

# Psalm 121 • The Lord is My Keeper

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Psalm 121 begins with well-known words that we've been saying tonight. Incidentally, it's interesting to know that this Psalm was actually recited by a well-known missionary from the UK, who was known as actually an African missionary because that's where he went—David Livingstone—right before he set out for Africa in the year 1840. He recited this very Psalm, and you'll see why.

*“I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?”*

*<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.*

*<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.*

*<sup>4</sup> Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” (ESV)*

And you can see the emphasis here is on the keeping power of the Lord. And you can see why this was probably an important Psalm for anyone to recite before going to a foreign land, to a place where they had no—probably wild—imagination of what to expect. Once they got there, he says in verse 5,

*“The Lord is your keeper (You'll notice the word *keep* and *keeper* is very emphasized in these last verses. He says,) the Lord is your shade on your right hand.*

*<sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.*

*<sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.*

*<sup>8</sup> The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.”*

And so again, you can see why, probably, David Livingstone thought this was a great Psalm to recite before heading to Africa. By the way, he is also quoted as saying, *“I'm prepared to go anywhere provided it's forward.”*

And I thought about that, and I thought, I have to wonder if that attitude is because he believed in this Psalm. He believed that he was being kept by the Lord.

And notice what the Psalm says once again about the Lord who keeps you. It says in verse 3—or excuse me, well, verses 3 and 4: *“He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.”*

Well, that's good news. If you've got somebody who's taking care of you, you want to make sure they're not sleeping on the job, right?

And here, this Psalm very clearly says to you and me that the Lord does not slumber. He doesn't sleep. He doesn't take time off. He doesn't lose sight of you because of a momentary distraction or because He got weary and He had to close His eyes and rest for a little while. Because the Lord neither sleeps nor slumbers. That's such a beautiful thing to think about.

In fact, in verse 8, it says, *“The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth...”* So the Lord knows when you go out, and the Lord knows when you come in, and it says that He will keep you. He will keep you. Stop and think about what that means for a little bit; *“The LORD will keep you...”*

When it is from a salvation standpoint. Do you know that I actually talk to a lot of people who write me notes, and they'll send me a verse from the Bible that talks about judgment or something related to that. And they'll say, Pastor Paul, would you tell me what this verse means? I used to just respond right away and say, yeah, this is what it means.

I don't do that anymore. I write them back and say, why are you asking? Nine times out of ten, they're asking because they're afraid. They're afraid of something in the Bible that seems to strike a chord of fear about them not being kept by the Lord, right? They know that they're saved by grace through faith, but they struggle because they believe that they need to be kept by their own strength and by their own ability to hang on.

So, whenever they come across a verse in the Bible that seems to suggest that judgment might be coming for whatever reason, they wonder if that's them, if this is speaking specifically to them. They become very upset and very fearful about it. It all comes down to this whole idea of being kept.

And what this Psalm is talking about, how over and over it says, "*The LORD will keep you* (the Lord will keep you, the Lord will keep you)..." Jesus talked about the fact that He would lose none of those who came to Him (John 6:37-39).

There's great power in the hand of the Lord to keep you and I in faith and in our relationship with Him. Let me show you a passage from the Book of Jude. This is called the Jude doxology, and it's at the very end of this very short New Testament letter. And he writes:

**Jude 1:24-25 (ESV)**

*Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

*Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

And I love the Jude doxology because it reminds us that we are kept by God. He is able to keep you. God is able to keep you and to present you before His glorious presence, blameless. And He will do it. God will do it.

And I want to just encourage you in case maybe you've slipped into that mindset that so many people do, where you believe that you're saved by putting your faith in what Jesus did on the cross, but you're kept in your salvation by your own effort to be a good person, or to keep certain rules or regulations, or to keep the Sabbath, or to keep this, or to do that, or whatever the thing might be. That's a miserable way to live, because you're kept by the Lord, and we do not keep ourselves saved by our own power.

You can't do that. The Lord keeps you. God keeps you, and He will keep you. He's promised to keep you. He says He's able to keep you and to present you blameless, and He will do that.