

Morningside

Sermon

9.30am

1/3/26

Communion

The Lord

Psalm 121

This psalm has a firm place in our Presbyterian tradition in its Scottish Metrical Psalm version which we'll sing at the end of this service. These are words which have made hill-loving Scots view their hills as symbols of Gods power and protection. It's described as a 'Song of Ascents', suggesting its author composed it before setting out on a journey, or even preparing pilgrims on their way up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish Temple feasts. There is still a hope amongst pious Jews, and some Christians, who will say with longing: "Next year, Jerusalem..." The place where God resides.

Hills are sentinels of the horizon - we look towards them as a source of strength. But also hills can be places of hiddenness and danger - they can conceal difficulties and dangers. Will help

be found from them, or within them? As the pilgrim journeys up to Jerusalem, it is not an easy journey.

Security, however, rests ultimately with God, our help. God is not asleep in His care for humanity, He is persistent. With this God there are no dangers which cannot be overcome. Even when faith is severely tested, the God Who creates is also the God Who keeps. We must walk towards and work with, there will still be perils and problems, but God remains. God has promised. God Who has shaped the universe cares not only for the big picture, but for the little details - like you and me.

Under the merciless glare of the Palestinian sun, the idea of God being your shade was a powerful one, maybe less of an issue in cloudy, rainy Scotland. But under the fierce glare of misfortune, or sadness, or grief, this God of ours provides the sheltering protection that gives respite. The hot sun by day, or the cold moon by night, God purposes to create a climate of comfort for

His people. We are not left undefended, we are protected. Wherever we go, whatever we do, not only today and tomorrow, but for all time to come, our moving God accompanies us. In our small daily journeys, and in the journey of our lifetime along the path of life, God ahead of us, God behind us, God beside us. In our work and in our leisure. In our home and in our country. In the darkness and in the brightness. God is present to help. Not to mollycoddle and nanny, but to work with us so that as we are strengthened, so we can help others, and so we can help God. Who is the Lord.

It is hard to accept God as our keeper, as our protector, as our fellow traveller until we accept that God is also our Lord, and also the One Who loves us, unequivocally, persistently, generously, sacrificially. God loves us, and therefore God keeps us. In the questioning season of Lent, look inwards to your faith. Look upwards to the hills of God where strength can be found.

Look forwards to this communion table, its bread and wine - the sacrifice of Jesus commemorated, and the resurrection of Jesus around the corner, once again, with light, with hope, with love.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Amen