

Lent Devotional March 24, 2025

Scripture

Psalm 121

*1 I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
2 My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
3 He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
4 He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
5 The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
7 The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
8 The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.*

Devotion

The Rev. Mary Robin Craig '10

As I write this devotional months before Lent, my eyes frequently pause upon news photographs of the mountains of western North Carolina. For those of us with ties to the southeastern United States, the plight of the Blue Ridge Mountains and all who inhabit them have been high on our list of concerns since Hurricane Helene. I don't know what other catastrophes will make headlines in the upcoming season, so I will stay with the mountains I know for now: Looking Glass Rock, Mount Pisgah, Chimney Rock.

How often have we looked upward for help? For some of us, snow-covered peaks—the Rockies, the Alps—set the scale. For others, the ancient Appalachians call, or perhaps rolling hilltops close to home are more likely possibilities. Some of us have to make do with the rooftops of urban skyscrapers. For anyone who has encountered mountaintops, they seem to have been constructed with proximity to God in mind.

If we have been to the Holy Land (as I have not) or searched maps and photographs for clues to the lives of biblical peoples, we know that Jesus, in addition to clambering up and around mountaintops on occasion, must have often looked upward to the heights that frequently surrounded him. Especially toward the end of his earthy life, he probably uttered these very words: "I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where will my help come?" We are in good company when we gaze upward and ask the same question.

Whenever I have hiked up a (very small) mountain, I look upward and imagine a minor personal triumph. Then, when I reach the top, with the immediate world spread below me, I imagine the Creator, delighted with the beauty of the view, and ready to respond to the prayers rising upward.

Prayer

God of the Heights, hear our prayer. May we lift our gaze from our troubled and hurting world toward the help that drifts our way from the mountaintops, through the clouds and across the rivers, and reaches our comings and our goings. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.