

Devotion:

Psalm 121 (New Revised Standard Version)

I lift up my eyes to the hills—
 from where will 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.
He who keeps Israel
 will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is your keeper;
 the Lord is your shade at 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 on and forevermore.

Reflection on Psalm 121:

The Psalms are a beautiful reflection of the vastness of life. They capture the ups and downs, the happiness and sorrow, the hardship and celebration. This Psalm, Psalm 121, reflects on God's provision in each of our individual journeys of life. Psalm 121 is from a collection of Psalms called the "Songs of Ascents" or "Pilgrim Songs". These Psalms gained such a name because they were sung on a journey, specifically by Jews traveling to Jerusalem for festivals. We are each on a journey and on that journey, we encounter an array of terrain – we must trek up mountains, feel the cold, brisk air of the valley below, and experience life in the in between. However, as unpredictable as those environments may be – maybe we encounter mountain lions, treacherous weather, blisters on our feet – what we gain from Psalm 121 is a confidence that God is with us in all circumstances. That God cares for us and walks with us along the journey – every single step of the way. Do we take the wrong path at times? Yes, absolutely. Do we turn down the wrong road? Probably. But what we know for sure, is that even there, God is ever-present. "Where will my help

come? My help come from the Lord...". What does this mean? That our help doesn't come from this Earth, from flesh or anything that humankind can provide. It means that we must continually gaze our eyes above and look towards something better, something bigger, something brighter and trust that the God who cared and loved enough to make the Heavens and the Earth, cares and loves each of its inhabitants. God loves and cares so much for us God sent, Jesus to live amongst us, to walk and bear the pains of this Earth to solely be in relationship with us. Through this continual promise, we can trust that God continues to love and care for each and every one of us today, just as God did in creation, through the Abrahamic promise and the early church. In this relationship, Psalm 121 promises that "[God] will not let your foot be moved." While we travel on this journey, God will guide our steps. As we sleep, God "will neither slumber nor sleep." For, God is with us every hour, every minute, every second of every day. God is our keeper, the "shade at [our] right hand... The Lord will keep [us] from all evil; [God] will keep [our] life." God will protect us from all of life's dangers and trials, but even with God, why do bad things happen? Jesus promised his followers they would face trials in this life. On Earth, there will continue to be trials and tribulations because of sins presence in the world. The promise of this Psalm is that God will be with us through everything – the good and the bad – and God will deliver us from what we are facing, maybe in this life and certainly in eternity. So, what are we to do? We must keep our eyes focused on God and our relationship with God. When life throws challenge our way and we stumble on our walk of life, we must not lose faith; rather, rest in the assurance that God is there to catch us. We must continually make an effort to strengthen our relationship with God and work to follow in God's path for our life – even if it is different than that which we prescribed for ourselves. It all comes down to trust – trusting in the providence – and the reading of the Psalm, can help guide us in that direction.

Prayer:

Trusting God – God of complete providence, we come before you in this time to stand in complete awe of you. Our maker, our friend, our source of life. We give you thanks for this day and for the opportunity to be able to take a few moments out of our busy lives to simply breathe. To be present in your Word and reflect upon it. Thank you for speaking to us, continually, and hearing all of the thoughts and prayers that lie on our hearts and echo out of our mouths. God, you know each of us intimately. You know our

mountains and our valleys. Our mountain lions and blisters of our feet. You know what we walk through God on this journey of life and as we walk along, you are there beside each and every one of us. As we continue to discern and learn where you are calling each of us to go help us to be better listeners and active followers of you, Lord Jesus. And when we do fall short, and trip or stumble, take the wrong turn or confuse our paths, help us to know that even there your presence transcends. Helps us to not hold guilt or anger, for our mistakes, but to take them as a learning opportunity – one to grow closer to you. Thank you for continually catching us and redirecting our paths – for without you we would be in utter darkness, with no direction, no compass and no idea where to go. Help us to trust in your provision and as we do help us to continue to build a deeper, more meaningful relationship with you, our Creator and Sustainer. We pray all of this in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, amen.