

DEVOTION FOR THE FOURTH TUESDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PSALM 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills—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.

The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

The sun will not 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 your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 6:1-25 *The Lord is One*

New Testament Reading: Acts 20:1-38 *Constrained by the Spirit to testify of Jesus*

“CONSTRAINED BY THE SPIRIT TO TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS”

Paul attracted crowds and was attracted by crowds. For two years Paul taught the gospel in Ephesus, teaching to crowds in the hall of a local philosopher called Tyrannus. Historians are not sure if that was his name, or if that’s what his students called him (since it means Tyrant). That was a friendly crowd, eager to hear the good news of freedom from slavery to sin and release from the condemnation of eternal death, through faith in Jesus. Other crowds were not so friendly, like the one organized by the silversmiths in Ephesus to oppose Paul and the gospel.

Paul was an amazing man, not of himself (as he would be the first to say), but because of the Holy Spirit and for the sake of Jesus. The crowd that gathered at the Sportsplex in Ephesus, wanted to tear him to pieces for offending their goddess Artemis. Most people would fear for their lives, but Paul saw this as an opportunity to share the gospel and tell people about Jesus. He wanted to speak to the crowd. The only thing that stopped him from facing that crowd were his friends, concerned about his safety. Paul’s friends were more concerned about his safety than he was. Paul was constrained by the Holy Spirit to testify about Jesus and if he missed an opportunity, it was because some else constrained him first!

Paul left Ephesus to preach elsewhere. He then began to make his way to Jerusalem, where he would deliver an offering from the Gentile churches for the church in Jerusalem (where he would face another angry crowd). As he made his way to Jerusalem, he invited the elders of the Ephesian church to visit him. They gathered, visited and heard Paul again share the good news of God’s love in Christ Jesus. They crowded together to pray and say goodbye. They feared for Paul’s safety. He didn’t account his life of any value other than for testifying to the gospel of God’s grace in Christ Jesus. They were saddened at the thought that this may be the last time they would see him.

But they would see him and each other together again. Once more in time and forever in eternity, crowded around the throne of God. Paul didn’t count his life as any value except to tell others the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit constrained Paul and many others to share with their lives the good news of God’s love and salvation through Jesus. The Holy Spirit worked through Paul and countless others through the ages, to make Jesus known as Saviour. In this way we too have come to know God as our Saviour through faith in Jesus. Because of the Holy Spirit working through others to share the gospel with us, we too can look forward to joining a great crowd at the return of Jesus and crowding around the throne of God, redeemed from sin, released from death for the sake of Jesus and the blood He shed on the cross.

“WHEN PEACE, LIKE A RIVER” (Public Domain)

When peace like a river, attendeth my way;
When sorrows, like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.
It is well...with my soul...It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
It is well...with my soul...It is well, it is well with my soul.

He lives—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;
My sin, not in part, but in whole, Is nailed to His cross,
And I bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
It is well...with my soul...It is well, it is well with my soul.

And, Lord, haste the day when our faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;
Even so it is well with my soul.
It is well...with my soul...It is well, it is well with my soul.

PRAYER

Thank you Lord for the people who have shared the gospel with us, through whose words your Spirit opened our hearts to believe and opened our lips to confess you as Saviour and Lord. Bless us with your Spirit that we also may share with others the good news of your saving love. We ask this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven.
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen

THE CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

BENEDICTION

Matthew 10:19-20

“When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”