



**SPRING-TIME DAILY
ENCOURAGEMENTS**

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

June 16, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

OUR PLACE OF SAFETY

The Lord watches over you - the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

Psalm 121:5

READ Psalm 121

Retired teacher Debbie Stephens Browder is on a mission to convince as many people as possible to plant trees. The reason? Heat. Extreme heat in the United States is the number one weather-related cause of death. In response, she says, "I'm starting with trees." The canopy of heat protection that trees provide is one significant way to protect communities. "It's life or death. It's not just about beautifying the community."

The fact that shade isn't just refreshing but potentially lifesaving would have been well known to the psalmist who wrote Psalm 121; in the Middle East, the risk of sunstroke is constant. This reality adds depth to the psalm's vivid description of God as our surest place of safety, the One in whose care "the sun will not harm [us] by day, nor the moon by night" (v. 6).

This verse can't mean that believers in Jesus are somehow immune to pain or loss in this life (or that heat isn't dangerous!). After all, Christ tells us, "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33). But this metaphor of God as our shade does vividly reassure us that, whatever comes our way, our lives are held in His watchful care (Psalm 121:7-8). There we can find rest through trusting Him, knowing that nothing can separate us from His love (John 10:28; Romans 8:39).

By **Monica La Rose**

PRAY & REFLECT

Loving God, thank You for being my place of shade and safety. Help me to find rest and courage as I grow in trusting You. Amen

How have you experienced life-saving shade in God's care? How does remembering you're always held in His care give you courage?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Psalm 121 is one of the "Songs of Ascents" (Psalms 120-134) set aside as a "mini-hymnal" within the overall psalter to give Jewish pilgrims songs to sing as they traveled three times a year to Jerusalem for the primary feast times (Passover and Firstfruits in the spring; Tabernacles in the fall). This particular psalm speaks directly to that pilgrimage - discussing the wrong (v. 1) and right places (v. 2) to look for assistance on the journey and offering promises of the specific areas of protection they can expect from God along the way (vv. 3-8). Psalm 121 is filled with confidence in God's protection and provision. It's an appropriate song of preparation for the worship they'd experience once they arrived in Jerusalem. – By **Bill Crowder**

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