

## Lifting our Heads/Opening Our Eyes

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Bedford Presbyterian Church  
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This morning's sermon falls in the category of "*Be careful what you wish for.*" Especially when children are involved in making the decision because more often than not they will surprise you.

Here is what happened...

A month or so ago, as I was starting to think about upcoming worship services and what the messages for each of those Sunday mornings might be, I came up with the brilliant idea to ask Midge Keane to ask the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Bible class to select the Bible verse they liked best as the scripture reading for today and I would use it as the basis for my message.

There are so many passages I thought they might choose.

Many of them are the ones some of you wrote in the Bibles we gave them this morning.

*Love God.*

*Love your neighbor.*

*Treat others as you would like to be treated.*

*You are the light of the world.*

*The Lord is my shepherd.*

*The greatest of these is love.*

You get the idea.

Before I heard back from Midge and the class, I was already anticipating and thinking about what they might select and what I might say.

But then it happened...

Midge emailed me what the class had selected, and it was back to the drawing board.

Psalms 121 was not on the list of the verses I had been thinking about.

*I lift up my eyes to the hills.*

*From where will my help come?*

*My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.*

These words have long been a part of my religious vocabulary.

In fact, they may have been among the verses I memorized as child in order to get a gold star next to my name on the poster board that hung in my Sunday school classroom.

But, I am pretty sure they have never been the passage I have used for a Sunday morning sermon.

So, after a day of or so of saying to myself "*Really? Psalm 121?*"

But, knowing I could not undo what I had promised to do, I began to live with those verses again.

Allowing the words of that ancient poet to seep and sink into my life.

As I did that, what pushed its way to the surface were the words *I lift up my eyes.*

And, so I tried to do just that.

And, when I did, do you know what I saw?

I saw you.

And, the guys down the street who work at the deli.

And, the older woman going into the post office.

And, the father holding his daughter's hand as they crossed the street.

The family gathered here this week for a funeral.

And, the children from the nursery school in a line as they walked to the library.

*I lift up my eyes.*

And, when I did I saw spring pushing the leaves out on the maple trees in my backyard.

And, the much needed rain change the forsythia from yellow to green.

And, the lilacs beginning to bloom.

And the grass growing faster than it can be cut.

*I lift up my eyes...*

And, when I did I saw something of God.

In the guys at the deli who encourage me to practice my Spanish.

In the lilac about to bloom.

In the father holding his child's hand.

And the mother saying she never lost faith that her daughter was alive.

In the stars in the night sky.

What it took for me to notice and, in turn, to see something of God was...

Children who were wiser than I am when they selected the part of the Bible they would like to have read today.

And, allowing with the wisdom of an ancient poet to echo within me for several days.

And, emerging out of that...

The reminder that I was to look up rather than look down;

To look outward rather than inward.

And that I was to live with my eyes wide open.

And to look long enough

And thoughtfully enough

And carefully enough

And caringly enough

To see what was around me all the time.

*I lift up my eyes to the hills.*

*From where will my help come?*

*My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.*