

My Help Comes from the Lord

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[0 : 0 0] First, 2 Corinthians 1, verse 24. If you'll turn to that verse before we get to Psalm 121 and our pilgrim songs, we'll be looking at a series of 15 psalms that we started a couple weeks ago.

And we'll talk more about that here in a second. Before church, I went and went to all the different rooms. I sung the song with the puggles. I sung the song, heard the sparks sing, heard the cubby song, and saw all the kids getting ready to study the Bible.

Went into the room of TNT where they were memorizing a scripture and tried to say to a couple of them the Bible verse that I've been meditating on this week. And I want to invite you to 2 Corinthians 1, 24.

They're going to put it up on the screen here for you. And we're going to memorize it together. So let's say it together. 2 Corinthians 1, 24. I'll read it once and then the next time you say it with me.

Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. For by faith ye stand. Now let's all read it together. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.

[1 : 0 6] For by faith ye stand. We'll say it again here in a moment. But phrase helpers of your joy. And that video was so nice. Travis and those with VBM really enjoyed that.

I'm sure you're aware that wasn't stock footage or videos they just purchased. But those are people on the mission field through our missionaries that have come to Christ. And those statements of just, I know Jesus.

I know hope. I know peace. And how wonderful is that? And that our friends are helpers of other people's joy. And so I've been meditating on this verse, getting ready for Sunday, a baby and parent dedication.

And we'll look at this passage in Galatians 5. But helpers of your joy. This is Paul explaining his intent, not just for him as an apostle, not just for him as a pastor or as a missionary.

But just one Christian caring for another, which is what we should do. You and I should help each other. We should be helpers of joy. Okay, so now say it again. Not for that we have dominion over your faith.

[2 : 0 7] Let's say that part again, okay? Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. For by faith ye stand. All right. Let's take it off the screen, Thatcher, and let's see how we do on this, okay?

2 Corinthians 1, 24. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. For by faith ye stand. If Kyle was here, I'd have him stand up and say it.

He's never afraid. All right. Won't ask the others to do it. That's our verse for the night. And I read something this week, and it said, When your friend goes through a storm, don't be a broadcaster.

Get an umbrella and cover them. I thought that was a good statement, right? When your friend goes through a storm, don't be a broadcaster. Like, it looks really rough where my friend's standing. Go get an umbrella and cover them.

And so, anytime a Christian sees another person that has some of that joy zapping happening in their life, they're the burdens of life, they're going through hardship, sin will take away that, we fight for their joy.

[3 : 09] And we help them. We go after that. There'll be an emphasis on Sunday about bearing one another's burdens. But as we get to these pilgrim psalms, songs that we're looking at, we're just mindful of the fact that we live with different burdens on us.

And so, here's a group of people that were homesick. Selah told us when she was little, I think it was Selah, she said, I'm homesick. And I said, well, you've been home all day. How are you homesick? She says, I'm sick of being at home.

All right. She's always got to be going. But all of us, you know what it's like to be homesick. Anybody think the first time you got homesick? Anybody going off to college, military? Anybody remember first time homesickness?

Anybody? Anybody? What you got, Travis? I was in the crowd, and I was, one of my friends was going around like a little lost puppy dog. Right. In college. And we didn't have smartphones.

I'm looking to the young people over here. We didn't have smartphones or any of that. So, I got lost all the time in Knoxville. I was always just pulling over, like, I want to go back to my town, wherever I know everything's at. But we all know that feeling of homesickness.

[4 : 13] And we know what it's like to be a pilgrim. We should call these Chase and Ashley Psalms. All right. The pilgrims. Always driving somewhere. Ten hours. That update, I was tired. I needed a break during his update of all that.

I wish. But it just, I appreciate that tenacity. He's going to get in South Africa. We have no doubt that he'll figure the visa. They may change the laws, but he will get into the South Africa one way or another.

But that traveling back and forth. So, this is what we have. But speaking, Travis, and thinking of that video, David Livingston, this is what James Montgomery Boyce says, that David Livingston, the famous missionary explorer of the African, he read Psalm 121, the one we're going to read tonight, and Psalm 135, which praises God for his sovereign rule over things.

And as he worshiped with his father and sister before setting out in Africa, and his mother-in-law, who was also a missionary's wife, Mrs. Moffett, she wrote a hymn often about Psalm 121 and how when she read it, he would come to mind.

It's a pilgrim song for us about just longing to be at a place where everything is set right. That's what we saw last time, is that there was people, we want peace, but they want war, is what they ended with in Psalm 120.

[5 : 26] Just longing for having a peace tonight, we're going to see that our Lord is our keeper, that we can't find it in any other place. I said that if your friend's going through a storm, grab an umbrella.

We all know what it's like to have that umbrella of a friendship over us, but we also know what it's like when our friend's umbrella just doesn't seem to be big enough. In a school, if you walked a girl from one class to another, that was a smart thing to do, you know?

You brought out an umbrella and you would walk a girl from one door to another, all right? That was part of my game plan, all right? It was to be the gentleman, but me and my friend Dave Childers decided the bigger the umbrella, the more girls you could walk.

So we would take the patio umbrellas, Caleb, and we would walk from class to class until the faculty told us we couldn't do that anymore, all right? So then we did it just faster, all right?

And so, but there seems to be a time where there's none of your friend's umbrella, it's just not big enough for you and them. And you know that they can't keep you and that the rain of life's coming on you and we rightfully look to the Lord that we'll see the 9th verse 8.

[6 : 30] It says that the Lord will preserve thy going out and thy coming in from time forth and even forth evermore. Then as we continue, we'll look at a restored Jerusalem in Psalm 122 and it's restored because Jesus is sitting there on the throne.

Everything that's out of place is because Jesus is in his rightful place. And then we'll define hope in Psalm 123. As behold, the eyes of the servants look into the hand of their masters and the eyes of a maiden into the hand of her mistress.

So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until that he had mercy upon us. Our hope is placed in him. Our hope has a direction towards Jesus.

And in Psalm 124, the assurance of the deliverance that is going to come, we'll just continue seeing. But the theme in each one of these Psalms is to help a pilgrim, is to help somebody on their journey. And every one of you should feel like a pilgrim, all right?

I'm not talking about the funny hats and the Mayflower. I'm talking about a sojourner, somebody going through this. If you, I can even say it, that it's the natural position that a Christian should feel in.

[7 : 36] Meaning that if you feel out of place as a pilgrim and a stranger, that's what's promised in the Bible. If you don't, then there's a problem, right? If you're feeling too comfortable in this world, because you weren't made for this one, you're made for the one to come.

And this one is broken. And we should be aware of that. And so we sing in against danger as they're walking from where they're at, coming from different places. In the last Psalm, we saw that they were, as they would come, there'd be enemies, people on the road that would be mocking them, possibly making fun of the funny rituals they're having, the traditions, and their walking, and the protection that they would need.

And as they will go, they will look into all the danger, to the hills, and they'll say, where is my safety coming from? And we'll say, it comes from the Lord. But that's just the first couple verses.

The rest of the verses, they preach a message to themselves, just eight, about six statements that we're going to give that are just, they're preaching to themselves as they're walking, all right?

Sometimes I'll send the kids out to the car, and if the front porch isn't on, you know, it's amazing how quick they can run, all right? It can be quite scary. You know, we all know what it's like to be at a place where you're walking, and it's dark, and it's scary.

[8 : 44] They are traveling through an area that is dark, and it's scary for them as they're going. So they're going to need the Lord to keep them, to watch their steps, to preserve them, and a God that's going to say, from the very beginning of your journey to the very end of your journey, I'm going to be with you.

And they're kind of preaching to themselves. I won't ask you to say it here. Some of you may incriminate yourself. But if you're listening to preaching, if you listen to people preach throughout the week, or different Bible teachers.

Cecily Michaels, she's one of my favorite people in the world, because he told me, she said, sometimes on Sunday after I eat lunch, I go back and listen to your sermon again. And I said, you are a saint, and God bless you, all right?

You always be. But I listen to different people who preach throughout the week. You listen to different people teaching. There's all kinds of ways in which you can learn and read. But who is the person who preaches the most to you?

And don't say your wife. That's the wrong answer, Jeff, all right? Who is the person who preaches the most to you throughout the week? And the answer is yourself, right? You are always giving a commentary on your thoughts.

[9 : 48] You're always thinking something, and then you're evaluating it. Have you ever been caught in somebody's argument that they're having with themselves? You're like, I don't really even need to be involved in this, because you're just doing this all by yourself.

And so a commentary on your thoughts and what you're having. And so I'm going to help you prepare a sermon that you can preach to yourself that says, The Lord is my keeper, and he will keep me.

Psalms 121. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved.

He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even for evermore.

[10 : 46] I want to pray a moment. Heavenly Father, Lord, I know the moment that I'm about to have with my brothers and sisters. It is short and it's brief. Where I know, relatively speaking, we are a small group of people that are gathered around tonight, but we're not gathered around a small word.

We're gathered around the big word, your word, an eternal word. Father, I'm asking that you would allow me the privilege tonight to be the helper of joy for some people that are here tonight, that they can find refuge and safety in you.

That maybe some in here, young people or older people that would find refuge, and they're looking to be kept by someone other than you or something other than you, that tonight they would recognize that you alone are the only one who is deserving.

That our help can only come from you. That anything else in this world, Lord, will only lead to disappointment and the chaos. So, Father, I thank you for your credentials.

Lord, I thank you for your testimony. Lord, I thank you for the fact that you have always been faithful to your people. And so tonight, Lord, I thank you that my help comes from you.

[11 : 56] In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. William Plummer on this passage says, He's commenting on the fact that over and over again in the Psalms, good men must be very unbelieving to make it necessary for the Almighty so often to assure them of His preserving and protecting care.

He's commenting on the fact that over and over again in the Psalms, the psalmist is having to remind themselves that God is trustworthy, that God can protect me. And it is amazing.

I would almost say, dare say, it's almost shameful how often that we need to be reminded of it. But God knows us and He provides this for us. But we find ourselves so many times just forgetting this.

So, where does my help come from? Verse 1, I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. So, there's a few different ways that we could say that. We could say, what is my source of security? Or we could say, where do I look to for refuge?

Or where do I find my comfort? Or what is my source of protection? And we all know the answer on Thursday night at 7.50, the answer to this question.

[13 : 14] But in real time, it gets more difficult. Stephanie and I have done CPR training a lot together. I'm not sure why, but we've probably done it five times through the time we've been married.

Very dangerous life we live, right? But every time, she always gets a better score than me. And the reason is, no matter, I remember all the steps that I'm supposed to take. But as soon as they say there's an emergency, I immediately don't ask anybody to call 911.

And I don't secure the area, okay? Those are the first two things that you're supposed to do. I always skip those things. And I immediately jump into action, all right? Trying to save the dummy, all right?

The mannequin, all right? No. And trying to save the person from whatever it is. And in the same manner, I can tell you right now on a Thursday night that I need to go to the Lord and find my safety in Him.

But I so often immediately move to action, and I forget those steps. So there's only two options. I'll subdivide the second one. But the first one is, you can go to the Lord to keep you, our God, where you should go.

[14 : 16] And the second is, anything else. Anything outside of Him is the wrong answer. And so what are some of those anything else's? It could be ourselves and what we do. Like in the example I gave, it's just me going into action.

I'm going to keep myself. I'm going to preserve myself. I'm going to make sure my steps don't fall. I'm going to do all the things that I'm going to ask the Lord to do. Or maybe circumstances will alleviate the problem.

If the problem came with circumstances, the new circumstances may solve it. Or resources are what's being provided for us. You call somebody. You ask for them to take care of it.

And other people. So either you can look to God to keep you or to anything else. And looking to someone to keep you and to preserve you is a form of worship.

And so to not look to the God of heaven, not only is it pragmatically wrong, it's not the right answer. But it's a problem of the heart. It's a matter of pride.

[15 : 16] It's to take matters into your own hand. And so, from the Lord. I will lift my eyes into the hills from whence cometh my help. And the answer is, my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

And so God is the only reliable source of our security. And so we need, at times, that we say is our help. But we also say, at times, we'll say he is my help. In Psalm 124, verse 8, is a testimony where it says, our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.

That's how we speak as a gathered people. That's how you speak as a family. We need testimonies of our and then my. In our home, our kids should hear testimonies of us saying, of God being our help.

And then it should translate into them saying it personally. That he is one that is the protector of us, but also of us individually. He is my help.

My help cometh from the Lord. Psalm 121, verse 2. Why don't you say those first six words with me? Psalm 121, verse 2. My help cometh from the Lord.

[16 : 22] And so now we get to the reminders and encouragement. Simple question, where does my help come from? Answer from the Lord. And then how is this going to happen? And it says in verse 3, he will not suffer for my foot to be moved.

He will guide my steps. He will keep the thee that will not slumber. It's the guiding of the steps. Looking to his words. To tell me where I should place my feet.

Beth in here, having spent many years in Bolivia. And those of you that have traveled around the world, you know a lot of roads. And going over a mountain, you just wonder how much room is there, you know? If you've never, you haven't lived until you've been in a car where you look out the window and you can look straight down.

And so I know a lot of you have done that in there and that insecurity that it brings. Not their traveling wouldn't have been as of that. But late into the night and just walking, they needed someone to guide their steps.

And so that visual is just God guiding their steps. You are in precarious situations as well. You're having to make decisions. You're making decisions for your family. You're making decisions inside of your business. You're making decisions with your life.

[17 : 27] And you're just saying, I don't know where I can place where I'm supposed to make this next decision. And you can look to the Lord. He will guide you. He will not suffer for your feet to be moved.

He will guide your steps. So we find encouragement in that. One that cares about us personally, cares about our next steps. And one that does not sleep, says in verse 4, he neither slumbers nor sleep.

And we're prone to think of ourselves as workers in God's life. That's how we often think about ourselves, that we are workers in God's life. But the Bible wants us to be amazed by the fact that God is a worker in our lives.

Isaiah 64, 4. For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear. Neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he has prepared for him that waiteth for him.

God has prepared something. It says in 2 Chronicles that the eyes of the Lord look across the place looking for people. And the condition of their heart is a place in which he could show himself strong.

[18 : 27] And so God here is working for his people. And that's encouraging. If you feel exhausted because you feel like you work for him, you need to be reminded. I saw it this week and loved it.

It says the gospel is not a help wanted sign. It is a help available sign. That God does not sleep or slumber. And that he works on our behalf. That we should be looking to that.

So he guides our steps. He does not sleep. And he keeps us. Verse 3. He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Verse 4. He that keepeth. And so we don't regularly, if you don't regularly feel your need to be kept by him, then you've lost your proper perspective in life.

Satan is always trying to consume us with a fear of exaggerating the unknown. He wants to exploit our imagination and torment us with feelings of insecurity. And so protection is a big issue here for these pilgrims that are traveling through this hard and lonely place.

And so they would say, the Lord is my keeper. Verses 5 and 6, it speaks about during the heat of the sun and during the fear of the dark. No matter what problems the day may have, the heat of the day, he's protection.

[19 : 37] During all the fear that they would have at night, by the moon night, he is there as well. And he's keeping us from evil. Verse 7. Preserves thee from all evil.

That's not a word that's often used outside of us, right? We use the word evil. But if you watch the news, it seems like they try to find any other word for evil. Something bad will happen and they'll blame it on some kind of some group, right?

It's always some group. But occasionally you'll find that the news just gets to a place and they're out of words and they just say, that was pure evil. But as God's people, we're very much aware of the fact that we want to be preserved or kept from evil.

Evil can and will harm us in our lives, but it can only do so much harm. Satan can make months or years or even decades be miserable, but his leash is short and eternity is long.

That's why Jesus tells the disciples in Luke 21 that you'll be betrayed by parents, brethren, kinsfolks, and friends, and the man will even be put to death. But he also says, not one hair of your head should perish.

[20 : 41] How are both of those contained in the same portion of Scripture is that we are preserved and we are kept from that eternal judgment. We are kept from the evil that Satan would want to do from us.

So we're kept from evil by the keeper, but he keeps our lives. He will preserve thy soul in verse number 7. He meets our needs. He gives us, he sustains us what we need.

Greg preached a great message recently about, or at Good Friday, about God's giving us abundant life. It's eternal life. It doesn't start at the end of our lives, but it started at the point of salvation. And our lives are abundant, but we also know that we live with daily bread.

That he gives us the grace that we need for each day. He gives us our cares. And how well does he care for you? So well that he told them that even the hairs of your head are numbered.

So our keeper who is keeping your life knows you extremely well. He knows you completely. Occasionally when Stephanie leaves the kids with me, and then she comes back at the end of the day and says, Did you feed them?

[21 : 43] I say, Well, no, because I wasn't hungry. All right? And so I occasionally forget important things, but our God doesn't ever do that. There's never a time where he just says, I forgot that you needed this, and I wasn't being mindful of it.

He's attentive to us. Let me end with this. So he keeps us from evil, keeps our lives. And then verse number 8, so precious. The Lord will preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even forevermore.

As they're singing in the face of danger, they say, From the time I take my first step to leave, to go to my pilgrimage, to the time that I come back, every step I have been protected by the keeper.

For us, though, it's the middle that's so scary. We have great trust that God started when we were saved. And then we pray that someday when we get to the day of our death, we will do that gracefully knowing him.

But it's the middle that seems to be so scary in all of this. When I was a kid, we would sing Jesus Loves Me out of the songbook. And the third verse, if you don't know it, there's a reason we don't sing the third verse in most songs.

[22 : 52] All right? If a songwriter's not sure about a verse, he puts it on the third one. All right? Well, the third verse, Jesus Loves Me, it says, If I love him when I die, he will take me home on high. How many of you knew that? I'm looking at you, Miss Sandy.

You knew this, didn't you? All right? If I loved him when I die, he will take me home on high. And the pastor of the church, he would always say, we would change it. And he would say, I will love him when I die, and he will take me home on high.

That confidence that we will have, that he will take us, and that he will keep us at the end of our lives. That same God that you have trust for the end of your life, you can trust for the middle of your life.

The same one that you trusted with your soul and salvation, the one you can trust right now in the middle. I'll end with this quote for you tonight. And it says, It says, So where does our help come from?

The Lord. The Lord who guides our steps. The Lord who does not sleep. The Lord who keeps us from evil. The Lord who keeps our lives. And the one who keeps us for the entirety of our lives.

[24 : 33] If you're feeling a little bit homesick, I understand. But you know that you can go into the presence of the one. He is your refuge. Until we are in heaven, we can still abide with him.

We can still dwell with him. And I would encourage you to do that. If you feel like life's maybe slipping out of control, and you feel just a little bit vulnerable, feel like it was a little bit dangerous, you can go and find comfort in him and pray to him and say, He is my keeper.

For me, I would like to say, you are the two over.