

Trinity 20 – Psalm 121

Genesis 32 vv 22-31 p36, Psalm 121, II Timothy 3 v14 – 4 v5 p1197, Luke 18 vv 1-8 p1052

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills: from whence cometh my help.

I find that quite a lot of people around here like Psalm 121. It is popular at parish funerals. We look out from our windows across the valley or across the river and we see the hills on the other side and we think *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills: from whence cometh my help.*

But what do we need help with? What do you need help with? You may or may not have a lovely view from your window of distant hills, but I guess we all need help. Think about it for a moment. What's on your mind? And where would you find help? The psalmist says *My help cometh even from the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth.*

That's not bad is it? The Maker of heaven and earth is on your side. You couldn't ask more than that. But in what sense is the Maker of heaven and earth on your side? How could you hope to find help in Him?

I've got two answers and I'll start with the less obvious. In his letter to Timothy, which we heard read today, St Paul speaks of the Bible as coming from God. We need to know how to live. We don't always know what we ought to do. We do some very foolish things. Sometimes we do foolish things even when we know that they are stupid. On the other hand, we don't always do what we know that we ought to do, what would be sensible if only we thought about it. We often say the wrong thing. Sometimes we are silent when we ought to speak up.

We do and say the wrong thing because we don't think straight. We lack wisdom. Now the source of wisdom is God. God reveals His Wisdom in His Word and the Bible is God's Word.

So a good way to find help, or indeed to avoid getting into trouble in the first place, is to read the Bible. If we read the Bible when we are in trouble, we will find help. If we read the Bible every day so that we are immersed in its insights, we have the mechanisms already in place in our brains with which to deal with life's difficulties as they arise. I can say *My help cometh even from the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth*, if I live my life in accordance God's Word. I know what to do and what not to do. I know where to find wisdom.

That's easy. At least it's straightforward. Now for the deeper bit. The Wisdom of God is personal. God's Wisdom isn't only an it; He's a he; not a what, but a who. The Wisdom of God is Jesus. We can have a relationship with the Wisdom of God. Jesus can be our friend. All we have to do is to put our trust in Him. We think straight if Jesus is our friend. We only think straight if Jesus is our friend. Only if we think straight can we cope with life's problems. So, since Jesus is our friend, if we trust in Him, we can always say *My help cometh even from the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth.*

And that segues into my second, simple and more obvious point. We can always say *My help cometh even from the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth*, because we can always pray. We should always pray. Whatever happens in our lives, whatever difficulties we may have to face, we can and should always pray. God, *the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth*, always hears our prayers and is always ready to help us. All we have to do is to trust in Him, to have faith. What a power source that is to plug into, *the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth*. You see. The force behind the Universe is personal too, *our Father which is in heaven*. And He loves us. He loves to hear us pray to Him. And He always answers our prayers. He may not always give us what we ask for, but He never lets us down. He never abandons us.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills: from whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth. St Paul enthuses about faith, hope and love. Faith and love are easy to talk about, but where can we find hope? Job asks, *Whence then cometh wisdom? And where is the place of understanding?* His answer is, *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom: and to depart from evil is understanding.* It's the same for hope. We find hope in the Word of God, in reading and hearing, in praying and trusting. The roots of hope are faith and love, just as faith and hope are rooted in love and love is sustained by faith and hope. So pray and read the bible. Your *help cometh even from the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth.*