where do you see that pattern showing up in your own life?
8. The Apostle Paul wrote that he had "learned the secret of being content in any and every situation" — and that secret was drawing strength from Christ rather than from circumstances. What does it practically look like for you to draw strength from Christ in the middle of a hard week?

9. The closing challenge from the sermon was simply: "Keep walking." What does keeping walking look like for you right now, in this specific season of your life?
-

Going Deeper

10. Romans 8 declares that nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Do you genuinely believe that? Are there circumstances in your life where that promise feels difficult to hold onto? Bring those honestly to the group.
11. The sermon connected suffering to transformation — the idea that God uses the hard parts of the journey to shape us into the image of Jesus. Can you think of a past difficulty that, looking back, you can see God used to change you or grow you? What did that teach you about trusting Him in your current struggles?
-

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following to practice individually or as a group this week.

- **Read and pray through Psalm 121 each morning this week.** It is short. Read it slowly. Let it be your first answer to whatever the day brings.
- **Identify your high places.** Take a few quiet minutes this week to honestly ask yourself: When life gets hard, where do I actually turn first? Name it specifically. Then bring it to God in prayer and ask Him to reorder your trust.
- **Memorize the core declaration of the psalm.** Commit to memory: "My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." Say it out loud when anxiety or fear rises during the week.
- **Practice trusting Jesus with outcomes.** The sermon offered this personal discipline: Do what you can. Be as faithful as you can. But trust Jesus with the outcomes. Write down one situation in your life where you are trying to control the outcome, and intentionally release it to God in prayer each day this week.
- **Encourage a fellow traveler.** Think of someone in your life who is on a hard stretch of the road right now. Reach out to them this week — not with answers, but with presence. Remind them they are not walking alone.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your group time by praying together. You may use the following as a guide or pray freely in your own words.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on us. We confess that we too often look to the hills of this world for help before we look to You. Forgive us for the ways we try to walk this road in our own strength. Thank You that You are not asleep, that You do not slumber, and that You are watching over each of us right now. Give us the faith to keep walking — even when the road is long, even when we are tired, even when we cannot see what is ahead. Remind us this week that our help comes from You, the Maker of heaven and earth, and that nothing in all of creation can separate us from Your love. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LOOKING AHEAD

What does it mean to belong to a community of pilgrims? What role does the gathered church play in the journey of faith?