

030523 Psalm 121:1-8 "The Lord Will Watch Over You"

When your world gets dark and your journey gets rough, where do you look for help? What is the source of the confidence you need to face life's headwinds?

David Livingstone, the famous missionary and explorer of the continent of Africa, read Psalm 121, which praises God for his sovereign rule over all things, as he worshiped with his father and sister before setting out for Africa in 1840. His mother-in-law, Mrs. Moffat, wrote him that Psalm 121 was always in her mind as she thought about and prayed for him.

Psalm 121 encourages us in such times. It reminds us of where our help comes from and gives us confidence. "My help comes from the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth." Deuteronomy 28:6 promises this blessing to those who love God and obey God's Word: "You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out." Likewise, Psalm 121 says that the Lord will watch over your coming and going. If you think of "coming" and "going", in English they don't have any positive or negative connotations.

In Hebrew, however, the word for "go out" is [Yazza], which means 'to leave' or 'to fail'. In contrast, the Hebrew word for 'come in' is [Bo], which means 'to follow' or 'to gain'. One has a negative meaning and the other has a positive connotation. When you know the meaning of the original language word, you will discover that it means more than just watching over you on your way to and from work. So, when you love God and live by obeying His Word, God protects you when you succeed, and God

protects you even when you fail. God watches over you when you are well, and God watches over you even when you are not well.

No one considers failure a blessing. But God can make your failures turn into blessings. Even if you are sick, God makes it a blessing. Even if you are ruined now, God can make it a blessing in the end.

Again, the Bible says "You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out." Either in success or in failure, you will be blessed. This is God's promise to those who love God and obey God's Word. In everything you do, there is a beginning and an end. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, and that He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

In the Old Testament, Joseph was hated by his brothers. He was sold as a slave. He worked hard in his master's household, only to be imprisoned under false accusations of his master's wife. But all of this turned out to be blessings for Joseph, who lived in obedience and fear of God, saying, "How shall I sin against God?" Even in such a miserable reality, we see that Joseph lived conscious of God.

Long story short, Joseph was able to advise the Pharaoh on how to prepare for the famine and as a result gained the favor of the Pharaoh who promoted him to Prime Minister. Later, when their father Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were greatly afraid that Joseph might take revenge on them. In Genesis 50, "But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is

doing today." I don't know about you but this is a powerful message to me.

If you stand by the Lord indeed, if you fear God and desire to depart from evil, and pursue a life of obedience to God and God's word, you must not blame any evil condition or poor circumstance. Instead, you believe that God will watch over your comings and goings. This is the blessed life of those who love God and obey God's word.

I hope you think of Jesus as you spend the season of Lent. He was the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is the only begotten Son of God. However, he came to this earth 2,000 years ago with a very weak appearance like a tender shoot and a stem coming out of dry land, and obeyed Heavenly Father even to death. In order to save those who believe in God from the power of sin and death, God the Son thoroughly obeyed the will of God the Father.

Finally but not least, in verse 8, "The Lord will watch over..." The word "to watch over" [shamar] here is derived from [shemuroth] which means "eyelids" because the eyelids protect the eyes. If the eyelids are open, the eyes can see. When closed, the eyes rest, and the eyes are protected. Even when we're not aware of it, our eyelids protect our eyes. All movements of the eyelids are intended to protect the eyes. What a comfort! The Lord has promised to keep us like the pupil of his eye. Psalm 17:8 says, "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings." I hope you believe that our Lord protects you even at the moment when you are not aware of it.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, when your world gets dark and your journey gets rough, come to God. Love your God and obey God's word. Read the Bible every day and live by it. Then, God will watch over your coming and going. Even though some intended to do harm to you, God will intend it for good. Fairfield Grace, May God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you and your family, and your business, and your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.