

# NEW BEGINNINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost – September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 (11:11 am)

**NEITHER DAY NEITHER NIGHT I FEEL ALONE**

**Psalm 121**

Ephesians 6:10–20

Mark 7:14–23

## ***We Are Cleansed and Sustained by the Word of God***

Wickedness and evil come “*from within, out of the heart,*” and that is what defiles a person (Mark 7:21–23). Hence, we cannot save ourselves, because we are sinful and unclean from the inside out. But as the Lord Jesus “*declared all foods clean*” (Mark 7:19), so He cleanses us by His Word, the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, “*listen to the statutes and the rules*” of the Lord, “*and do them, that you may live*” (Deut. 4:1). For His Word is righteous, and to live according to it is “*your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples*” (Deut. 4:6). Cling to His Word, and also teach it “*to your children and your children’s children*” (Deut. 4:9). Put on this “*armor of God*” by hearing and heeding what He speaks to you, that you may “*stand firm*” in the evil day (Eph. 6:11–13). Gird yourself with the righteousness of Christ, by faith in the “*gospel of peace,*” and take up “*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,*” by confessing Christ Jesus and “*praying at all times in the Spirit*” (Eph. 6:14–18).

## **PSALM 121**

*My Help Comes from the LORD*

**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.**

**<sup>5</sup>The LORD is your keeper; 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.**

Once upon a time, a little boy did not want to sleep as he did not feel safe. He said, “**Daddy, I’m afraid of the dark.**” He didn’t want to leave his father’s side that night. The father noticed that he was feeling lonely and said: “**Don’t be afraid, son, I will leave the door open partway, and you’ll notice the light in the hallway. That way, you will know that your**

**parents are at home, and if anything happens you will know that we are here to protect and save you".** After that, he slept peacefully.

We feel alone. This is the point.

We live in an accelerated pace in our current reality. We perform different tasks and communicate with other people through various means and platforms all the time. But even surrounded by people and with a list full of commitments, there is an uncomfortable feeling of helplessness and abandonment that discourages, causes fear and sadness. The idea of solitude is closely linked to the moments in which we are unaccompanied. That tightness in the chest or discomfort, which arises from the impression of being oblivious to those around, without being cared for or understood, is one of the characteristics of loneliness.

**Do you feel alone? Or have you ever felt lonely?** I believe so! We often feel alone, but we don't want to show it to anyone. As parents, we need to provide security, as teachers and authorities, we need to have no doubts; as widowers, we do not want to bother people, as sick people, we avoid talking about our difficulties so as not to upset family members anymore, as professional workers, we sometimes go through danger moments at work, and we keep it to ourselves. We are often so full of problems that we seem to have no solution. We try to solve them our way, and everything seems to get worse. *Isn't that true?!?!?*

I believe everyone here knows the Banff area, how beautiful it is, with the mountains all around. One has a feeling of security and magnificence looking at the mountains. The first time I was there I was enchanted and marvelled at their beauty and majesty.

In biblical times, taking a walking trip like this is not only difficult but dangerous. There were few paths and many hiding places for wild (*wild*) animals and possible thieves. Do you remember the good Samaritan parable? (Luke 10: 30-36) Going from one place to another was a risky business. In that sense, we can imagine the psalmist leaving Jericho for Jerusalem and looking at the long treacherous climb ahead of him and wondering, **"How am I going to get home safely, I feel alone and unprotected here." "From where my help comes?" "Is God seeing my affliction?"**

Psalms 121 is a pilgrimage psalm. Many Hebrews from around the world attended the festivals in the Temple in Jerusalem. Verse 1 is not a question of the psalmist but a statement to introduce the theme developed throughout the text: **God protects his children.** Finally, there is a blessing given to those who were on the path and the certainty that God would lead them in safety, both on the way and on the way back.

The Lord is our help very present in our lives, He assures us that our help comes from above, and He also assures us that; every perfect gift and wisdom is with Him and comes from above. We need to understand that the Lord is like the air we breathe and feel His presence always in our lives. God, the author and finisher of our life, the creator of heaven and earth, is with us, and with Him, we are more than conquerors by faith. So, when we feel weak and that nothing goes right and we feel alone, it is a mistake to understand that God is not there because the Lord knows what's happening, and He is with us all the time.

***“The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand.” (Psalm 121:5)***  
Our shadow does not leave us! That's the idea this verse wants to convey. To show that the Lord is close to us to guard and protect us. Because the Lord is watchful and on guard at all times, nothing happens without Him knowing it. No storm, robbery, health problem, among others, occurs without the knowledge of the Lord, and He, only He, has the power to prevent anything to happen to you and me. A curious fact is that the experience of the presence of God was made through the cloud by day and pillar by night that accompanied the Hebrew people in the desert. The shadow of the Lord does not leave us!

The coverage given by God is very **personal, total** and **unlimited**. It protects the pilgrim from all risk and danger, including death, no matter where he is, and for an infinite time. Without a doubt, God is the best bodyguard and the best insurance! Thus, following the example of the psalmist, we can place our trust, our lives, and our daily walk in the hands of our Creator and God.

Think back to the story of the little boy afraid of the dark. In the darkness of our loneliness and fears, the open door means that God is present in every situation of life. The light represents the forgiveness and salvation in Jesus that guarantees eternal life through faith. Whatever may come, with God, we are safe, and we can sleep peacefully and live peacefully, sure of his presence and love for us because God doesn't nap and doesn't sleep! That's why **NEITHER DAY, NEITHER NIGHT I FEEL ALONE** – GOD'S PEOPLE ARE NEVER ALONE because the Lord will be with us wherever we go. In Jesus' name. Amen.