

LENT DEVOTIONAL



LENT PROGRAM

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Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

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Spiritual Formation Certificate

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Continuing Education

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Miller Summer Youth Institute

Metro-Urban Institute

World Mission Initiative

Zeitah Excavations

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EVENTS

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LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 30, 2020

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills —
from where will my help come?
2 My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.
3 He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
4 He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
5 The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade at 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 on and for evermore.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Dr. Theodore W. Kalsbeek '51, Pastoral Ministry (1996)

One of the comforting components of our Christian experience is the spiritual assurance that there is a divine, perpetual presence and protection in the life of a believer in God. In Psalm 121 the psalmist expresses his personal conviction that such a divine reality does exist. That conviction is based on his own personal experience, and it provides for us an appropriate subject for Lenten meditation.

The psalm begins with the author's statement that he "lifted his eyes to the hills," followed immediately by his question, "from where will my help come?" His answer is that his help "comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth." It is generally thought that by "looking to the hills" he meant looking up to God, because the answer to his question was the strong affirmation that his help comes "from the LORD, who made heaven and earth." Without knowing exactly what he meant by "help from the hills," it is enough for us to focus on his statement that his help comes from God.

Note that after his admission of need and his affirmation that his help comes from God, the remainder of the psalm is spoken as though to us. Verses 3-8 are a strong, inspired affirmation of what God will do as our "keeper"—an affirmation ending with the assurance that "The Lord will keep our going out and our coming in."

Surely in these Lenten days we do well to spend time pondering the assurance that, by our faith, the Lord who keeps us "will not slumber nor sleep," meaning that his presence and protection are continuous (vv. 3-4). The Lord is our keeper day and night (vv. 5-6).

Because the Lord is always awake and watchful, he is aware of circumstances that develop in our lives, and his protecting surveillance will keep us, not just occasionally, but "from this time on and for evermore" (vv. 7-8).

These examples of divine assurance given by the psalmist give us confidence in facing life's experiences with dependence on the promises of God. They call us to have faith and to be assured that the promises of God are reliable and worthy of our gratitude.

PRAYER

Gracious God, in the midst of busy contemporary life, we pause to listen prayerfully and expectantly to the ancient voice of the psalmist, as across the centuries it speaks to us of your gift of spiritual assurance in our times of uncertainty. We offer our profound gratitude for your promises given. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

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