

# SERMON DELIVERED AT AUBURN UMC, AUBURN, MICHIGAN

11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Year B

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Text: Psalm 121

Title: "God is Holding Your Life"

The Psalms are the prayer book of the Hebrew people. They express the thoughts of those who are in the agony of the pit and the elation of those who have been freed from great burdens. From the Psalms we hear resounding praise for the Creator of all that is and the lonely cry of one who asks "Why have you forsaken me?", a question Jesus repeated from the cross. In this series, we will spend some time with 5 of these rich poems of faith.

Earlier I mentioned being on vacation and reading, something I really enjoy doing when away like that, but there is something about the traveling, too, that can be renewing. We rented a place on the Boardman River with friends of ours. It was fairly remote but often we took trips into Traverse City or we'd head up to Leeland where some of our crew would comb the beaches for Petoskey stones. During those trips, the time was filled with conversations.

It occurred to me that life is a lot like that. It's a journey and on that journey there are lots of conversations, some of the conversations are just chit-chat but some of them are deep and searching. We have these conversations throughout our lives. Sometimes it's about the weather or a restaurant. But then there are deeper moments when we wonder what is life really about? What is God about? Who can we really trust when life gets tough? Where can we find help when we really need it?

Psalm 121 has an answer to the deeper questions. It's known as the traveler's psalm and it speaks of looking to the hills in search of help. Looking to the hills because that is one of the traditional places in which to look for God. Moses on Mt. Sinai. Jesus on the Mt. of Beatitudes or in the garden on the Mt. of Olives or on the mountain for his transfiguration. The Temple in Jerusalem was built on a mount above the valleys of Hinnom and Kidron. The hills are the high places to which people would go in search of the steadfast presence of God, and so when help is needed "I lift up my eyes to the hills".

That help comes from the Lord and in case anyone may become confused about who that is, it's the Creator of all that is. The Lord is the one who can be trusted to keep us steady. The Lord is the one who never sleeps. The Lord is the one who can be counted on when life makes us sweat like the heat of the summer sun and we need relief from the source of whatever it is that makes us miserable. The Lord provides the cover we need.

It's the Lord who holds us and keeps us throughout our life journey. No one else keeps us in the way in which God can and does. When it's all said and done, it is only God who holds us, who keeps "your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore."

Where do the eyes of your soul go when you're in need of help? Who do you call on when the journey is rough and you're not sure where the road leads? In your bulletin you will find an insert with Psalm 121 printed on it along with some questions to guide you in thinking through this psalm. You are invited to take it home with you. Use it in your devotional time with God and consider that God is holding your life.

Sometimes we all need reminding that God does hold our lives and that we can trust God to do so because sometimes our lives can become disoriented with all the competing demands, all the bumps in the road that can cause us to lose our way. Being reminded of God's steadfast presence and love brings focus and the kind of reassurance that we'll be okay when we look to the hills and seek the Lord who made heaven and earth.