

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

*You Must be Born Again!*

**Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”**

**(John 11:25-26)**

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***My Help is From the Lord***

***June 29, 2025***

**Sermon Text:** Psalm 121

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 34

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 forth and forevermore. (Psalms 121:1-8)

**A Song of Ascents.** I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does 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. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike

This morning we are going to consider this Psalm and the tremendous and comforting promises it contains for the Lord's people. If we will but hear and believe these words, all of our anxieties would be calmed.

**A Song of Ascents**

The Psalm has a heading – *A Song of Ascents*. We do not know the precise circumstances in which the Psalmist wrote these verses. But we do know this, as H.C. Leupold puts it:

“So much is clear, it is a psalm of trust. It counsels men to trust in the Lord in all situations of life. Many hearts have been strengthened for the pilgrimage of life by this song.”  
[Exposition of the Psalms, Baker]

The Hebrew word translated here by “Ascents” means something like “a journey to a higher place.” And thus this Psalm is one for a pilgrimage, particularly one in which there is a rising elevation. Listen to Leupold once more:

“It was commonly known in the later days of Israel’s history that the place that had been appointed by Yahweh to be the central sanctuary of the nation was on the Temple hill at Jerusalem. There God had promised to dwell among His people. But that one hill in the complex of what made up the city of Jerusalem was one of a group of

several others. Thus the “hills” became synonymous with the holy city. Hills or mountains and the true sanctuary were one and the same thing.”

For example:

“If your people go out to battle against their enemy, by whatever way you shall send them, and they pray to the LORD toward the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, then hear in heaven their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause. (1 Kings 8:44-45)

And thus we have it here in the opening of this Psalm as perhaps the psalmist-pilgrim is approaching the hills of Jerusalem –

**Psalms 121:1-2 A Song of Ascents.** I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? (2) My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

**The Lord Our Helper**

This Psalm could very appropriately be given a title such as “The Lord is Our Keeper.” Look at the Psalm again, verses 3-8, and note the highlighted words:

(3) He will not let your foot be moved; he who **keeps** you will not slumber. (4) Behold, he who **keeps** Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

(5) The LORD is your **keeper**; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. (6) The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

(7) The LORD will **keep** you from all evil; he will **keep** your life. (8) The LORD will **keep** your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

The Lord our *keeper*. The One who *keeps* us. That Hebrew word is *shamar*, and check out this definition:

“Shamar can mean *to keep, to guard, to observe, to give heed*.”

The basic idea of the root is *to exercise great care over*. This involves keeping or tending to things such as a garden (Gen 2:15), a flock (Gen 30:31), a house (2 Samuel 15:16). Or it may involve guarding against intruders such as the cherubim guarding the way to the tree of life, or gatekeepers or watchmen. David frequently speaks of God’s care and protection in such passages:

Psalms 34:19-20 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. (20) He **keeps** all his bones; not one of them is broken.

### From Where Shall my Help Come?

My HELP comes from the Lord.

Do YOU need help? Do you need a guardian *who exercises great care over you at all times*? If anyone answers “no” to this question, that person is a fool and yet there are many foolish people today. We ourselves have all been fools at one time or another in this regard. We

did not look to the Lord as our help, as our Protector. We launched out on our own understanding:

Proverbs 3:5-8 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. (6) In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (7) Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. (8) It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

“None are so safe as those whom the Lord keeps; none are so much in danger as the self-secure.”  
[Spurgeon]

From where shall my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord. I will lift up my eyes to His habitation and put my trust in Him. I will lift up my eyes to the mountains – that is where my help is to be found.

Let’s ask ourselves once more:

Do we need help? Do we need a guardian *who exercises great care*

*over us at all times?* If you are in Christ, if you have been born again, then you have just such a guardian even when you are foolish enough not to trust Him.

Let’s look into the character of the Lord our guardian/keeper a bit more:

Psalms 121:2 My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want. The LORD, the maker of heaven and earth is the Christian’s Keeper. Watchman. Guardian. The Psalmist here, by pointing to Him as Creator, is reminding us that the Lord is OMNI-potent. There is no enemy, including Satan, who is greater. No enemy, no evil king, no mighty enemy army – none can stand against Him. Listen to Spurgeon on this:

“What we need is help – help powerful, efficient, constant: we need a very present help in trouble. What a mercy that we have it in our God. Help is always on the road,

and will never fail to reach us in due time, for He who sends it to us was never known to be too late. The Lord who created all things is equal to EVERY emergency: heaven and earth are at the disposal of Him who made them, therefore let us be very joyful in our infinite helper. He will sooner destroy heaven and earth than to permit His people to be destroyed, and the perpetual hills themselves shall bow rather than He shall fail whose ways are everlasting. It is vain to trust in the creatures: It is wise to trust the Creator.” [Treasury of David]

Let’s be very careful and honest and examine ourselves in this respect – *do we admit that we need the Lord as our Guardian and Keeper?* Many people do not. These are the kind who see no need of Christ, no need of the gospel, they look to themselves for salvation, even insisting that they need so saving.

Recently, and I think I have told you this before, a man whose life was and is a total disaster talked to

me and Verla. He couldn’t even function due to the turmoil in his mind and life. He lost his job. Here was a man who by all appearances was at the end of his own rope. But would he listen when we told him he needed to turn to Christ? No. He would not. Such a person refuses to lift up their eyes to the mountains of the Lord and call out for His help.

But there are many others who are just as foolish even though their lives appear to be quite successful. Money, fame, talent – these kind look like they are the last to need help. Offer Christ to them and they scoff. They see no need for a guardian or keeper. And sooner or later here comes the devil, prowling about like a roaring lion, and they are easy prey because the Lord is not their shepherd.

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

### **The Certain Promises of Our Keeper**

Psalms 121:3-4 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. (4) Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

I was never in the military, but it is my understanding that one of the key points of military training is *guard duty*. The gates of military forts are guarded. In war, someone is assigned to keep watch especially at night. To fall asleep while on watch duty has often been an offense punishable by death. The sleeping watchman endangers the lives of the whole army.

Other times, perhaps, a watchman fails because he is distracted. He isn't looking and scanning with his binoculars. Or in a high tech environment he fails to watch the radar screen and doesn't see the incoming missile. Keeping watch is tremendously important.

The Lord is such a perfect and mighty Keeper of each one of His people, that *He knows, watches, and directs every one of our steps. He will not allow your foot to slip.*

He will not get distracted. He will not nod off to sleep while we walk off a cliff. He won't even *slumber* – which I suppose is something like driving your car and not remembering the turns you took to get to your destination.

*Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

Let's consider this business of our foot *slipping* a bit more:

“Those who have God as their keeper shall be safe from all perils of the way....When dangers are awake around us we are safe, for our Preserver is awake also, and will not permit us to be taken unawares.” [Spurgeon]

This world is enemy territory. It is a dangerous place. We have a three-fold enemy – *the world, the flesh, and the devil*. All are at constant energies to destroy and the Christian is the special desired target of these evils.

**The world** and its inhabitants work to conform us to their mindset. It is



a mind that is hostile to God and His Word. Hostile to Christ and His Church. How quickly would we be duped were it not for our Keeper who never slumbers nor sleeps.

The devil is energized by a hellish hatred for the Lord and all who belong to the kingdom of Christ. He is always on the prowl. He neither slumbers nor sleeps either. He sends his deceiving minions among us just as he crept into Eden and deceived Adam and Eve. If it were not for our Guardian and Keeper, surely Satan would take us to hell. What human being in their own strength could stand against him?

But consider perhaps the greatest danger to us – our own sinful flesh. This body of sin which sets itself against the Spirit in us. How many times would we have fallen into sin had it not been for our Guardian and Keeper who never slumbers nor sleeps not permits our foot to slip?

*Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come:*

*'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.*

In some ways we can say that our own sinful flesh which we war against is the greatest danger. Sin which is in this corruptible body is a diabolic force that constantly works against righteousness. It is a precipice always waiting for us to step off into destruction. And yet our Guardian and Keeper watches our every step. He will not allow our foot to slip.

How many times in your life do you suppose the Lord grabbed hold of you just as you were about to step off? How many foolish decisions did He override? How many doors did He close to keep us from walking through?

Isaiah 30:20-22 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher. (21) **And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in**

**it,” when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.** (22) Then you will defile your carved idols overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images. You will scatter them as unclean things. You will say to them, “Be gone!”

### **Our Keeper is Our Shade**

Here is still another aspect, another promise regarding our Guardian’s keeping us:

Psalms 121:5-6 The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. (6) The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

What does this mean? Protection from the sun and moon? Psalm 91 provides the answer:

Psalms 91:1-10 He who **dwells in the shelter** of the Most High will abide **in the shadow** of the Almighty. (2) I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

(3) For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. (4) He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

**(5) You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, (6) nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.**

(7) A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. (8) You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. (9) Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place— the Most High, who is my refuge— (10) no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.

The Lord our Guardian/Keeper is always so close that His shadow falls on us – He is our shade who



hides us from evil day and night.  
Sun or moon.

### **He Will Keep Your Soul**

In this fallen world, Christ's people suffer. The world hates Christ and everyone who belongs to Him. Further, we are not immune to the results of the curse – sickness, wars, broken bones and more. But unlike even the best human guardian, the Lord promises *to keep our soul*. No one can touch the Christian's soul. That is, *our real person, who we really are as new creations in Christ*. He keeps our soul. We cannot be lost to the enemy. We cannot slip so as to fall.

*He will keep you from ALL evil.* Real evil is that which attacks a person's soul. The worldling only looks for physical protection, with no concern for his soul – which the devil already has. But the Lord keeps His people from ALL evil. Here is Spurgeon once more:

“This is a far-reaching word of covering: it includes everything and excludes nothing. The wings of

the Lord amply guard His own from evils great and small, temporary and eternal. If the soul is kept, all is well. Our soul is kept from the dominion of sin, the infection of error, the crush of despondency, the puffing up of pride. Kept from the world, the flesh and the devil, kept for holier and greater things, kept in the love of God, kept unto the eternal kingdom and glory. What can harm a soul that is kept by the Lord?”

### **Kept in Our Going Out and Coming in**

Here is one of those figures of speech which we must let Scripture explain for us. Going out and coming in. What does this mean?

You find it in Deuteronomy –

Deuteronomy 28:6-8 Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. (7) “The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you. They shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven

ways. (8) The LORD will command the blessing on you in your barns and in all that you undertake. And he will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

The phrase seems to be a kind of summary of all of our activities. When we rise up in the morning and go out to work, then when we finish the day and return. Or when a king sets out with his army to battle, then returns to the city.

John 10:9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

Acts 9:27-28 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. (28) So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord.

“Our exits and entrances are under the Lord’s protection.” [Spurgeon]

Even our entrance and exit from this mortal life. This keeping NEVER ends – it is “from now until forever.” *Thus the perseverance of the saints is certain. Our Keeper never slumbers, He never lets our foot slip, He keeps us from all evil, He keeps our soul – how therefore can anyone deny that the Christian is eternally secure and can never be lost?*

“The Lord keep thee safe from harm and sin, Thy spirit keep;  
The Lord watch o’er Thy going out, thy coming in,  
From this time, evermore.” [Keble]

### **Our Guardian/Keeper From All Eternity**

That moment in eternity past when the Lord decreed that each of His people would be saved was all and entirely of grace – undeserved, unearned.

“He was found by those who did not seek Him, saying to those who

did not ask of Him, ‘Here am I ,  
here am I.’ (Isaiah 65:1)

“If He were to wait until we were inclined to receive His grace, and until we of our own choosing sought Him out, alas, we would perish a hundred thousand times, and we would remain lost before help ever arrived. It was necessary for God to take pity on us when we were so dazzled that in our misery we could scarcely see a thing, and when the devil both owned and blinded us so that we despised all righteousness. Thus, in rescuing us from hell’s deep pit, God had to come and seek us just as we were, and to extend His infinite mercy to us.” [John Calvin, In the Power of the Spirit]

And thus we see that the Great Guardian of our souls began His watch care over us before we ever knew Him.

“Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
interposed his precious blood.”