

2/21/21

ROAD TRIP DEEPER DIVE

1. PILGRIMAGE PSALMS

Today, we begin a new series of messages together that (believe it or not), are based on the popular songs in the Bible. Did you know there were songs in your Bible? Yes, there are! Here's why this is exciting: Jesus prayed these and sung these very songs and we pray you will as well. The Psalms formed a playlist not only for occasional trips, but also for the entire journey of life.

A. Thoughts and questions for discussion

*I look up to the mountains—
does my help come from there?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth!
He will not let you stumble;
the one who watches over you will not slumber.
Indeed, he who watches over Israel
never slumbers or sleeps.*

*The Lord himself watches over you!
The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.
The sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon at night.*

*The Lord keeps you from all harm
and watches over your life.
The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go,
both now and forever. Psalm 121*

- i. In times of trouble, where do you first turn for help? Are you looking up for an answer, or down at the problem?
- ii. Have you had others encourage you like the second person in the Psalm?

These words of assurance would send the traveler on their way with the blessing of their loved ones.

The supernatural thing about the Bible is that it is not just about recording a blessing for us from history. These are words of hope and assurance that were needed hundreds of years ago and, frankly, they are needed today. Here's why: In our journey through life, each one of us longs for the blessing expressed by this Psalm.

When the psalmist looks to the mountains, many commentators think that is because they were concerned. Mountains were places where pagan gods were worshipped and were also the hideout of bandits and robbers. Two thousand plus years ago, on the roads leading to Jerusalem were filled with danger.

- We see evidence of this in the Bible because Jesus used the road from Jericho to Jerusalem as the setting for his story of the Good Samaritan, where an innocent man is attacked, beaten, and robbed. Bandits commonly lurked in the dark corners waiting to rob travelers.
- Even before Jesus, the Old Testament hero, King David, used the road from Jericho to Jerusalem as the setting for his famous 23rd Psalm. He called this road "*The Valley of the Shadow of Death.*"

The original author is likely looking to the mountains, knowing that is the place robbers and bandits are hiding out, waiting to pounce.

Most of us here today can relate. In our journey through life, there are bandits who seek to steal from us and leave us beaten on the side of the road.

Let me ask you some questions to reflect on today:

- What is stealing your joy today?
- Who or what is robbing you of life to the fullest?
- What is your bandit's name?

On my journey of life, who am I walking with?

In our journey of life, who we walk with will make all the difference, especially when we consider the bandits that seek to rob us of life to the fullest.

- Who are you placing your trust in?
- Who are you calling on to calm your fears, secure your path, and guide you along the way?

I want to do my level-best to join the Psalmist in persuading everyone within the sound of my voice to choose today and every day to walk with The Lord in the journey of life. Why?

Because... **God our helper is both powerful and personal**

When we walk with the Lord as our helper, we find the power and perspective of God can transform our lives.

- In a time filled with fear of death, let us remember that God has the power over death and is the giver of life.
- In a time filled with worry, let the God of all peace fill your heart.
- In a world and time filled with problems, lift your eyes to the mountain of the Lord.
- Let The Lord lead you to "look over" and see the power he has to deliver on His promises.

God is not a distant deity. God's power knows no limits and God's presence knows no bounds.