

**“Where Does My Help Come From?”
by Rev. Frances Savill
Sunday July 30, 2023
Worship at the Waterfront**

Psalm 121

Psalm 121 is a psalm of Ascents – a psalm that the travellers to Jerusalem would recite.

I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come?

The road to Jerusalem would be long, as many made the pilgrimage – and there were many dangers along the way. As travellers walked, they looked up to the hills along the way – the hills would be dotted with the temples of other gods providing the promise of help.

So the psalmist looks to the hills – to these temples and asks - *from where will my help come?*

There are so many idols that call to us, that claim they can keep us safe and make our journey easier. I think of the journey that all of us – and all our churches are making - and again there are all kinds of idols that beckon.

For those of us concerned about the church we hear the call from: the latest church growth strategy, the best new music program, this new thing is going to solve all our problems of keeping young people in church, management, leadership, stewardship solutions. Conferences galore, books by the thousands, articles, invest in this, start that program, this will save the church.

I lift my eyes to the hills – to the experts clamouring, to the promises of safety and an easier path. *Where will my help come from?*

For us personally, it is similar, we look to education to save us, or science to rescue us, healthcare to make our lives pain-free, and financial wizards to give us the good life and set us on easy street.

So as we journey through this world, where do we place our faith and our hope? What do we place our trust in?

The answer is: **my help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.**

I know that there are helpful strategies for the church and for our lives, there are good programs, education and science have some value, financial planners have their place – but there is only one Saviour- and He has already saved us, and Jesus is the King and head of the church which is His body.

My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

The Biblical story and our history since then have shown that God does unexpected things at unexpected times, using the most unexpected and unlikely people.

God, the Lord our help, is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end of all things - the Creator, the one who created the people with the ideas and programs, the one who breathed life, birthed the church and called us together as His people.

The Lord, our great God, who loves us and has given Himself for us, walks with us through every day. The Lord, who is our help, created us, and has called us each one of us to serve each other, to serve the world He loves, to worship together. Our help, our true hope, is in Him alone.

There are a lot of hazards on this road – for the travellers to Jerusalem there was sunstroke, dehydration, stumbling and injury, there were bandits or robbers, lunacy from the moon striking you at night. All kinds of misadventures are possible on the journey.

There are a lot of hazards for us who journey this road together. We forget that this is important. We forget that we are called by God to be together as His people. We forget who we are – sons and daughters of the King, we forget that each person is made in the image of God.

We forget to pray and to rest in the Lord, we become cynical, or lazy, bored or discouraged.

Whatever the hazards, the answer is: "our help is in the Lord - who has called us by name, who set us apart."

Education and programs, strategies and wise changes, all are helpful as we travel this road together - like wearing sensible shoes, and having an extra water bottle, carrying a walking stick. There are good tools to aid us in the journey. But **our help, our hope is in the name of the Lord.**

The One who keeps us does not slumber or sleep – so we can rest knowing that the Lord is still on watch. We can sleep tonight secure.

The Lord is in all things, able to be in all places, so we don't have to be.

The Lord will keep you. He will keep your going out and your coming in. He will keep your beginnings and your endings.

I am thankful to God for being my help, for being our help, I am very thankful for the people I'm on this journey with. I am thankful that God has us – our faithful God is with us and with His church.

This week marks my 9th anniversary here at Calvin, and I am very thankful. We lift our eyes to the hills – from where our help comes – our help comes from the Lord.

Thanks be to God.