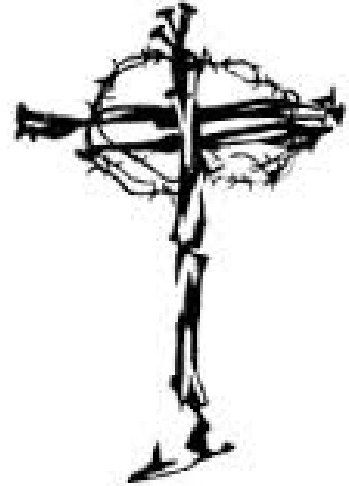


St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church

Sermon by Pastor A. E. Schultz Lent 2 March 16, 2013 Psalm 121



A song of ascents.

¹I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? ²My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. ³He will not let your foot slip – he who watches over you will not slumber; ⁴indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. ⁵The LORD watches over you – the LORD is your shade at your right hand; ⁶the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. ⁷The LORD will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life; ⁸the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in Hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

It happened 50 years ago – last Thursday. In the wee hours of a cold winter morning – about 2 a.m. a man named Winston got up from his bed, got dressed and leaving behind his sleeping wife and two sons – a man who had never been in trouble with the law – drove around – looking for a woman to murder. Around 3 in the morning – a young lady named Kitty Genovese – climbed out of her car – on her way home after working as a bar manager. Winston chased Kitty and catching her – started to stab her. She screamed, “Somebody *help* me!” But nobody did. Oh, lights went on – windows were opened. A neighbor yelled out “leave the girl alone!” – and Winston ran back to his car. But soon he was back. When nobody came out to see what was going on – Winston came back and finished the job. The newspapers 50 years ago said “For more than half an hour ³⁸ respectable, law-abiding citizens in Queens watched a killer stalk and stab a women – in three separate attacks.” The story spread around the world. And people asked, “Are New Yorkers that calloused?” How could it be – that nobody lifted a finger to help? Today – this second Sunday of Lent –

God's Word reminds us – even in the most desperate situations – especially spiritual danger:

My Help Comes From The LORD!
The LORD made everything

I. The LORD watches over everything all the time!

Psalms – Old Testament hymns – 150 of them are arranged in clumps and bunches. We have seen that. The last 5 *hallel* – Praise the LORD! Today Psalm 121 is part of a bunch – Songs of ascent – Psalms 120 through 134 – Songs of ascent. These were Psalms – songs that people sang going up! Some people have suggested songs of going up were sung by the Priests going up the Temple steps. Some think people going up to celebrate the feasts in Jerusalem. Others still think it's the exiles going up from captivity in Babylon. Still today – if we were moving to Israel we would say we are “going up”! I like that! Psalm 120 says, *A song of ascents.* **¹I call on the LORD in my distress, and he answers me. ²Save me, LORD, from lying lips and from deceitful tongues. ³What will he do to you, and what more besides, you deceitful tongue? ⁴He will punish you with a warrior's sharp arrows, with burning coals of the broom bush. ⁵Woe to me that I dwell in Meshek – (that is Turkey – well to the north), that I live among the tents of Kedar – (in Arabia – to the south east!) ⁶Too long have I lived among those who hate peace. ⁷I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.** We call to the LORD for rescue – for help – when no one else can possibly help!

Psalm 121 says, **¹I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? ²My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. I look at the mountains – the hills.** Are the hills a place where wild animals and robbers hide – only to pounce – to attack me? Or do I lift up my eyes to the mountains – look up because the LORD is my rescue and my deliverance? When there is trouble – where do you look? Do you look down in fear – in depression and even despair? Do you look around – thinking if I am just smart enough – clever enough – I will think of a way out? Do you look around – hoping and expecting people will deliver you? Again and again people will fail you. They have troubles of their own. When push comes to shove – are they dependable? Again and again – people will fail you! Where do you look? Look up – to the LORD. My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. Back in the

day – there were John Wayne movies. They were often the same. The wagon train – the covered wagons were heading west. Suddenly they were attacked by what we called back then – the *Indians* – wearing war paint – shooting flaming arrows – humanly speaking it was hopeless. But you were never really afraid – because you knew at just the right moment the Cavalry would come! John Wayne and the long knives would ride to the rescue. The Cavalry in their blue uniforms – their flags snapping in the wind – the bugle sounding the “charge”! They would drive off the Indians – put out the fires – rescue the little school ‘marm! It always worked out! Jesus is the Cavalry! He comes to save us – at just the right time – when we were still powerless – Christ died for the wretched sinners that we are. When we were still dead in our trespasses and sins – Jesus came to rescue us from our guilt and our grave. Jesus came to save us! I lift up my eyes to the mountains and hills – where my rescue comes from – from the Great I AM!

My help comes from the LORD – the Maker of heaven and earth. When I lived in West Chicago – my dad drove Volkswagen bugs! We have a black one and a yellow one and a green one. They had the engine in the back – stick shift – no heat. If we went in the ditch – my dad, uncle Terry and I could pick up the car and throw it back on the road! My dad was very big on change the oil and all the filters regularly. He always took out bug to the Vollmer Brothers – two little German guys with a big sign in their shop that said, “Factory trained!” My dad always said – if they knew how to put them together in the first place – then surely they would know how to fix and maintain them! Jesus is **the Maker of heaven and earth.** What is the biggest thing you ever made? A house? A barn? Jesus made the oceans – the rocky mountains – Niagara Falls – the Grand Canyon. Jesus made the giant redwoods out in California – the Amazon Rainforest – Lake Superior and the North Pole! Jesus made some really little stuff too. Like all the hairs on your head – all the little parts of your eye – that make it possible to see the light of a single candle – some 146 football fields away. Jesus made your fingerprints. Jesus made your strands of DNA. Jesus made it so we can take pictures with our phone – can send text messages and e-mails. Jesus made it so air planes can fly. Jesus made music. Imagine how dull and quiet our lives would be if there was no music! Jesus who made your ♥ to beat again and again – all day and when you are sound

asleep – knows how to fix it and mend it and make it strong again. **My help comes from the LORD – the Maker of heaven and earth.**

³ He will not let your foot slip – he who watches over you will not slumber; ⁴ indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. Watchmen dasn't sleep! I think it was in the Viet Nam War movie *Platoon* – that one of the lead characters – an American soldier is so tired – exhausted from the fighting and from the stress and from the heat – that he falls asleep when he is supposed to be on guard duty. And while he sleeps – the enemy comes sneaking past the perimeter – where his fellow soldiers are sleeping. What to do now? Sound the alarm – and pure chaos breaks out. Friends are wounded and lives are lost – because he fell asleep! It's painful to watch. Have you ever been driving – and you started to fall asleep? Have you ever seen a little grandma – a little grandpa watch TV and slowly but surely they fall asleep sitting up? Have you ever thought – how funny! That will never happen to me?! Jesus is never asleep. Jesus' asked his disciples to keep watch with him – to watch and pray just one hour. And they didn't – they couldn't – because their eyes were heavy – they were exhausted from the stress and the pressure. They fell asleep the one time in all the world – when Jesus needed them!

⁸ the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. “Coming and going” – can very technically apply to your running errands – the short distances you go from your house to the grocery store. We kid at my house – if while watching TV we would decide we need a 7up and cheese corn – if I would run out the front door the moment the commercial started – and drive around the corner to the Piggly Wiggly – have exact change in my pocket – throw money at the checkout lady – jump in the car and race home – I could just about make it back before the commercials are over! I already had my shirt and tie on – when there was a baby born at WRMC. I jumped in the car – to the end of Windsor Circle---Meadowbrook Drive becomes Hospital Drive. Through the intersection by Dr. Meade and Dr. Turke and Theresa – left up the driveway – in the front door – up the elevator to the 3rd floor – turn right – and I'm there – before the afterbirth is out! That's quick! How often do we assume – when we leave – to run to the store – that we will be back. I will never forget the episode of *Family Matters* – the show with Erkle. Carl is a Chicago Police Officer who is at the cemetery – to put flowers on the grave of a little grandpa. At the grave he meets a little grandma who is there to

place flowers, too. Carl apologizes to the grandma. You see – Carl was the first police officer on the scene of a Convenience Store robbery. The little grandpa was in the store. Carl fears if he had done something – anything differently – he could have shot the robber and saved the little grandpa – instead of the robber taking the life of the little grandpa. Carl says he forever feels guilty – that he should have done something – anything differently. The little grandma tells Carl he doesn't feel guilty – it isn't his fault. She is the one who feels forever guilty. Her husband was at the store because she said she wanted some ice cream and they didn't have any. If she hadn't wanted ice cream – her husband never would have been in that Convenience Store. His death is her fault. And Carl tells her – it's ok – it's not her fault at all. Coming and going – Jesus watches over us. If we should go to the store – and not come home – our next stop is in Heaven. That's never a bad thing. It might be sad for those we leave behind – but that's only temporary. Soon we will all be in Heaven – safe by Jesus forever.

⁸ the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. Coming and going...in the broadest sense – is your whole lifetime. Jesus watches over you from the miracle of conception on. When you were 2 cells, then 4, then 8 – then 16 and 32 and 64 and more! Jesus watched over you when you were born. Jesus knew before anyone did – if you were a boy or girl – how many pounds and ounces – and if you had hair or not! Jesus watches over you – the first time you strap on your back pack and go to 3K and 4K. Jesus is with you when you have lunch with your teacher for the first time at school and ask if you have supper at school too – all the way to when you are in Marquardt or Zinzendorf or Golden Living or where. Jesus watches over you – through the circle of life – from when people wash you and dress you and feed you – till literally almost 100 years later people wash you and dress you and feed you. Jesus is with you coming and going – both now and forevermore – always and forever!

⁸ the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. It has been years already – since a Watertown Police Officer told me after Church one Sunday, “There is no such thing as a routine traffic stop.” There was a video the other day – the dash camera of a squad car – a traffic stop. The driver of the car – a 70 year old Viet Nam Veteran got out of his car – and then reached back into the car. The police officer thought he was reaching for a rifle – told him to stop – and then in genuine

fear for his own life – the police officer fired 6 shots at the man reaching back into his car *for his cane*. You can hear the police officer – when he realized what had happened – cries out to the LORD for forgiveness! I cannot imagine how horrible you would feel – the moment it began to sink in – what you had done! Only Jesus can wash away every sin – no matter how horrible. Jesus is our Savior – our Rescue from all guilt and pain. When we are in the most terrible situation – our help is from the LORD. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz