

Psalms of Ascent - Psalm 121

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[0 : 0 0] Psalm 121. And the question that you have for us today is that when you find yourself in a hard place, where do you go to find help? From where do you seek reprieve? From where do you look for rescue? Who or what do you rely on? The answers to these questions will reveal a lot about our lives, our hearts, but also will reveal a lot about, most importantly, our view of God.

I've watched a lot of tennis in the last couple weeks. I know that tennis is not the biggest sport in America, but it is one of my favorite sports to watch. And as you guys may or may not know, the French Open has been happening for the last few weeks, month even. And the finals are today. I have no idea who's winning. I think the match might be close to over right now. But as I've watched this tournament, it's been amazing just to see the repetition. They have like three commercials that repeat over and over again. And so I've literally seen the same commercials probably hundreds of times. But one of them, it starts out with a giant logo. And it's a crown. And it's a five-letter word. R-O-L-E-X. Rolex. Now Rolex is the major sponsor of most of the tennis tournaments.

Something about premium watches in tennis, I don't get it. I played a lot of tennis. This is not a premium watch. But that is kind of the thing. The culture is to have really nice watches in the tennis world. And this commercial, it shows a clock ticking. It shows balls being hit.

And their whole angle of the commercial is, buy something perpetual. And they show the motion of the ball. And their hashtag is perpetual. It's one of the slogans of the company Rolex, premium watches.

Here's what's fascinating to me. The word perpetual. What is the connotation of that word? What are they going after with this illustration? They're going after the fact that they believe their watch are the most reliable in the world. To the point where it will never let you down.

[2 : 2 0] As perpetual as a Rolex watch may be, compared to others, maybe for years, maybe even decades, if you were to take a Rolex watch and lay it on a table and let time play out, how long until the watch stops ticking? Not very long in the grand scheme of things. So I have a question. What is truly perpetual? It's a great lead-in to understanding what this psalm is all about. What is truly perpetual in this universe? Well, we have maybe the Great Pyramids, right? They're still around. They've been around for a very long time, thousands and thousands of years. Well, did you know the Great Pyramids are originally covered with white ivory? And raiders came in and stripped the ivory away, and that's why you're left with just the under part. But you know the Great Pyramids, every single year, are losing a lot of their structure as the wind continues to hit it. And I would venture to guess that in another thousand years, they may not be there at all. Well, they're not perpetual, even though they seem perpetual. About the great mountains of the world, Mount St. Helens, we knew it was a volcano, but no one expected it to explode to the point where it's literally gone. St. Helens is gone.

The mountains even aren't perpetual. What about the sun? The sun is a perpetual ball that just will eternally flame in the universe and warm the earth, right? Religions of the world and worldviews of the world have believed this throughout all centuries. That the sun is worthy of being worshipped because it's a perpetual god in the sky. But did you know that every single second that passes, the sun is actually burning fuel? And even the sun has an expiration date. Well, if the sun isn't really, truly perpetual, how about we expanding further? How about galaxies? We can observe the horse head and the sombrero and all these beautiful galaxies. They're massive. They're wide. They've got millions and millions of stars. Surely a galaxy is perpetual. Nope. Even galaxies are changing and slowly dissolving away as stars supernova and disappear in the night sky. Cosmic degradation. So is anything truly perpetual in this life? Permanent? And I have to offer to us right off the bat here, there is one thing that is perpetual in all of existence. And it is the God of creation. His attributes, his character, perpetual.

His love, his grace, his kindness, his justice, his holiness. But in this psalm, we're going to hyper focus on one quality of his perpetual nature, and it is his protection. See, we could do a whole sermon on the perpetual love of God that goes before us and wraps us in his arms. The perpetual grace, kindness, justice, holiness of God. We could do all of that, and we should, and we should enjoy thinking about God in such a way. But today, specifically, the psalmist writes, and he wants whoever reads it, which would be Israel journeying out of the wilderness to Jerusalem, he wants the people to dwell on the perpetual protection of God. So we join with the sojourners, journeying to Jerusalem, going up to God in worship at his holy temple, and we celebrate the perpetual protection of God. So let's read this psalm once again. It's fairly short. We'll read it from start to finish, and we'll break it down together. Psalm 121, verse 1, I've heard 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 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. I want us to break this psalm down in two sections. In the psalms, oftentimes there's a structure of an A, B, A, B, and we have this here in the original language. In Psalm 121, I'm going to break it down into four stanzas. The first stanza is the first two verses, then three and four is the second, five and six is the third, and then finally seven and eight is the final stanza.

Here's the breakdown of the psalm. Stanza one, verses one and two, stand alone, and then stanzas two, three, and four, verses three through eight are another section that build on the argument in the first. So let's look at the first stanza, the first two verses here. It gives us the introduction to the main subject of the psalm, God's perpetual help, perpetual protection over his people. And in this stanza, it's really interesting, if you look at the language, look at the verb, and the fact that the psalmist is using first-person language, you'll notice, he says, I lift my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from?

[7 : 29] My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. It's first person. It's almost as if the psalmist is introspectively asking of himself, where will you set your eyes? You need help. Where will you set your eyes? And here's what's amazing.

We see in verse one that he lifts his eyes to the hills. Now this is interesting. Oftentimes you see eyes being lifted in scripture. It immediately jumps to, I lift my eyes to the heavens. But no. The psalmist says, I lift my eyes to the hills. And then he asks himself, from where does my help come? Now the hills present a high and prominent place where one might look for shelter and rescue. And in the time in which the psalms were written, the hills were places where ancient religions would often ascend, build an altar to their false god, their foreign god, and they would look back and say, our god is high and exalted. Look how high they are.

We built an altar for them on the hill. So most likely, the psalmist is asking, I'm looking at the hills. Where's my help?

We don't know the trouble that the psalmist is in. He doesn't tell us what he's wanting help from. It doesn't give us contextual clues as to maybe it's anxiety or maybe it's physical danger. Maybe he's under threat of being killed or someone has him on a list. He's a debtor. Who knows? We don't know what the situation is, which implies that this psalm is for us in this room. Every person, right where you are, no matter where you are, the danger that you are experiencing, the threat that you see over you, wherever you are right now, the broadness of this psalm is intended by God to cover each and every one of us. Where do you need help in your life today? The psalmist looks at the hills and says, I'm looking at the hills. Where's my help? Verse 2 gives us the answer. My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. And here's what's so amazing. The psalmist isn't looking high enough.

The religions of the world thought we can build an altar on a mountain. Let's just assume, for sake of argument, it was Mount St. Helens. Wow, it's a high mountain. Way back in the 60s, 70s. People were watching. Wow. Let's build an altar up there. Look at our God so high. And then it blows up. Well, that's not going to work. Okay.

[10 : 18] So the psalmist says, the hills aren't my answer. So where does he look now? He looks more accurately, focuses more intently, and he looks beyond the hills to the cosmos itself. But no, not even the cosmos contains a God that can sit and be the help. No, no. He looks beyond even the

cosmos. He lifts his eyes and he sees who? Only one. The God of the universe that created all things.

So verse 1 is, in some senses, meant to be sarcastic and rhetorical. I'm lifting up my eyes to the hills. There's no help there. Instead, my God, who is above all, the one who made heaven, made the earth, who stands above it all, that's the one who's going to be my help. And the reason verse 1 and verse 2 are an introduction and really important for us is it's here that we find the credentials of the one who is worthy to protect us, worthy to care for us, worthy to be our God.

He's the one that made the heavens and the earth. You will not find a more incredible resume than this. He does not exist on a temporal plain like an actual hill or an actual mountain. Instead, this God dwells on the immeasurable eternal Mount Zion that traverses the galaxies and extends to the eternal reaches of his divine kingdom. The kingdom with no end. That's the God who can help. When we are looking for supernatural, otherworldly help, as the psalmist recognizes, I need. There's no physical help that can help me. I need the God who extends beyond all. Supernatural, divine help.

When we ourselves recognize that we need that help from God, when we look for supernatural, otherworldly help, we must set our eyes beyond the world to the supernatural, to God.

[12:14] And the great thing about God is in his invisible quality, as we're told elsewhere in scripture, we cannot see him, yet he exists. He's real, he's present, he's personable. So we look to God.

God is our perpetual protector from all danger. And now we move into the rest of the psalm, which we'll lay down. Now that we've seen the premise that God is the one that can help us, he's the one that doesn't sit on a physical hill, but instead is enthroned above the heavens, that's the God that we look to, and now we're going to see in what way does that God help us. There's many ways, but this psalm focuses on one, and again, it's this. God is our perpetual protector from all danger. So first, let's move into three and four. Verses three and four, five and six, and seven and eight, three different stanzas, they all give a different angle to this reality that God's our perpetual protector. Three different ways of explaining it, which is a really cool use of poetry in the scripture here, to convey the same thing in three different ways. So the first one, we're going to look at verse three and four. This speaks of the quality of God's perpetual protection, the quality of his perpetual protection. Look at verse three, it says this, he will not let your foot be moved. He who keeps you will not slumber. What does a foot not being moved imply? This is a really interesting language. Perhaps it's connected with the idea of journeying on a pilgrimage in a barren land. We know that they're traveling. We know they're going up. We know that it's not an easy, smooth, concrete paved road where you can just ride a scooter. No. So perhaps literally he's saying, hey, when we walk and we're walking on this uneven rocky ground, we're not going to slip.

Our foot is not going to turn, maybe. Or perhaps it's more symbolic, a picture of stability in God not letting the lives of his people be shaken or fall into tragedy.

[14:22] I want to draw your attention to the verb here at verse three, second part here. He who keeps you will not slumber. The word keep in the Hebrew is used six times in the psalm.

And the Bible, as we know, or maybe you don't know, but the Bible, when it repeats things, it's telling you this is really important. And in such a short psalm with only eight verses, the fact that the same word is used six times is cluing us in. What is the theme of the psalm? What is the most important truth that it's trying to convey? And it's this word, keep. And it is a powerful word. Let me explain what it means. In a general sense, it means to watch over or to protect.

However, in this specific usage, in this verse, it implies an active duty. I want you to imagine a security guard hired for an event. Security guard stands out there for the three hours that they're on duty. They're actively doing their job, protecting the event. And then they're off. They're done. They go home. They take a shower. They watch some Netflix. They get in bed. They're done. The word here is an active duty. In other words, imagine a bodyguard that has endless perpetual energy and stands and will never tire. He's on duty all the time. That's the tense we get here. It's an active duty. The Lord is actively keeping Israel from danger, from something external. This word keep, shamar in the Hebrew.

It's used of shepherds watching over sheep. It's used of watchers in the night in a tower guarding a city. It's used of even oneself watching over one's own tongue. A lot of usages here in the word so we can get a picture of what God is intending for us to know about himself. But I want you to notice the end of verse 3. He who keeps you, protects you, guards you, watches over you, he will not

slumber.

And then again verse 4, we have a double down here. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. Again, active protection. God does not take sick days. He does not take time off. [16:50] He does not turn his cell phone on silent or do not disturb. In other words, verse 4 is telling us that God has perpetual energy.

He's inexhaustible. Maybe we can liken him to a burning furnace producing perpetual heat in the dead of winter or a rumbling generator producing perpetual electricity to keep the lights on in the house or a cell phone that never moves from 100% battery charge. Would you out there need that? You're like, okay, that's me. I always run out of battery. Okay, I'm one of those people. Always plugging my phone in. Imagine any of those realities. But I'm going to offer to us, it's actually hard to imagine those things because they themselves are finite. They're exhaustible.

There's no such thing as a generator that never doesn't produce electricity or furnace that runs cold or doesn't run cold. There's no such thing as a cell phone that stays 100% without battery charge. This is the reality that God actually is that thing. He is inexhaustible. The only thing in existence, the only being in existence that truly will never need to recharge. He has perpetual energy.

And the reason that the image of sleeping is used is it's very important to the culture of the day. In this day and age, in this culture, it was often, it was an often used practice for false religions, right? They would go to their God and they would wake them up or they would call upon their God, hey, we need you. Can you arise and do something for us? And the expectation was that we have to activate the God in order for them to do something for us. Not the God of Israel.

[18:39] The God of Israel, Jehovah, He is always activated. I want to read a quick passage from a story. It's a story about a man of God named Elijah who believes in the present active perpetual God of the universe and a bunch of false prophets of a false God named Baal. And in this showdown, they go to the top of a mountain and they put an altar together. And the challenge is essentially this, hey, we're both going to call upon our gods to send fire down to consume the altar. So we'll both call upon them. You guys go first, your turn. You guys get the ball first.

So here's what happens. And they took the bowl that was given them, the prophets of Baal, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, which by the way is roughly six hours, six hours, wake up. And they said this, oh, Baal, answer us, but listen carefully. There was no voice and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. And at noon, Elijah mocked them saying, cry aloud for he is a God. Well, she doesn't know it's sarcasm here. Either he is musing, he's playing, he's having, he's recreating, or he's relieving himself, which is what you think it means. Maybe he's going to the bathroom. Or maybe he's on a journey. And then listen to this, Elijah says this, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened. Maybe he's just taking a nap. Wake him up. And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out of them. It's a brutal scene. And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of off the oblation. But listen to this, but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.

I'm not even going to read the rest of the story, but here's essentially what happens. Elijah, all right, Lord, put water on the altar first to make sure it's nice and wet. Elijah barely has to say anything, and the Lord sends a fire that completely consumes the altar.

[20:52] In other words, these verses are telling us very clearly that God does not sleep. He's not sitting, getting tired. People are groaning a lot. They're praying too much.

They're calling upon me too much. There's too many things going on in their lives. I just need a break. God doesn't do that. He's always ready to help us, to listen to our pleas.

We're told to pray without ceasing. It's tied to the perpetual energy of God. He's always ready to listen and to come to our aid and help us. So pray without ceasing. That's the confidence that we go forward to pray literally without ceasing is that God is always listening. It's amazing. So we entrust ourselves to the one who never sleeps. Prayers never bounce back. He is able to hear you at any moment and rescue you from your danger. Move to verse 5 and 6. If 3 and 4 was the quality of God's perpetual protection, 5 and 6 is the scope of God's perpetual protection. It says this, the Lord is your keeper. Again, we have the word, the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night. Now this is a really interesting section here because there's a lot of imagery used again. We have this shade on the right hand and the sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night. What's amazing about the word keep in here, you'll see the first one, the Lord is your keeper. All the other usages of this word shamar are the verb forms and

now you have a form that identifies the action with the person. So now it's saying not just that he keeps but it's saying he is the keeper, the one who keeps. Further extending all of who God really is to us that we might believe in his nature. So here's what happens. It says the Lord is the shade on our right hand. What does that mean? Well perhaps this is a reference to strength because in the Bible our right hand, our right side is typically used as a symbol of authority or power. Jesus extended to God's right hand, to the right hand of his Father. This is the place of favor, of strength. So maybe it's simply saying, hey, the Lord is going to shade your right hand.

Your power. The part of our body and our mind and our soul and our strength that works for God. The strength of our right hand. Or perhaps it's just simply saying this. In Psalm 17, in Psalm 57, it says that the people of God take shelter under the wings of God. The reason it might be this is it's the same word used here for wings. Sheltered. The shade. In other words, it connotes a protection provided by a mother bird to her chicks is the way one scholar says that when it says the shade is on your right hand like this, that the Lord is going like this and saying, hey, come under my shade. I'll protect you from the heat. And this is further shown by verse 6, which says the sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night. What is it like to bake out in the sun? Not good. The weather's getting nice.

We had a wedding last night that many of you were at. And me and Brooke are sitting there and we're like, I think we're both going to burn because we didn't put sunscreen on. It was beautiful and the sun was out. It's a great wedding. But what a reminder that summer is here when I start to feel the tingling on my neck.

[24 : 34] I'm like, oh, I'll just sit like this like a weirdo during the wedding. Brooke's got her hand right here. Burning in the sun is not fun. I think we can all relate immediately with the imagery that the sun will not strike you. It will shade you. It will keep you from that danger. But also there's by the night, which is interesting. What does this have to do with anything? Well, the sun and the moon here likely represent the heat of the day and the cool of the night. Even when it's warm in the daytime, if you were to try and sleep outside, even sometimes in the summer without any sort of blanket, it's cold.

It's protection that goes from A to Z. And that's the point of this. It's actually a term in the Hebrew or a poetic device called a merism, which basically is this word pairs that summarize the total by naming the opposites. In other words, poetically, this is saying this. The hottest, worst thing that could ever hit you, the sun, and the coldest, most dastardly thing that could ever hit you, the moon, the night, and everything in between, God will protect. So the scope of his protection protects to every facet of life. But then finally, verse 7 and 8 speaks to the depth of God's perpetual protection. This is where we'll spend the rest of the message. Because this is where everything comes together. Look at verse 7. We have the word keep used again twice here, but I want you to notice these usages are actually in a different tense. 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 forever more. Notice in verse 7 and 8, there's a word before keep. An ESV at least. And it's a good translation. The word is will. We have seen that the Lord is a keeper, that he does keep us. But now we see the imperfect tense used. And what is the imperfect? I only tell you these things when they're really important and this one's important. Verb tenses and all that nerdy stuff. An imperfect is a verb used when the action that it's describing denotes current or future ongoing incomplete perpetual action. incomplete. Incomplete. Not saying God's action, his keeping of us is incomplete. It's saying that when it describes that the Lord will keep you, it's ongoing and it has no end date. It's forever. It's eternal. It's perpetual. Which brings us back again to God is our perpetual protection from all danger. The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will keep your life. These are the promises of God. Now and forever.

[27 : 43] Now we have to stop at this verse, verse 7 and 8, because this is the point where when I was studying this, maybe you felt this as you heard it, I have to admit there was something in my heart that accused God of something. And it was this. You know, I read this promise and I read these supposed truths and I have to admit this psalm seems a little irrelevant or unrelatable.

Because how can God say from verse 1 to 8, no evil will befall you, your foot will never stumble, the sun won't ever strike you. Really? Are these promises primarily teaching us that we will not encounter pain, evil, or suffering in life? That our foot won't actually literally twist when I'm playing basketball or fall on the rocks as I'm journeying on a hike? Is it literally saying that I will never experience turmoil in my relationships? That there will never be any evil done to me even if I didn't

deserve it? Is that what this is saying? It doesn't seem relatable.

Does anyone here actually believe that God will never let anything misfortunate befall you in his sovereignty? Let me tell you two stories. Two men in my life growing up, one was Mr. Knox and one was Mr. Kuyper. Both were elders. Mr. Kuyper was an elder at my church. Mr. Knox was my football coach. He was an elder at his church. Great men of God whom I learned much and in many ways both disciplined me. Both men were faithful, Jesus-loving people in my life and examples.

Now I'm going to first talk about Mr. Knox. Mr. Knox had three boys. They were on a trip, a camping trip, and they decided, hey, let's go up into the mountains. Let's go camp out. Just four boys, me and the three, and they're in their van. They've got a trailer in the back with all their stuff, and the two oldest boys are sitting in the front seat. They're buckled in. The youngest, Seth, is sitting on the middle seat in the back of the van, taking it, sleeping with no seat belt. You're not supposed to do that, but I get it as a bunch of boys. I'm like, yeah, we've probably done the same thing. They're driving, and someone accidentally hits the trailer, and that's all you need when you're going 65 miles an hour. The trailer turns. The van turns. They're hitched together. The van rolls three times. Dad gets out of the car. The two older boys, unbuckle, get out of the car.

They're shocked they're alive. They're in absolute shock, and they don't know where Seth is, but they remember he was sleeping, not buckled. So they look around. They're yelling his name. They can't find him, and 50 yards away is Seth sitting on the grass, huddled in the fetal position, going, I'm right here, and I'm fine. They run over to him. What? How in the... When the van first turned, because he didn't have a seat belt on, his body became completely airborne, and he ejected through a window, his head first, straight through a window, broke through, and landed on a tuft of grass 50 yards away, unscathed. Remember the first time I heard that story from the Knox's, and Mr. Knox looked at me and said, God protected us. There is no doubt in my mind he protected us, because we all should have been dead, or at least greatly hurt, but I'm going to tell you a story of Mr. Kuyper. Mr. Kuyper is going on a fishing trip with his two boys, and his oldest son, Ari, was 16 and was learning how to drive, and so he let his son drive through some back, backwoods, a couple hours to the fishing spot, and Ari lost control of the vehicle and rolled the truck three times.

[31 : 19] This happened within years of each other, and the two boys get out of the vehicle totally fine. Dad is unconscious, died on contact. For two hours, they waited in the middle of nowhere for an ambulance to come with their dad's dead body in the truck. Horrible. We mourned the loss of this elder.

It was brutal. Our church was shaken over it. Now here's the question I have for us. Did God fulfill the promises of 121 to both Mr. Kuyper and Mr. Knox?

If we read Psalm 121, we read this list, and we say, okay, did God protect Seth and the Knox family?

Yes, no question. God had a hand in that. But if we read Psalm 121, and we say, that's what it means. The whole Psalm is talking about instances like that.

We can be gravely, gravely disappointed when the Lord does, in his sovereignty, actually allow evil to affect us, which he does. Instead, I want to argue that there's no life lived in this earth that does not encounter loss, pain, suffering, and danger.

[32 : 37] However, as much as we may celebrate the physical protection of God in bad and evil in life, this psalm actually is inviting us to zoom out, to direct our eyes to the holistic, spiritual, eternal protection of God over our heart, soul, mind, and body.

It's inviting us to see the greater picture of what God is doing in the world to protect his saints forever. However, the words of this psalm must be proclaiming a greater promise of protection than just physical protection in life.

One that is perpetual and heavenly. And I believe it is. There's a doctrine in Reformed theology and in classical theology called eternal security.

And it's a doctrine that says that the salvation of the heart in the heart of a person is promised by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and sealed, seen through by the Holy Spirit. Never again able to return to the previous state of condemnation and guilt before knowing Jesus.

And here's a few thoughts on this reality that I think Psalm 121 is leading us to. If our salvation is not earned by our diligence, it cannot be removed by our lack of diligence.

[33 : 51] If Christ's perfect life is the standard of holiness applied to us, then we are always above reproach in God's eyes because Christ's holiness can never be questioned. If grace is a free, unmerited gift of God, then grace ceases to be graced if the gift is taken back.

If our works are meritorious to lose salvation, then we probably believe that works are meritorious to earn salvation. In other words, here's what Psalm 121 is teaching us.

That God redeems those who repent of sin and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. And once He claims you, you are His forever.

He will never let you go. I want you to think of this promise that the Lord will keep your life, even from evil, even from death, which is why I think this all connects together at the very end here.

He'll keep you from evil. He'll keep your life. It's like a heaven-bound train. Eternal security, God keeping our life through all life circumstances.

[34 : 53] Once aboard that train, there is no getting off. The train will not derail. It will not slow down. It can't be boarded or robbed by outlaws. God is driving this train of salvation onward towards its eternal destination.

His kingdom, heaven. The place where every tear is wiped away. All brokenness is made whole. Every saint is glorified in the likeness of Jesus. That is the reality.

The Lord will keep you from all evil. And He will keep your life. Recently, we were offered an umbrella policy by our insurance.

I didn't know what umbrella policy was. So, umbrella policy is, okay, so you've got your house covered, you've got home insurance, you've got car insurance, you've got medical, all that.

Okay, umbrella policy is, if in case something happens that doesn't, one of those things is not covered, umbrella is going to cover that extra thing. So, weird things like lawsuits can be covered. And if you accidentally hurt someone, but you didn't mean to, and they sue you, just weird things that umbrella policy covers.

[35 : 59] Damages to things that you own, that isn't your home or your car. And I'm listening to this going, man, this is crazy. But this brought up an interesting point. How far do we really need to go to protect the things that we have?

An umbrella policy is typically offered by insurance companies to cover the wider net of misfortune. But the umbrella policies offered by State Farm Farmers or Geico or whatever, name your company, they only apply to material wealth and possessions.

This psalm is like the Lord's umbrella policy over you. It's far more comprehensive than any earthly insurance company.

In fact, life insurance policies aren't really insurance for life. They're death insurance policies. With car insurance, when you total a car, hear me out, when you total a car, you get a new one.

When your house burns down, you get a new one. With life insurance, when you die, you don't get a new one. Somebody gets money, and that can be good. I'm not saying it's bad to have life insurance.

[37 : 02] But here's what I want you to see from Psalm 121, that God's umbrella protection is true life insurance, such that when we die, we get life. That's what it means when it says the Lord will keep you from all evil.

He will keep your life. What is the greatest evil in the history of the world? The greatest danger to the human soul? Rejecting the love of Christ and the forgiveness of sin freely offered at the cross and standing on your own merit before a holy God.

That's the greatest evil, the greatest danger you will ever face. The evil of our own hearts that deceives us into thinking we are good enough. Be rescued today from that great danger.

Be kept by hands far more secure than your own. God is your perpetual protector from all danger. And then finally, verse 8, the Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

This special blessing is unique in its offering. Going out and coming in. It implies a holistic covering of protection over every aspect of our lives that leads up until the day we die that the Lord will keep our soul.

[38 : 10] He guards our entire voyage of life. From our home when we leave in the day, we leave, we go out, we come back to our homes. From home to the horizon, from journey to destination, from birth to death.

The protection of God over our lives is perpetual. It starts at the moment of regeneration and continues on beyond even our eventual glorification.

So finally, I want us to soak this in. We are Jesus' precious sheep and he will shepherd us from all danger. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

I give them eternal life and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. The Lord is your keeper.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. The Lord is your keeper. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God and Christ Jesus our Lord.

[39 : 24] The Lord is your keeper. Was the Lord faithful in keeping his promise to keep the lives of both Mr. Knox and Mr. Kuyper?

Yes. For both now and will be with him in eternity kept by the gracious love of God in Jesus Christ. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this song. We thank you that you are our keeper. God, there's no better hands that could ever hold us than the hands that fashioned the very universe.

So Jesus, I pray that as we continue to live and move and have our being and live out our identity as a church and as saints redeemed by your blood, Lord, that in every single situation, every hardship we find ourselves in, every danger that may come across our paths, that we would remember that you hold us dearly, gently, but firmly.

Thank you, Jesus, for your life, your death, your resurrection. Thank you that you yourself went through danger, willingly took it upon yourself that we might be saved from danger.

[40 : 53] God, we give all to you and we recognize you as our gracious Father and our perpetual protector. In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.