

**God's Special Protection**  
**Psalm 121:1-8**  
**HUMC 26 September 2021**

As a mother was getting her four-year-old daughter ready for bed, it had become obvious that the child was afraid of the dark. When the mother turned off the bedroom light, the child caught a glimpse of the moon and said, "Mother, is the moon God's light? And the mother said "Yes."

Then the girl asked, "Will God put out His light and go to sleep?" The mother replied, "No, my child, God never goes to sleep." Then out of the simplicity of a child's faith, the little girl said, "Well, as long as God stays awake, there is no need for both of us to stay awake."

That is wisdom for us as well. This morning I would like all of us to look at Psalm 121 and see how God watches over His people as an ancient watchman watched over a city. My Scripture for today is verses 1-8 of this great Psalm.

**Psalm 121**

**1 I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; 4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**

**5 The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; 8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.**

The 121st Psalm was one of the “Song of Ascents” and it was recited and sung when Jewish pilgrims who had traveled many days, were in the city of Jerusalem and could visually see the temple from a distance.

**V1-2 I lift up my eyes to the hills-where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.**

To put this in perspective, the country of Israel is about the size of the state of Delaware and three times a year, the Jewish pilgrims had to walk long distances to worship in the temple.

As the people journeyed, they could see the mountains off the horizon. And to them it was a reminder that God who created this marvelous grandeur was protective of his people.

Even though the pilgrims were far from their appointed place of worship, the singer would lift his eyes toward the distant mountains. And it was a reminder that all of them were under God’s continuous protective care. God was just as present in the journey as in the destination.

In our spiritual pilgrimage of life, it would be good for us, to stop and see the beauty of creation. Think of it as a visual reminder that our creator God watches over us.

The psalmist writes that God is a help to us. It doesn't mean we will have a problem free existence or a cushion free type of life, but He is there to help. And the mountains and all creation are a visual reminder that God is in control and nothing happens to us without his permission.

**Verses 3-6. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; 4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.**

In verses 3,4,5,6, we have the assurance that God watches over his children through the challenges of the day and the deep darkness of the night.

Now thinking back to my first night in the military, I soon came to the realization, that someone was always awake while others slept. Watchman, Sentry, Look-Out, Charge of Quarters or Staff Duty NCO or Officer. Everyone from an enlisted private to company grade officer were required to go on watch.

But for me being deprived of sleep, outside in the cold at 3 AM with a rifle on my shoulder was not fun. Sometimes we would sit up all night next to a phone or we had to check all the doors in an empty building to make sure they were locked. But the purpose was to protect, sound the alarm or alert the higher ups that something was wrong.

In the spiritual realm, the Lord is the ancient watchman who never sleeps. On rare occasions, some soldiers fell asleep on duty, but we can trust that the Lord will not sleep or slumber.

Our God is always awake and alert. He is ready to help His people. He is not to pamper or solve all problems, nor does he always make the way easy, but provides enough assistance that we grow and endure in our faith.

Isaiah 25:4 reinforces this. You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm driving against a wall

To illustrate God's providential hand, members of the West Side Baptist Church choir in Beatrice, Nebraska began to prepare for their 7:30 PM choir practice. This was March 1, 1950. But something unusual happened to each of its choir members. For the first time ever, they were all late.

That night, the pastor left his office and went home for dinner and was about to return to choir practice with his wife and daughter when it was discovered that his daughter's dress had a spot on it, so time was spent trying to find a clean dress, which of course had to be ironed.

- High school sophomore Ladonna had trouble with her geometry homework and needed some extra time to finish.
- Then there were two retired sisters who always rode together for choir rehearsal, but on this night, their car wouldn't start.

- Mrs. Shuster who normally arrived at church at 7:20PM was delayed because her elderly mother needed some special help.
- One of the men in the choir decided at the last minute to write a letter and he too was late.
- Court stenographer Joyce Black just felt lazy and stayed home until the last possible moment and when she did go, she was late.
- Machinist Harry Ohl was to drive his two boys to choir practice, but was interrupted by a neighbor who wanted to talk.
- Pianist Marilyn Paul fell asleep after supper and she was delayed.
- Two high school female choir members decided to listen to an interesting radio program and didn't leave their house until after 7:30.

The reason I tell you all of this was because at exactly 7:25 PM, a gas leak caused the West Side Baptist Church to blow up and the entire building was destroyed. Fortunately, all the choir members were late and that was the first time that ever happened. It was certainly a God-ordained circumstance.

I have another story to share, which too has a good ending. Our church had looked for at least a year to find a financial secretary, but it took the death of a woman named June at a local nursing home to set in motion how we found our new financial secretary.

It all began when June's daughter from Connecticut wanted to have a graveside service for her mother to be held in March of 2020. Lots of emails went back and forth as we ironed out the details

Several months later, June's daughter from Connecticut called again and this time she wanted an indoor Memorial service at our church for her mother. And just before the Memorial service, the florist delivered the flowers. We got acquainted and ever since, she and her husband have been wonderful additions to our church family.

Since then, the florist has volunteered to be the church's Financial Secretary. I had prayed for a year to find someone to fill that position and God answered my prayer through the florist.

I think all of us in our own personal lives have had God moments such as these. Some were dramatic, some subtle, but nonetheless real, but all circumstances pointed upwards.

Now there is also a paradox here. If we were to read in the New Testament, The Book of Acts, there is one lesson we can take away. There is no predictable pattern on how God will work. It is often a mystery.

For example, the Apostle James was executed, but the Apostle Peter was released. Dorcas or Tabitha died of natural causes was raised to life. But Deacon Stephen was stoned to death and

buried. Then Deacon Philip had free reign to preach anywhere and achieved wonderful results, but the Apostle Paul had more than his share of troubles and was arrested and later beheaded.

These are six examples of the unknowable ways of the Lord and since he is at our side, and we should be able to face anything and everything.

The Lord will see us through all the problems and trials of life. Even though we are in the palm of his hand, but it doesn't mean we will automatically be exempt from all pain and suffering.

**Verses 7-8 The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; 8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.**

When we stay close to the Lord and walk in His ways, He will keep his eye on us. And this is the place we should want to be. Spiritually speaking, we can't straddle the fence. We have to be all in if we want to claim God's protection.

**Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Whom shall I be afraid?**

Because of this, we can go through life with confidence and if we walk with the Lord, He provides the light and brings us salvation.

**Psalm 121 also known as the Travelers Psalm. It is a passage of scripture I would encourage you to get to know.**

I have read accounts of families who had loved ones who served in World War II, Korea and Viet Nam and what these families would do is read Psalm 121 and pray for their loved ones in war to return safely. In many instances, the Lord honored those prayers. Others went to their heavenly reward.

**Isaiah 55:8 says:**

“For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.”

**Romans 8:38-39 “For I am persuaded 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.**

**Matthew 28:20: And behold I am with you always, to the end of the age.**

So may God be with all of us and know we are not alone. So, whatever comes our way, we need to hold on and let Christ take us through.