

Psalms: Expressing Our Emotions

Lesson 15 - On Our Way

Warm up -

1. Describe a lousy thing that has happened to you on a trip - be it a family vacation, class trip, or whatever.
2. Did anyone ever save you from a jam? Describe the person who
 - opened your car door with a hanger
 - saved you from a fight with two big guys
 - fixed your car when it broke down on the highway
 - gave you \$5 in the checkout line when you were short
 - other:
3. What miraculous things have you personally seen God do?

Lesson -

Remember Dorothy in the movie *The Wizard of Oz*? She and her little dog Toto, along with their companions the Lion, the Tin Man, and the Scarecrow, spend much of the movie traveling to the Emerald City to find the wizard - the great and powerful Oz. Along the way they run into all kinds of obstacles (including apple-throwing trees and the Wicked Witch of the West). By following the yellow brick road and relying on their own strength and courage, they eventually make it to their destination.

Psalms 121 is a psalm for those who are on a journey. But it has a different focus than the movie. It's not about setting out on a journey to find the great and powerful God. Instead, it celebrates the fact that God goes with us on our journey! Unlike Dorothy and her companions, we aren't traveling on our own. We don't have to rely on our wits and whatever friends we may make along the way. Because God is right there with us every step of the way. We can rely on God.

This "journey psalm" ends this short series on the psalms. We've looked at psalms of wisdom (1), despair (22), safety (46), forgiveness (51), confidence in God (91), and rage (137). I hope you've discovered that no matter what you're feeling and thinking, there are psalms that speak to you and help you speak to God. I want you to know that God is walking with you wherever you go. He's with you whether the road is smooth or full of potholes. He's with you through every switchback and detour. Wherever you are on your way - in the highest mountains or in the valley of the shadow of death - you can be sure God is there.

Read Psalm 121

1. As you read this, look for two phrases that are repeated through the psalm. What are they?
2. From what type of stuff does God protect us?
3. What steps does God take to protect us?
4. Since God watches over us all the time, what risks do you think you can take?
 - go bungee jumping
 - invite a new kid to hang out with you and your friends
 - go rock climbing without any safety equipment
 - try out for a part in the school play even though you've never acted before
 - other:
5. Why is worrying bad for us, spiritually or otherwise?
6. Do you believe the psalmist when he says, "The Lord will keep you from all harm"? If that statement is true, why do you or the ones you love still sometimes get hurt?
7. When you're dealing with problems, do you ever feel like Dorothy - that is, you've got to figure things out by yourself? Why might this be bad for your spiritual health?
8. What does God do for us that we tend to take for granted? Think of some ways to become more grateful for what God has done for us.
9. Are we responsible for taking care of ourselves? How does this fit with trusting in God to take care of us?