Luke 7:11-17

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Preacher: David Helm

[0:00] At this time, children ages 3 to 5th grade are released to teen tots and kids. Today's scripture reading is in Psalms 121, which is found in the Blue Bibles on pages 516 to 517.

Please turn there and stand with me as we read God's Word. Again, that's page 516 and 517, Psalm 121.
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. He will not let your foot be moved. He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither sleep, slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper. The Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.
[1:14] This is God's Word. Thanks be to God. Good afternoon again.

Glad to be here. And what a great series we are in. Though we've just heard one message. It still was good.
Food to the soul. Life to the heart. Won't you pray with me? Lord, we love you. We bless you. We honor you. And Lord, together, corporately, we have been poised here to give you praise.
So Lord, may that praise continue. May our listening continue. May our worship continue. Even as I speak and all of us hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the church today.
We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Glad for you. Glad for, particularly for Charles Dobby and Felicity and their son with us.
[2:20] Glad to have you all the way from London. We've interacted with Charles this week. Have enjoyed his company. And then my daughter Naomi is here from Brazil enjoying the lakefront in our new neighborhood.

Good. Singing as we go. An exposition of the Psalms of ascents.
15 Psalms. Psalm 120 through 134. Believed to have been sung by the Israelites as they journey to the annual feast of Israel.
An alternative title could be Pilgrim Praise. Praises as we pilgrim through life.
As we journey through life. And certainly this eight-verse psalm is one of the more beloved psalms in the Psalter.
[3:23] Rightly so because it covers the ground of life that is very familiar to us. This is a travel psalm indeed.

A lot of us will be traveling this summer. And, you know, but we just don't travel at special times. Travel is a way of life for the human race.
We are very mobile people. Every day you and I go out as well as we come in. We travel to and fro. And whether we're going across the street or across the globe, you and I cherish safety and security as we travel in this world.
On the one hand, our journey is through life. We go daily, annually, regularly from point A to point B.
[4:28] Point B to point C. That's the nature of our traveling in life. We go from childhood to adolescence to early adulthood and on into retirement.

From education to career to usefulness, investing in others. That is the nature of our traveling through life.
But yet, brothers and sisters, ours is not just a journey through life. There is a destination beyond this life.
Life must also be viewed as a journey to the one, to the very one, who is life indeed. It is a journey to glory.

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And in a real sense, these are parallel kinds of journeys. We journey through life and we journey to the one who is life indeed, even our Lord and Savior Jesus.
[5:38] The psalmist put it this way. You will guide me with your counsel and afterward receive me to glory.

Isn't it wonderful to have the counsel, the direction, the guidance of the Lord here in life? But also, our destination is glory with God itself.
Parallel journeys. Oh, and as you listen to the songs of the saints over the years, it really helps us to see the nature of life's journey.
We all know this one, don't we? Through many, what? Dangers. Toils. And snares. That's the nature of life.
And if you haven't been faced with any dangers, toils, and snares, dot, dot, dot, just keep living. Huh? Because they will come.
[6:43] Because that's the nature of life under the sun. The question for you and me this afternoon is this. Where is it that you and I turn to for help when we journey through life as well as to the one who is life himself?

Is there any help for the pilgrim? Is there any help for the journeyer? Is there any help for the traveler in life?
This great psalm this afternoon answers those very questions. My prayer is that we all would hear what the Spirit of the Lord would say to us through this psalm.
As we look here, the answer is a poetic answer. I mean, we could, those of us who are people of faith, we could simply say, Yes, there is help for the pilgrim.
Period. Let's go home and eat dinner. Man, the psalmist doesn't take us that particular route. He gives us a picture. He takes out, as it were, his paintbrush.
[8:01] And with each stroke, it looks like he's used, in a sense, the same paint. But it's a beautiful and marvelous picture that we see in Psalm 121.

It's poetic. It's magnificent. And if the psalm was displayed as a piece of art, this is the caption that would read over this piece of art.
The Lord, the guardian, or the keeper of his people. That would be the caption that you see there. And you can see that because this psalm celebrates the Lord.
That is Israel's covenant-keeping God as the all-sufficient, always-present, always-alert guardian over his people.
God is presented as a watchman. Now, we all know about security guards. Well, this is the real deal here, folks.
[9:01] As a matter of fact, look at the psalm with me. Notice the key word. The first place that we see the key word is in verse 3. He will not let your foot be moved.

And here it is. He who keeps will not slumber. Huh? The word is keeps. And we see this word or variance of the word.
Look at verse 4. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. Look at verse 5. The Lord is your keeper, the one who keeps you, the one who watches over you, the one who guards you. Look at verse 7.
And two times the word is used. The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will keep your life. The basic idea behind the word is to pay close or careful attention to, to exercise great care over.
[10:06] And isn't that what the Lord does for his own, for his people? All your experience and mine validates that fact.

Look where he's brought you from. Look in the rear view mirror of your life. And you can see him, those of us with a little mileage on us.
Brought us through childhood. Brought us through the terrible teens. And you may be there now. Keep on living. You'll get through them with the Lord's help.
He brings you, in spite of many dangers, tolls and snares, through the travel road known as parenting. Amen.
And somebody says, Lord, help. And he does help us. We see this word in Genesis 2.15. You needn't turn to it.
[11:06] But this is where Adam was commanded to keep the garden. In Genesis chapter 4, verse 19, Cain asked this question.

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Am I my brother's what? Keeper. That's the question. But turn over a page or so to Psalm 127. This is a great picture of what we see here.
Because you see the Lord here as the watchman. That is the word used in Psalm 127 and 1.
It is used twice. It's used once as a verb. And once as a participle in that same verse. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.
And then, unless the Lord watches over. There's our word. Watches over the city. And here it is. The watchman. It's actually a participle there.
[12:08] The one who watches. Stays awake in vain. Again, that's the idea. He exercises great care over. Watchful care over. And that's where we see it.

The Lord is the helper of his people. But notice in verses 1 and 2. Even before we get to verse 3. The Lord is pictured there as the helper of his people. Notice the words. I lift up my eyes to the hills. And then the question.
From where does my help come? My help. And notice the first person that's used there.
I and my. It's personal. The holy hill. What seems to be in view here in the psalmist's words in the first part of the verse is the anticipation. The arrival at the place of worship.
[13:05] Which was in Jerusalem. The city of God. Worshippers would go up to Jerusalem. Where the temple sat on a hill. Going up there.

Others feel that this may be a reference to the hills around Jerusalem. Where there were idolatrous kinds of shrines that were there. And there were worship there.
These gods that masqueraded themselves as deity. As gods. Again. And there's a lot in our world. That would masquerade itself as really being a true source of help.
Job's friends were called physicians of no value. When these masquerading deities are. These are gods of real. No real value. But people find themselves bowing down and worshiping them daily. To include. The devilish cult of me. No gods. But there was a true destination.
[14:13] And we must also always be mindful. That our true destination for worship. Is not ultimately a place. It is a person himself.

And it was the God who was actually worshipped in the temple. That sat on the hill. That was the ultimate destination. Ultimate destination then. Brothers and sisters. And our ultimate destination. Now Jesus made it plain in John chapter 4. Didn't he? He said it's not really where your feet are. It's not in Jerusalem. It's not in Mount Gerizim.
But those who worship God must worship him. In spirit and in truth. Because God is not time bound. He is not space bound. He is not geography bound. Because it is everywhere.
He can be worshipped anywhere. The psalmist. Though for him. The ultimate destination was not a place. It was a person. But look at the question in the second part of verse 1.
[15:13] From whence shall my help come? It's personal isn't it? Who or what is the source of help? And many people again would fill in a lot.

I mean if we left that blank. Where would your. How would you fill in there? Help is a reference. Refers to assistance. Assistance. And it was often the word that was used.
And it's derivatives. It was used a military kind of assistance. When help is needed. Where do we look?
Where do you go? Who do you listen. To. I love Psalm 20 and 7. Says this. Some. Trust in chariots. Some in horses. Again. The reference to military might. But we. The people of God. We will remember the name. And name equals person.
[16:13] We will remember the name of the Lord our God. That is our help. Source. The maker. Of heaven and earth. We've already talked about that.

I believe in God. The father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The maker of what? Heaven and earth. We say it. Every week. The reference here is to the Lord. As the designer. And architect.
And I think this is important. He is the designer and architect. Of absolutely all things. The maker of heaven and earth. And as this speaks of his sovereignty.
This speaks of his supremacy. This speaks of his ability. To do. All things. He's in control. And the same God.
That put it all together. From the beginning. And from before the foundation of the world. This is the one who is. Our helper.
[17:08] As the people of God. Notice the Lord. Who made heaven and earth. Is the same one featured throughout this psalm. Look at verse 5. You see.

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He is mentioned. Twice. The Lord is your keeper. The Lord is the shade. On your right hand. Look at verse 7. The Lord will keep you.
From all evil. And again. Verse 8. The Lord will keep your going out. And your coming in. The Lord is the name. Of the faithful.
Redeeming. Covenant keeping. Opposition defeating. God. Who has revealed himself. In the person. In the work. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture.
Has validated. That he. That the Lord. Is our source of help. Just listen to some of these. Scriptures. That really emphasize. The fact that the Lord. Is the one. Who ultimately. Assists us.
[18:05] Psalm 124. And 8. Says our help. Is in the name. Of the Lord. Who made heaven and earth. Psalm 33. And 20. Says our soul. Waits for the Lord.

He is our help. And our shield. Oh. And we love this one. Don't we? Psalm 46. And 1. God is our refuge. And strength. A very what? Present help.
He's available. To help us. In trouble. Psalm 118. And 7. The Lord is my. The Lord is on my side. As my helper. I shall look and triumph.
On those who hate me. Scriptures. Validate to us. That the Lord. Is our ultimate. Source. Of help. The real source. Of help. But I've also noticed.
That the songs. Of the church. Over the years. Also. Help us to see. Clearly. And validate. That God is our. Source of help. The great reformer.
[19:01] Martin Luther. Got it right. Didn't he? Huh? A mighty fortress. Is our God. A bulwark. Never failing. What? Our helper. He.

Amid the flood. Of mortal. Ills prevailing. As we travel. In life. Huh? How firm. A foundation.
Put it well. Fear not. I am with thee. Oh. Be not dismayed. For I am thy God. And will give thee. Aid. I will strengthen thee. Help thee. And cause thee to stand. Upheld by my righteous. Omnipotent hand.
Oh. But let me rewind to. The black church. Okay. Yeah. If you were to go. To African American churches. Around the country.
[19:57] And I found this out. It doesn't make any difference. And comparably. In the church at large. But there are some phrases. And some songs. That you could sing.

Anywhere. At any time. And the saints will rise up. When we were. When we were at this. The Chicago Eagles. Fellowship. This brother came up to me. And he said.
I'm from Kojic. Why did he say that? I said. I'm from Kojic too. He lit up. He smiled. Similar kind of background.
But if you were to go. To these churches. Anywhere around the country. Old or young. Men or women. Whether acapella. Or with grand musical accompaniment.
You could hear. Saints break out. With something like this. Father. I. Stretch. My hand.
[20:53] To thee. No. Other. Help. I know. If thou. Were to withdraw. Yourself.

From me. Whither. Shall I go? Oh. And sometimes. You would. Get those. Deacons. They would come in. And start. The service. Early. And they would get their.
Moan. And groan. On. Huh. And they would break out. With that song. Father. I. Stretch. My. Hands. To thee. No. Other. Help. I. One. And they would just go on. But you would join in with them. Because. The saints of God.
Have recognized. That their ultimate. Their true. Source of help. Doesn't come from below. But it comes from. Above. Huh.
[21:48] He's our help. And so pilgrims. On their journey. Through life. To glory. Have acknowledged. With the psalmist.

That. Help is found. In the sovereign. Supreme. Lord. The maker. Of heaven. And in earth.
The picture. That the psalmist. Paints. It. Is the prevailing. Image. As we've already noted. Here. It is that of the Lord. The watchful.
Guardian. Of his people. And in. Verses. Three. Through. Eight. We have this. Multi-faceted. Picture.
Of the Lord. As the guardian. Of his people. And any way. You slice. These verses. The Lord. His keeper. Is going to come up. He's going to show himself. In that way.
[22:44] In verses. Three and four. The Lord. Keeps his own. In the midst. Of dangers. What I would call. From below. Notice in verse. Three. He.

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Will. Not. Let. Your. Foot. Be moved. Huh? The great care. Of our God. Is pictured. By what he does not allow.
He does not allow. Your. Foot. To be moved. Huh? That the feet. That's the means. About which. You and I. Travel. Through life. The moving.
Of the foot. Because of stumbling. Or slipping. Could be. A disruption. Of the journey. God. Helps us. Keeping us. Steady. Huh? And here it is.
We see this. Image. Of a. Steady. On the move. Foot. A foot. That is planted. On the ground. And firm footing. Is essential. Absolutely essential.
[23:38] For traveling. In this world. Huh? And I believe. Jude. May have had. Psalm 121. And three. In mind. When he wrote. To the saints. Of his day.

Turn with me. In the. Bible. Provided for you. On page. 1027. Jude. Verse 24. He may have had. This in mind.
Because he uses. The same. Word. That would have been. In the Greek. Version. Of the old. Testament. Of his day. Full.
Full. So. And this word. Means to. Guard. To protect. To defend. So. Again. We see it. In Psalm 121.
And three. And Jude. Could have been. Reading his. Bible. And may have. Gotten this. Exhortation. For. The saints. From Psalm. 121.
[24:31] And three. In his. Greek. Old Testament. The Septuagint. And this is what it says. Now. Unto. Him. Who is. Able. And here it is.

To keep. You. From stumbling. And to present. You. Thoughtless. Before the presence. Of his glory. How. With. Great. Joy.
Huh? Uh. He will. He will not. Allow your. Foot. To be moved. He who keeps you. Not only will he not let your foot be moved. But notice what else he will not do.
He will not slumber. Huh? You see that there? In the last part of verse three? He will not slumber. He will not sleep. Verse four. The caregiving God. Of heaven and earth.
Is constant. Because he's always alert. Nothing escapes. His watchful gaze. Nothing. Gets by him. His vision. His.
[25:27] Is. Is perfect. His hearing is perfect. And according to Isaiah chapter 40 verse 28. The creator of the ends of the earth. Does not faint. Or grow weary.

Doesn't get tired. Doesn't sleep on. The job. But not only that. Look at verses five and six. Not only does he. Uh. Guard his own. In the midst of dangers.
From below. The Lord guards his own. When they are threatened. By dangers. From above. As pictured. Or depicted. By the sun. And the moon. The Lord is your keeper.
The Lord is the shade. On your right hand. The sun shall not smite you. By day. Or. Nor the moon. By night. The Lord's protection here. Is further elaborated.
He is. He's presented. His present. As indicated. By the shade. The protective shade. On the right hand. His presence is a shield. From the forces. And from the threat.
[26:23] And threats. From above. Sun and moon. Viewing. Another way of viewing. Five and six. Is seeing the Lord. As the protector. From both daytime. And nighttime. Kind of dangers.

He does that. 24-7. Around the clock. Protection. From the living God. But no. Look at verses. Seven and eight. The Lord.
Guards his own. From all evil. Throughout. All the ages. This amounts. To a summary statement. A concluding statement. Regarding the Lord's.
Protective. And preserving presence. Like the psalm. These verses. It's comprehensive. Comprehensive. He guards. In all of these ways. Here's a summary statement.
For. The psalm. The Lord. Check this out. Verse two. Who is the maker. Of all things. Heaven and earth. Will guard his own.
[27:18] Verse seven. From all. Evil. In all. Circumstances. Things that may. Harm us. From below. Verse three.

Or above. Verse six. At all times. Verse six. Day and night. In all situations. Going out. And coming in. And throughout. All of the ages. For all time.
In eternity. Good God. Hallelujah. Huh? That's what the psalm. Is about. Huh?
But we can't just stop. With the picture. That this particular. Psalmist. Paints. The Lord. Who watches. And guards. His own. That's the paint. That's here.

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Brothers and sisters. In this. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. We see the person. To whom. The psalm. Points. So it's not just. The picture. That the psalmist.
[28:12] Paints. In Christ. We see. The person. That this. Particular psalm. Points to. It's about him. It's about him.

Huh? It's fulfilled. In him. According to. John 1. In Colossians 1. Jesus. Is the maker. Of all things. Of heaven.
And on earth. Listen to Colossians 1. 15 and 16. He is the image. Of the invisible God. The firstborn. Of all creation. For by him. All things. Were created. In heaven.
And on earth. You hear that there? Visible. Invisible. Whether the thrones. Or dominions. Or rulers. Or authorities. All things. Were created. Through him. And for him. He is. The maker. Of all. Things. And then. Has not the Lord Jesus. Helped us. At the point. Of our greatest need. The point. Of our greatest need. Is for a savior.
[29:10] The writer Romans. Put it this way. What shall we say. To these things. If God is for us. Who is against us. He who did not spare. His own son.

But gave him up. For us all. How shall he not. With him also. Graciously. Freely. Give us all things. He met us. At our. The point.
Of our greatest need. And helped us. Where you and I. Couldn't in no way. Help ourselves. He's the savior. Who shall bring anything.
Against the. That. Against God's elect. It is God. Who justifies. Who is to condemn. Christ is the one. Who died. More than that. Who was raised. Who is the right hand of God. Who is indeed. Interceding. For us. The person to who. The psalm points. Is the Lord. It's not the Lord Jesus. Is the one. Who is able. To keep us.
[30:05] From falling. And to present us. Before. The throne. Of his glory. Without blemish. For his honor. Huh. He's the one. That does that. And then.

All the gracious. Doctrine. Of the security. Of the believer. The great biblical. Doctrine. Says. That says. This. God's plan. For our glory. Will not be thwarted. Huh.
Those who have been chosen. For salvation. Will receive. The full benefits. Of our great salvation. Did not Jesus. In his earthly ministry. To his disciples. Picture.
What he does. For his own. Eternally. He is. Our eternal guardian. Salvation. In that. Nothing. Can separate us. From his love. Listen to John. 17.
Where Jesus speaks. Of the security. While I was with them. I. Kept them. In. Your name. And here's the word. I. Have. Guarded.
[31:00] Them. And not one of them. Has been lost. Except the son of destruction. That scripture. Might be fulfilled. What we see of the Lord. Here. Mirrors the manner. In which Jesus.

Cares for. His own. Those who have the Lord. As their eternal help. Or their keeper. Are secure. From the dangers. Of judgment. Huh. Huh.
The psalm. It points to a person. But now. Let me wrap up. With some personal implications. For the praises. Of.
The saints. Huh. If what we see. From the picture. Painted. In the psalm. And. In the person. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ. Speak to God.
As. Speak of God. As our earthly. And eternal. Eternal guardian. Why does the journey. Get rough. Sometimes. If it speaks about.
[31:55] The protective care. Of God. Someone may ask. Why cancer. Why divorce. Why unemployment.

Did God. Doze off. Can he really. Be trusted. Was he. So busy. Caring about. Watching over. Someone else. That he.
Forgot about me. The biblical. Record. Includes. Those. Who felt. That they. Have been. Forgotten. By God.
But you. And I. Can hold tightly. To what we see. In this. Psalm 121. Picture. And the person. It points to. While understanding. On our way.
To glory. And through life. Evil. Does sometime. Invade. Our lives. And it's not because. Of God. Has dozed off. It's not because. He's abdicated.
[32:50] His throne rights. The presence. Of evil. In this world. And in your life. And in my life. Does not mean. The very absence. Of God. As a matter of fact. It could mean.

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That he is that much. More near. Because remember. God is our refuge. And strength. A very present help. When. And where. In trouble. He's a present help. In trouble.
Huh. Calvary teaches us. That this. His higher. Purposes. Can in fact. Mean. Our. Pain.
So with Jesus. Does guarding. One's life. Mean no pain. Whatsoever. No it doesn't. What it means. Is that. He will. Guard. And keep.
Your life. Your soul. Evil things. Can happen. And will invade. Your life. And mine. But our guardian. God. Through his son. Will not. Allow evil. To invade. You.
[33:46] Or overtake. You. He will not. Allow it. To invade. You. Or overtake. You. Yesterday.

I was at the side. Of. A dear sister. She had. Encountered. Over the years. Several. Life.
Altering. Kind of. Situations. Serious. Serious. Health. Issues. But in faith. She has lifted her eyes. And her heart. To the. Her heart. To the Lord. Several years ago.
Cancer invaded her body. She had a mastectomy. Underwent chemotherapy. Changed her life.
Two months ago. She went through. Multiple. Open. Heart. Surgeries. Days. Yet. In spite of that. Though she could not. Speak a word.
[34:43] Scripture. And song. Were running. Through her. Head. And through her heart. That reminded her. That the Lord. Was her keeper.

And such has been. The experience. Of the saints. Of the ages. Though. In this world. With. Devils. Field. Should.
Threaten. To. Undo us. I will not. Fear. For God. Is will. His truth. To triumph. Through us. The prince. Of darkness.
Grim. We tremble. Not for him. His rage. We can't endure. For low. Low. Low. His doom. Is sure. Huh? God.
His guardian. Even in this world. As we. Travel through. As we journey through. On this pilgrim journey. To glory. God is the guardian. Of his own. And he.
[35:38] Has not. Lost. One. Yet. The Lord. The maker of all things. Heaven and earth. Will guard his own. From all evil.

In all circumstances. At all times. All. In all situations. For all. Time. And. Eternity. Because.
The Lord. Jesus. Is the help. Of his people. Therefore. I needn't look. To any. Other. Source. For help. Because. The Lord.
Is the keeper. Of his people. I have. Hope. Regardless. Of where. I find myself. On life's journey. Those who embrace.
The truth. That the Lord. Is the helper. Of his people. Guess what? They. Find themselves. Singing. As. They. Go.
[36:32] Through life. And may. That vision. Of him. As clearly. Painted here. And point. To Christ. May it. Grip. Your soul. May it.

Grip. Your life. And may we sing. As we go. To him. Shall we pray? Father.
We worship you. Here. Thank you. That our worship. Destination. Is not. A place. But it is. A. Person. It is you.
The one. Who has done. Exceedingly. Abundantly. Above all. That we. Can. Ask. Or think. You. Are. Our helper. You.
Are. Our. Keeper. Thank you. For this. Psalm. That paints. A picture. Of your. Protection. Your. Care. Marvelous.
[37:30] Poetry. That points. To a person. And we can. Apply. These things. In our lives. And we give. You. Praise. Bless. Your name. Amen. I invite.

You. To stand. We have.

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