

Where does my help come from? (Psalm 121 & Romans 8:31-39)

21-January-2018

G'Day everyone

There's Bible's in front of you and the usual outline in your bulletins.

We're looking at Psalm 121 and then briefly at Romans 8:31-39

Let me pray for God's guidance and help first...

Context

Psalm 121 is a psalm of ascent

The people sang this Psalm as they ascended the hill - and went up to the Temple in Jerusalem to worship God, on Mount Zion

Intro

To start the New Year

2 weeks ago - we said we need to put on God's armour - to protect us from this evil world

Then last week, we said we had to be yoked to Jesus and learn from Him and let Him carry our burdens

This week we're looking at Psalm 121 - and looking at where we get our help from? And the word used for help is the same word used when God created Eve as a help for Adam - the word means a suitable help

So basically the writer of the Psalm is asking where will I get suitable help and support in times of hardship and distress.

So let's unpack this Psalm a bit...

Please turn your Bibles to Psalm 121

Source of Help (Psalm 121:1-2a)

Where do we go for help and support in times of hardship and distress?

To our family?

To our friends?

To our church family?

(pause)

What if they can't help?

What if they won't help?

What if they're sick of helping?

What if your problem is beyond their capabilities to help?

(pause)

The writer of the Psalm pictures looking up to the mountain for help

Have you ever noticed - when people are in despair they look up to the sky

It's like they're looking up for some help from above - isn't it?

[PowerPoint 1-Source]

But the psalmist realizes the source of help is not the mountains in the distance - as in v1

But the source of help is the one who created the mountains

His source of help is the Lord - v2

A Suitable Help (Psalm 121:2b-8)

Why is God a suitable help for human beings?

[PowerPoint 2a-Maker]

1. Because God made everything - v2b - He made the Heavens and the Earth, even the mountain of Jerusalem that the people are going up singing and worshipping. If God made everything in Heaven and Earth, including humans. Then it stands to reason - that the Creator of All - can be the Helper of all!

[PowerPoint 2b-Foot Slip]

2. God is a suitable help. Because God won't let your foot slip.

This doesn't mean - you want fall over.

But that God will help us stand firm in our times of trouble.

Just like we talked about God's armour 2 weeks ago

And we said the feet part of the armour were the Gospel of Peace - which helped us stand firm

With our feet firmly standing on the foundation that Jesus loves us and died for us and forgives us - and gives us eternal life

We can stand firm in that truth

And in that sense - God won't let our foot slip - but helps us to stand firm in times of trouble

[PowerPoint 2c-Sleep]

3. God is a suitable helper. Because God doesn't sleep. See v3 and 4. God's on the job 24/7

Our friends or our family who try to help have to sleep - and when they're asleep they can't help. But God is with us 24/7 - always awake!

So, for example if we are concerned about our children or grandchildren or family member who are away [Like my son in Mexico right now] - we can't be with them all the time -but God is with them 24/7 - because God is everywhere. That's what Psalm 139 says in v7-8

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

(pause)

A mother or father may fall asleep at the side of a sick child, not meaning to, but just because they are exhausted. God is never exhausted, is never weary, and is never inattentive. He never closes His eyes on the condition of His people

[PowerPoint 2d-Watches Over]

4. God is a suitable help. Because God watches over us (as we sang earlier in our children's song).

3 times the writer of the psalm says God watches over us (in v3, v4 and v5)

The word used for watch over is like a watchman or a guard - like a shepherd guards their sheep. We already know from Psalm 23 - that the Lord is described as a shepherd and His people are His sheep. That's what it means here in this Psalm - we are under God's protection. He's watching over us.

[PowerPoint 2e-position right hand]

5. Notice the position of God as protector - He is in the position of power - on our right hand. See v5. We still use that expression today - don't we - so and so is our right hand man. The idea is that God is always in close proximity ready to help. His close proximity means it's like He's shading us from any harm. It's like we're under His wing safe and sound

[PowerPoint 2f-duration]

6. And notice the duration of God's protection - His protection is during sun-light and during the moon-light - see v6 - in other words God protects from the dangers of the day and the dangers of the night

[PowerPoint 2g-keep from harm and watch over your life]

7. And notice too, what the protection is in v7 - He will **keep you from all harm** - literally keep you from evil. We pray this in the Lord's pray each week, don't we? - **deliver us from evil (or the evil one)**. That's the picture here in this psalm - God protecting His people from the evil one - the Devil!

And the protection is also to **watch over your life**. A better translation is that God preserves your soul. Those who trust in Jesus - know that God preserves their life into eternity. No matter what troubles and trials we have in this life - as Christians we know we have eternal life

[PowerPoint 2h-gracious promise]

8. And to finish up - in v8 - God's final promise is gracious assurance

This is the gracious assurance which is made to all who put their trust in God. At home and abroad; in the house, in the field, and by the wayside; on the land and on the ocean; in their native country and overseas; on earth, in the grave, and in the eternal world, they are always safe. No evil that will endanger their salvation can befall them; nothing can happen to them here but what God sees to be beneficial to their ultimate good; and in the heavenly world they shall be safe forever from every kind of evil, for in that world there will be no sin, and consequently no need of discipline to prepare them for the future.

Why would God be the source of all this help?

Why would God be that most suitable help?

(pause)

Because of His everlasting love for us

God's Everlasting Love (Romans 8:31-39)

Which brings us to our NT passage - so please turn your Bibles to Romans 8:31-39

And look what we find - in v31

If God is for us, who can be against us

[PowerPoint 3a-God is for us]

As Christians we have God on our side - and we are one of His children - we are on His team - and that's the winning team - so it doesn't matter who's against us on the other team. God love us - that's the bottom line

[PowerPoint 3b-Gave His Son]

And in v32 - If God allowed His Son to die for us - so that our sins could be forgiven - if God loved us that much that He sacrificed His Only Son - isn't He going to be there for us - hasn't He got our back - that's the Apostle Paul's argument

[PowerPoint 3c-Jesus intercedes]

Not only that - in v34 - Jesus is not a dead saviour - He is a Living Saviour - sitting in that position of power on God's right hand - and He's interceding for us right now. Pleading for us, speaking up for us - right now.

Why?

Because He loves us - His followers.

In fact that love is so strong that nothing can separate us from Jesus' love

[PowerPoint 3d-nothing can separate]

See v35 - Jesus' death on the cross - paid for our sins - and bought us back to God - so we're His. So no trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, poverty,

nakedness, danger, violence or war can keep us away from Jesus' love for us. He has us in the palm of his hand for all eternity

[PowerPoint 3e-conqueror]

Jesus has conquered this evil world and because we belong to Him and He loves us - see v37 - we're conquerors too.

[PowerPoint 3f-death]

And because Jesus has conquered death - through His resurrection, we don't have to fear that even death [even suicide] will separate us from His love - because we too will have eternal life.

And because Jesus is ruler of the Heavens and the Earth - we don't need to fear the Spiritual world either - neither angels nor demons - not even the Devil - Jesus has defeated Him too! Jesus rules all.

If we love Jesus, we belong to Jesus - and His love never fails.

Conclusion

So today I'd like you to take home this:

[Powerpoint 4-Conclusion]

God is our source of help

Because God is the Creator, who never sleeps, we can be assured He's watching over us - and He preserves our soul for eternity - because He loves us

All our response has to be is to accept God's everlasting love in Jesus - and with it comes eternal protection and eternal love that we can't be separated from

That's got to be reassuring as we live out our difficult lives in this dark world

So the next time you need help!

Go directly to God the source of our help - the most suitable help!

Let's pray