

“The Road Trip”



“I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.” (Psalm 121:1-4)

I love a good road trip. I would much rather drive across our beautiful country than fly over it. Flying is fast and efficient. A road trip is slow and reflective. There are times in our lives when slowing down is good, and stopping is even better. I often wonder why the open road is so appealing to me.

Life was simple when I was a child. Family vacations were often road trips full of wonderful memories. As I grew, life became busy and challenging. Efficiency became more important to me. I do more flying these days. I find myself longing for a good old-fashioned road trip.

The Psalms are the “road trips” of the Scriptures. The *Book of Psalms* is comprised of 150 poems, prayers and promises that God placed in the middle of the Bible to help us slow down and reflect upon our journey. God speaks *to* us through the Scriptures and he speaks *for* us in the Psalms. When the challenges of life become overwhelming, Psalm 121 speaks *for* us, “*I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let my foot slip – he who watches over me will not slumber, neither will he sleep.*” (Psalm 121:1-4). Amazing. The same God who created the heavens and the earth never sleeps as he watches over us.

Psalm 121 is a pilgrimage song often sung by the people of God on a road trip to Jerusalem for one of the great annual feasts. I can imagine a caravan of families on the road to Jerusalem all singing of the wonders of the God of Creation. The hills surrounding Jerusalem seemed to testify to the majesty of the one true God who is the unsleeping guardian over Israel.

For much of my early years as a pastor, when life in ministry became overwhelming, I would get in my Ford 150 pickup truck, put on Jimmy Buffett 's CD, *“Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes”* and head for the open road. There is something therapeutic and healing about changing our latitudes when life weighs us down. Road trips often put life in proper perspective.

When Jesus heard of the death of this dear friend and cousin, John the Baptist, he was discouraged and needed to get away with his disciples for rest and reflection. Gathering his disciples around him he said, *“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest”* (Mark 6:30-31). Jesus and his friends needed a good road trip to a remote place in order to rest and reflect on their Heavenly Father's care for them. They needed a change in latitudes to change their attitudes.

Maybe that is why I love road trips. The beautiful sunsets, the majestic mountains, the lilies in the fields and the vast oceans all remind me that there is a powerful Creator in control of this world, and of my life. As I gaze into the rearview mirror of my journey, I realize the God of creation has been with me every step of the way. There was never a day when the Creator left me, *“The LORD watches over me—the LORD is my shade at my right hand; the sun will not harm me by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep me from all harm—he will watch over my life; the LORD will watch over my coming and going both now and forevermore. (Psalm 121:5-8)*

So, I invite you to take a little road trip this week. Maybe you are not able to get into your car and hit the open road, but you can take a few quiet moments to enjoy God's magnificent creation. Step outside. Take a short walk. Share your morning coffee with the birds. Watch the Discovery Channel on your television. Take a little time this evening to enjoy God's amazing creation. Enjoy the journey. You will never want to fly again!