**Series Wrap Up**

**God Is Holding Your Life – July 19 – Psalm 121**

1I lift up my eyes to the hills — from where will my help come?
2My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth…

We named some of the fears we have during this particular time in our lives and then stared them down with “My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

When you’re right in the middle of the worst storm you’ve ever experienced, God will hold you until the storm is over. Not only does God provide shelter, God IS our shelter. We can know that we are loved and safe and protected even in the toughest circumstances of life.

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

The Lord will protect you on your journeys – whether going or coming – from now until forever from now.

**Surely Goodness and Mercy – July 26 – Psalm 23**

God’s compassion and lovingkindness is relentlessly pursuing me all my days, and I’ll be at home with God forever.

We had fun with Shirley Goodnest and her daughter Marcy. Little Timmy said he guessed he would have to get used to them following him all the days of his life!

A revelation for us in looking at Psalm 23 is that in looking at the psalm in Hebrew, the word right in the middle is “with.”The center of the Psalm, the center of the life of faith, is “thou art with me.” God isn’t primarily a fixer or protector or guarantor of this or that that we think we must have. God’s identity and purpose is simply to be with us. Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. Not God fixing us or doing favors for us. That realization defines our mission. We don’t do for others or fix others; we are called to be with them as God is with us.”

**Desert Blues – Aug. 2 – Psalm 63**

We heard the Desert Blues song with its great blues swing: In the desert I am waiting. I am waiting for you… for the water of a word with you. In the desert I am waiting, I am waiting for you and the sky is crystal clear. You’re gone. At your mercy out here in the heat. Feel the empty and ev’rybody here knows what I mean.

Psalm 63 starts out as lament – as blues – a song of crying out for help, crying out for the experience of God’s presence. The psalmist misses God, longs for God, yearns for God. We talked about the empty that many folks are feeling right now. We talked about the longing we are experiencing in this weird time. We sure would like for life to be like it used to be.

Even through the lament or the blues, we have hope. We have hope. We are people of faith who have a strong foundation. We KNOW God loves us and is holding us. We KNOW God is keeping us safe. We KNOW God has named us and claimed us. God calls us precious and honored in God’s sight. We can trust that as we dream for better days ahead.

**Into Your Hands – Aug. 9 – Psalm 31**

This Sunday we talked a lot about rocks – their uniqueness, their beauty, their strength. Psalm 31 refers to God as our rock and our fortress, offering protection when enemies threaten. We were reminded that this psalm contains the verse Jesus spoke at the point of his death. Into your hands, I commend my spirit.

We are invited, and we are challenged to commit our lives to God each and every day. Into your hands I place my life. Oh, loving, faithful God, my life is yours.

**There Is a River – Aug. 16 – Psalm 46**

We talked last week about the City of God and references to Zion. Even though there is not literally a river which flows through Jerusalem, we noted the metaphorical meaning of the river which provides life-giving sustenance to the city and God’s people.

Then we moved on to Mayhem.

God is our refuge and strength,
    a help always near in times of great trouble.
**2**That’s why we won’t be afraid when the world falls apart,
    when the mountains crumble into the center of the sea,
**3**    when its waters roar and rage,
    when the mountains shake because of its surging waves.

Our trust, the psalm’s trust, is not based in a naive notion that “nothing bad can happen.” In fact, the psalm assumes the possibility of natural catastrophe and enemy attack -- but it invites the singers of the psalm and those who hear it (and that includes us) to put their trust in God, who alone stands firm when all else shakes.

Mayhem happens. But we are in good hands.

**God Never Quits – Aug. 26 – Psalm 136**

O give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love endures forever. We learned through Psalm 136 that God’s actions throughout history are included in the story of the people of Israel. The people celebrated and gave thanks for all that God has done, is doing, and will continue to do into the future. God never quits.

And we come full circle. Because God’s love never quits we can trust God to hold our lives as we move during the joys and successes of life as well as the challenges, the stresses, the desert blues, and the mayhem that sometimes is a reality of life. God is with us. God will ALWAYS be with us. Thanks be to God. Amen.