

Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday, July 19, 2026

Preached By: Matt Stewart

“The Lord Our Keeper”

Summer in the Psalms Series #7

Psalms 121:1-8

OPENING PRAYER & ICEBREAKER

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you felt uncertain or unsafe during a journey (literal or metaphorical). What helped you get through it?

SERMON REVIEW

Main Idea: The Lord faithfully keeps His people through every season of *life*.

Key Verse: Psalm 121:1-2 - "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and *earth*."

Context Reminder: This psalm was sung by Jewish pilgrims as they traveled up the hills to Jerusalem for worship—a journey filled with real dangers and uncertainties.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Part 1: God's Sovereign Power (Psalm 121:1-2)

1. Where do you naturally look for help first? When facing uncertainty (financial stress, relationship problems, health concerns), what or whom do you turn to before turning to God?
2. What "idols" compete for your trust today? The sermon mentioned money, power, political parties, and positions. What things in your life might you be functionally trusting more than God, even while confessing Him with your lips?
3. How does remembering that God "made heaven and earth" change your perspective on current problems? What situation are you facing right now that seems bigger than God's power?

Part 2: God's Watchful Care (Psalm 121:3-4)

4. What does it mean practically that God "never sleeps"? How is this different from believing in a distant, uninvolved God?
5. The sermon contrasted God with Baal, whose prophets wondered if he was sleeping or distracted. In what ways do you sometimes act as if God is distracted or unaware of your situation?
6. Discuss this statement: "Are you interpreting hardship as God's absence?" Have you ever confused difficulty with abandonment? How can we maintain trust in God's presence even when circumstances are hard?

Part 3: God's Protective Presence (Psalm 121:5-6)

7. Jesus is described as the Good Shepherd who protects His sheep. What are some "lions and bears" (threats) in your life that God may be protecting you from that you don't even see?
8. The shepherd's voice kept the sheep calm at night. How do you "hear" God's voice in your daily life? What practices help you stay close enough to recognize it?
9. Read John 10:28-29 together. What comfort does this passage provide? How does knowing that no one can snatch you from God's hand affect the way you face fear?

Part 4: God's Eternal Preservation (Psalm 121:7-8)

10. The promise "the LORD will keep you from all evil" has an eternal perspective. How do we balance this promise with the reality that Christians do suffer in this life?
11. "Going out and coming in...forevermore" speaks to God's comprehensive care. What does it mean that God cares about both the mundane daily moments and the eternal destiny of your life?
12. The closing question from the sermon: "Are you His? Do you know His voice?" How would you answer this? What evidence is there in your life that you belong to the Good Shepherd?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ God's power is sovereign over all creation - He is more powerful than any threat, circumstance, or fear we face.
- ✓ God's care is constant and attentive - Unlike us, He never needs rest, is never distracted, and is always watching over His people.
- ✓ God's presence is protective - Like a shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, Jesus died to protect us from sin and death.
- ✓ God's preservation is eternal - Those who belong to Christ are secure in His hand forever; no one can snatch us away.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. Identify Your Functional Idols

- Write down 3-5 things you tend to trust in before God (money, relationships, your own abilities, etc.)
- Confess these to God and ask Him to help you turn to Him first
- Share your list with an accountability partner

2. Practice "Lifting Your Eyes"

- When you feel anxious or uncertain this week, physically look up and remember God's sovereign power
- Pray: "My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth"
- Journal about how this practice affects your anxiety level

3. Listen for the Shepherd's Voice

- Set aside 10 minutes daily to read Scripture and pray
- Ask God to help you recognize His voice more clearly
- Pay attention to how staying close to Him affects your sense of peace

4. Memorize Psalm 121

- Commit this short psalm to memory (8 verses)
- Recite it when you feel afraid or uncertain
- Teach it to your children or share it with a friend who needs encouragement

PRAYER FOCUS

Pray together about:

- Areas where group members are looking to things other than God for security
- Situations where it feels like God is absent or distant
- Fears and uncertainties that need to be surrendered to the Good Shepherd
- Anyone who is unsure of their relationship with Christ

Closing Prayer Prompt: "Lord, You are our Keeper. Help us trust in Your sovereign power, rest in Your watchful care, find safety in Your protective

presence, and have confidence in Your eternal preservation. Teach us to hear Your voice and follow You closely. Amen."

LOOKING AHEAD

Before Next Week:

- Read Psalm 23 and compare it with Psalm 121
- Consider: How have you seen God's "keeping" power in your life recently?
- Be prepared to share one way you practiced trusting God as your Keeper

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Recommended Scripture Reading:

- Psalm 23 (The Lord is My Shepherd)
- John 10:1-18 (Jesus the Good Shepherd)
- Psalm 91 (God as Refuge and Fortress)
- 1 Peter 1:3-9 (Protected by God's Power)

For Further Reflection: "The believer's security rests not in their hold on Christ, but in Christ's hold on them." - John MacArthur