

Wednesday 25th November George Powell
Psalm 121 – I will lift my eyes

Morning, everybody. Welcome to this Wednesday devotion. I hope that you're doing well and we just welcome you to this morning's look at the scriptures. A Look at what God's saying to me and hopefully what he's saying to me will help you with where you are on your journey at this time.

I've been really struck over these last few weeks, about finding your place of rest in the Lord, finding a place where in the process of all that's going on at the moment actually getting back to a place of rest, a place of being with Him, with God in facing what we're facing. With all that's going on in the world right now, that actually the best place I can be is with Him. And I was taken back to Psalm 121, which is what I'm sort of looking at this morning. Let me just read it to you quickly: 'I lift my eyes up to the hills, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven earth. He will not let your foot slip, He watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you, the Lord is your shade at your right hand, the sun will not burn you, or harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm, He will watch over your life, the Lord will watch over you, your coming and going, both now and forevermore'.

And I was just struck by it you know, sometimes when we look at things, the first part of that is where I lift my eyes up to the mountain, you know, I don't know about you, but through all that goes on in life, your brain can sometimes overload with all the information that's coming in, whether that is what's going on on the news or what's going on in your own life. And for me, sometimes I realise that the amount of information, the amount of stuff that's going on in my life can sometimes take over who I am, it can take over everything that's going on in me. And whether I've spoken to the right people, whether I've written the right emails, whether I've spent enough time with this person, or whether I've managed to catch up with that person, whether I've done this work that I needed to do. And all these things suddenly start whirling around in there. And as I start to face these things, it becomes increasingly like a massive mountain; and I'm thinking crumbs, where's my piece gone? Where's my rest gone. And sometimes it might be an event, it may be some situation that I'm facing, which seems like a mountain, it seems like a mountain that's too big that I don't know how to deal with it, so your brain is trying to work around it. Your heart is troubled, and you're trying to sort out a system or a process to work around. How do I deal with this? How do I get through this situation, it could be financial, it could be emotionally, whatever it is, there's kind of this thing going on in you, which can sometimes distract you. And it's like, when I was looking at this psalm, like when I look up at the mountain, sometimes those mountains, it's like, as I raise my eyes up, I've got to stop stopping on the mountain, does that make sense?

It's almost like I can stay looking at the situations that I'm facing, the problems that look like a mountain at that time, or I can go a little bit further and I can raise my eyes to God, raise my eyes to heaven, so that I can actually start to see this God who is in love with me, who loves me so much, that wants to be with me and everything that I'm going through. He wants to journey with me in the process of going over these mountains and down the valleys and up the mountains and down the valleys. God's heart is to be with you this morning, God's heart is to walk with you in that process. And in that process, things start to change. You know, it's kind of like there's this, as we all know, as I get closer to Jesus, as I get closer to God, it changes my life, and I start to become more hopefully. And I'm hopefully looking at you all this morning, and hopefully there are a few thumbs up! The more that I am closer to God, the more Christ like I become, the more Christ like you become, because there is just this transaction that has to happen. The more you spend time with the Father, the more that you spend time with the Holy Spirit, in His presence in their presence, the more that you start to shine the glory of God, the more that the light shines from your face.

So this morning, I really want to encourage you, I want to encourage you that actually sometimes we are looking at it from a point of view of, ah I don't know what to do. I don't know if anybody else feels that oh, I

don't know how to get through this. What is it? These situations are too big. Let's not stop at the mountain, let's carry on lifting our eyes up to the Lord, let us keep going up to that place of understanding, God, you love me so much. In my situation whatever I'm facing right now, actually, You have the right thing for me to do, You want to be with me in that process.

I keep coming back to a few things in this season it seems there are a lot of people talking about finding that place of rest and coming back to that place of intimacy with God. In this lockdown, we're nearly at the end of the second lockdown hallelujah, we pray that God will bring release to the country so that we can be again, free to be what we are. But in this lockdown, what are the things that God's challenging you with? What is it that He is saying to you? I really feel in this season, He's saying 'come to me, come to me all who are thirsty, come and spend time with me, focus your attention on me'. Because what we don't realise is, or maybe we do, but somehow in our lives, we seem to forget by not doing it, the more that we yield to Him there's a transformation that happens to us. There's something that changes in us, there is a rest and a piece that comes to us, which is beyond all understanding. And that's the great thing about it, that God is just to interested in leaving you where you are right now. He wants to change and bring back change in your life. But I have to yield to that, I have to yield my life to Him. I have to say, 'Here I am Lord, whatever it is that I need to change, I need to manoeuvre myself to being in a place of availability to you to change me'. I need to be obedient to that.

I've been reading a little from Spurgeon's book on grace, which again is a great read, but I just want to read this little bit to you. It says here, 'If you yield yourself to His divine working the Lord will alter your nature. He will subdue the old nature and breathe new life into you. Put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and He will take the stony heart of your flesh and He will give you a heart of flesh. Where everything was hard, everything shall be tender, where everything was vicious, everything shall be virtuous, where everything tended downward, everything shall rise upward, with impetuous force. The lion of anger gave place to the lamb of meekness. The raven of uncleanness shall fly before the dove of purity, the vile serpent of deceit shall be trodden under the heel of truth. I have seen this with my own eyes, such marvellous changes of moral and spiritual character, that I despair of none. I could if it were fitting, point out those, who were once unchastised women who are now pure as the driven snow, and blaspheming men who now delight all around them by their intense devotion. Thieves are made honest, drunkards sober, liars truthful, scoffers, zealots. Wherever the grace of God has appeared to a man it has trained him to deny ungodliness and worldliness and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present evil world; and dear reader, it will do the same for you'.

And that's it, the more that we start to focus and the more that we start to give ourselves and yield over to Him, the fruit of what happens when we get close to God are those things, righteousness, peace and joy, that's the fruit of the kingdom of heaven in you, and so, whatever it is you're facing this morning, I want to encourage you, I want you to understand that actually, God wants us to come to Him first and foremost, and say, Here I am, yield myself to Him and say, I want to change, I want to be more like Christ. We obviously then need to understand what that looks like and it might be a process; it is a process for all of us. We're on a process, sometimes I get it right and sometimes I get it wrong. But that doesn't mean that I don't get to the place of knowing the fullness of God in my life. Because He is so full of grace, that He wants me to be all that He's called me to be.

Again, in this season it's like, there's a lot of talk about what is happening about church about 'new means new' and all that type of stuff is going on, it's whirling around in our attention and also what is our role in this world. And we've got opinions and we have points of view and all of you watching this morning will maybe have a slightly different point of View to me and opinions on different issues. But, the core issue is, if I am in love with Jesus, if I am full of His grace full of His love, then what happens is, when we come together we can be as one, we can be together and we can see our eyes lifting up into the heavens. And we can see the Lord that David is talking about there in the psalm.

I listened to Bill Johnson on Sunday, just talking about Jeremiah 29. And if you can, I really recommend having a listen to it. It's a great sermon about abiding in Jesus and knowing him and of finding God. I would

just really encourage you in whatever you're facing at the moment; it might be helpful, because sometimes these things are there to encourage us in our journey, in the process that we're going through right at this moment. And he was talking, if you look at Jeremiah 29, we know that verse everybody quotes, 'For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans for welfare, not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope'. And we leave it there sometimes that you know, it's the one that we've underlined in our Bible, because it's great for us. Yes, Jesus, God has a plan for me. He has a plan; he doesn't want to let me walk in calamity or despair. But there's a hope that I can rise because He, He loves me. But then he goes on and he says in verse 12, 'Then you will call upon me, and come and pray and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all of your hearts'.

And I just keep coming back to that, even with what I'm talking about and it might be seem a little bit disjointed, but I hope not. Part of God's calling on you and me in this season, is that He's looking for people who are wholeheartedly, seeking His face. That there are no distractions, and whatever those distractions are, whatever those things that draw your attention away from God, we need to start taking ownership of those and saying, I don't want that to be the case anymore. We need to get to a place where actually, we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all those things will be added unto you. The added unto you bit means that the whole of the kingdom of heaven is added unto you; peace, joy, righteousness, the very core of what the kingdom is about. But in this time, it's easy to be part hearted in this, we can pay a little bit of attention to Him and actually most of our life is looking over here. And I think what God is asking of us, and what He's looking for in his church today, is people who are wholeheartedly seeking after His face, that my whole life is in line with what He's saying in the scriptures. But it's a line with looking to Him first in every situation. Because when I start praying in those situations you know, even Jesus says, if you have faith the size of a mountain, you can say to this mountain move. Well if I'm..., the reason is because there'll be a connection with you and God, you'd be so close in tune with him, you'd be so close in knowing what God's will is, you'd know whether that mountain needed to be shifted anyway, does that make sense?

And so this morning, again I hope it's encouraging you but you know, as we seek His face, God is promising us and saying, you'll find me. It's not like I'm seeking forever and it's like, where is this God? Where are you God in the midst of it? If my whole heart is looking for Him, if my whole heart is searching for Him, then God is saying, here I am. And in the midst of whatever turmoil you are going through, and sometimes life throws out these challenges as I'm sure you would agree, what is it that I need to be, where do I need to position myself to be so that when I look at that challenge, I'm not looking at the mountain, but I'm looking at God who is above it. My eyes are drawn up to Him in this so that when I look at the mountain or whatever I'm facing, I get a godly perspective on it, which is helpful. Well it is for me! When I start looking at it from God's point of view, it changes the perspective of things. Jesus speaks about, in John 15, as we know, 'abide in me, remain in me', again, it's all about that coming back to Him. That's the answer to every situation that you're facing right now is coming back to Him, coming back remaining in Him focusing our eyes as it says, 'I lift my eyes to the mountains, where does my help come from?' It comes from you. It comes from heaven. It comes from the Lord. And He is there looking down on you right now, looking around you right now, wanting to be part of your life. He wants to be part of you. And whatever the challenges that you're facing, and some of you right now are thinking oh, I don't know, but he's talking to you. It doesn't matter what's happened, where you are on your journey with the Lord right now, it doesn't matter. What He's saying to you right now, whoever you might be, is, I'm after you. My heart is for you. I love you. And I want to be part of your journey. Come abide in me, come be close to me.

And so I just want to say this morning, read the scriptures, get into those scriptures, those promises of heaven, yield yourself to Him, and you will change. That righteousness, peace and joy will start to overflow in you because you can't help but be in that place as we start to yield our hearts to him. I'm sure we have to be light in this world. And we're getting to that place where the more that we are in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, the more that we are in fellowship with God, actually, that light starts to shine. And God will start to share issues that we want to be dealing with, whether that's in our own lives, or whether that's in society, because I believe as Christians, we need to be light in this world, we need to be the difference, we need to show that actually, there is a heaven and there is a kingdom of God, which is righteousness peace and joy. And wherever that goes on in your life, whatever is going on in your neighbour's life we need to be

that to them, so that the church can be all it is called to be; God's bride standing aside, standing apart from the world so that we can see His kingdom come. So as I said earlier, look at the Psalms, read that and I'll just quickly go through it and then I'll stop because I'm going over time.

'I lift my eyes up to the hills, where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth'. Even that - there's so much to unpack - the maker of heaven and earth, He is interested in you. He is interested in you from the beginning of time itself; He is interested in you. So this morning, take hold of these things. God loves you, God's chasing after you this morning. God wants you to yield to Him. God wants you to be in partnership with Him in your journey so that all those things can change and you can become more like Christ. And that's the best place to be. So bless you this morning. Have a great day.



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