

Backpacking to Heaven

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Date: 11 August 2019

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this morning, just for a wee while, we turn back to that psalm we read, Psalm 121. Psalm 121, we'll call it the Backpacker's Psalm, and we'll just read again verses 1 and 2.

We're going to look at the whole psalm, but we'll read again in verses 1 and 2. But it says, Well, boys and girls, it's lovely to see you all here this morning.

This is what we've called a Backpacker's All-Age Family Service. There's a mouthful for you. And it's a Backpacker's Service because, well, during the week, some of you were at a holiday club, and it was called the Backpacker's Holiday Club.

And, well, I hope you enjoyed it. Did you enjoy the holiday club? Yeah. Yeah, you did enjoy it. That's good. Now, can anybody tell me what we were doing at the holiday club? Does anybody know?

Sorry. Arts and crafts. Arts and crafts. Yep. We were doing arts and crafts. We were singing. What else were we doing? Songs.

[1 : 27] Playing games. What were we doing with a big ball? Playing games. Playing games. And then there was something at the very end that usually happened. One, two. Well, that was there too.

There was also a... Somebody had to think of food. A dra... What was it? A drama. Drama. Yeah, there was a play, wasn't there? Play with lots and lots of different characters. So we were singing, we were playing games, we were having crafts, and there was a drama.

And at the Backpackers Holiday Club, we were all backpackers. And we were going on a journey to different places throughout Europe. And does anyone remember where we went first?

It was a place. France. We went to France first. And then we went... Where else did we go? Went north to... No. Further. Sweet.

Sweden. Do you remember that place? We went to Sweden. Then we went to... Italy. Then we went to... Switzerland.

[2 : 25] And then we went to... London. London, which is the UK. And who lives in London? The Queen. The Queen. And who else? The Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, yeah. So they all live in London.

And so as backpackers, we went on a journey to all these different places. But at the Backpackers Holiday Club, we were also following the journey of someone else. Who was that person?

Does anybody know? Whose journey were we following in the Bible stories? Do you remember?

Jesus. Yeah. We were following the journey of Jesus all the way to the cross, wasn't it?

Because first of all, we saw Jesus. He was coming into Jerusalem. And what was he sitting on? Do you remember? He was sitting on a donkey. Jesus was sitting on a donkey. And Jesus was sitting on a donkey because he is a...

Or the... Messiah. Messiah, yeah. So Jesus is God's King. But then we saw Jesus, and he was in a room with all of his...

[3 : 26] Disciples. Disciples, yeah. And they were in an upper room. But what were they doing in the upper room? They were having the last... The last supper, yeah. And during the last supper, Jesus handed them some bread.

And he said, this is a symbol of my... Body. Body, yeah. And then he gave them some wine, red wine. And he said to them, this is a symbol of my... Blood. My blood, yeah. So you were listening. That's good. You were listening at the holiday club. So Jesus... You were. That's good, Riley. You were listening. So Jesus had a symbol of his body and a symbol of his blood. Why was that?

Where was Jesus going? Jesus was going to the cross. And Jesus went to the cross because one of his disciples, one of those close friends around him, what did they do?

They betrayed Jesus. He betrayed Jesus. Does anybody remember what his name was? Judas. Judas Iscariot. And was he a good guy or a bad guy?

[4 : 25] A bad guy. Definitely a bad guy. And so when Jesus was betrayed by Judas, the soldiers took him away and they took him away to be crucified. Yeah. Jesus was crucified on the cross.

Why? To save us from our sins. And when Jesus died, do you remember? Stephen was talking about it on Thursday.

When Jesus died, was it a sunny day? No. Dark day. It was a dark day. A very, very dark day. And it was dark though, but it was the middle of the day.

It was midday when the sun was meant to be right in the sky. It went pitch black. But after Jesus died, do you remember? Something happened in the temple. There was this big curtain in the temple.

It ripped open, didn't it? It ripped. It was torn in two from top to bottom. And after Jesus died, he was then buried where? In a tomb.

[5 : 22] And we did a craft about the tomb. But did Jesus stay buried in the tomb? No. No. He rose from the dead. So, but why did Jesus rise again from the dead?

Because he's a king. Because he's a king. That's a good answer. Why else? Because he did it. Because he wanted to. He wanted to. That's another good answer. But also to give to us the promise of eternal life.

Yeah. And that's what we learned at the Backpackers Holiday Club. We learned a very, very important verse. Do you remember it? We had to do the treasure hunt looking for the verse. And what was the verse?

For God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that whoever believes in him will not die but have life forever.

Well done. And that's a verse in the Bible. Does anybody remember where it is? No. No. John 3.16. So, I have to remember where it is.

[6 : 25] John 3.16. Now, boys and girls. You're very, very good at listening. You did very well this past week. But I want to ask you. Where is Jesus today?

Jesus is in heaven. Now, does anybody want to go to heaven? Yeah. Hands up. Who wants to go to heaven? Well, the adults don't want to go to heaven. Okay.

I'm wasting my time here. Well, we all just want. We were on a journey at the Backpackers Holiday Club. And we were going to all these different places.

But if we want to go to heaven, we also have to go on a journey. We have to go on a journey to heaven. And the only way to go to heaven is to follow Jesus.

Because Jesus, as the Bible says, Jesus has prepared the way for us to go to heaven. By dying on the cross and rising again from the dead. And so this morning, I want us to make sure that we're all on this journey towards heaven.

[7 : 26] And I want us to do this by looking at this psalm. Psalm 121. Because in Psalm 121, it describes someone who's backpacking to heaven.

Someone who's on a journey going to heaven. Psalm 121, it describes a backpacker who's backpacking to heaven. And that's what we've got today. We've got a backpack.

So we're backpacking to heaven. But in order to make sure that we're getting to heaven or going the right way to heaven, we need to make sure that we have the right things inside our backpack. Because if we're not prepared for heaven, then we'll never reach there. And as we read in Psalm 121, we'll see here that there are directions.

And this backpacker in Psalm 121, he looks in four different directions in order to get to heaven. And the first direction that this backpacker looks is up.

[8 : 31] He's looking up. So that's the first thing. He's looking up. That's what he says in verse 1. So the first thing that this backpacker does is that he looks up.

Now, boys and girls, if you look up, what do you see? What's the first thing that you see? What's that? You see a light? Okay. What else? The ceiling of the church.

You see the ceiling? But then if you went outside, what would you see? You'd see a cloud? Oh, you'd see the sky. What's in the sky? Clouds. And sometimes we see what? Big.

Oh, we see the sun. Yeah. And then if you looked up at night, if you looked up at night, what would you see? You'd see the? The moon. The moon. And you'd see some stars.

Yeah. But what's beyond the clouds? What's beyond the sun and the moon and the stars? Heaven. Heaven is up there. And that's where this backpacker is going.

[9 : 31] He's looking up to heaven. He's lifting his eyes up to heaven. But who's he looking to? Who's in heaven? God and Jesus. Jesus is in heaven.

And this backpacker who wants to go to heaven, he's looking up to Jesus. He's looking towards his destination. That's where he wants to go. His destination is heaven because that's where Jesus is. But how does he get to heaven? How do we get to heaven? Die. We have to die, yes. That's true. But we also have to do what? We need access.

There's a word for you. We need access into heaven. Now, boys and girls. I'm sure that during your summer holidays, some of you might have gone away for a few days. Maybe you went to Inverness.

Some of you might have went to Glasgow or somewhere. Maybe even somewhere very, very far away. And if you went on a plane or on the ferry, before you were allowed on the ferry, what did you need?

[10 : 32] A ticket. Yeah, you needed a ticket. You needed a ticket to get on to the ferry. And because without a ticket, what would happen? You don't get on the ferry.

You don't get on the plane. If you don't have a ticket, you don't get on. That's how it works. But you need a ticket, just like this one. You need a ticket. And I'm glad you all got your ticket and came to the Backpackers Holiday Club.

You all got a ticket and you all came. But now, if we're looking up to heaven, we need a ticket to get to heaven, don't we? Yeah. But what's the ticket to get to heaven?

It's not one like this, is it? No. You need a ticket in your heart, don't you? Who? Who do you need in your heart? Do you need Jesus in your heart?

Now, can you buy? Can you buy Jesus? Can you buy Jesus to be in your heart? No. Can you work for Jesus? Can you earn things in order to have Jesus in your heart?

[11 : 32] No. If you're a good person, will Jesus be in your heart? No. Can you borrow Jesus from someone else to be in your heart? Can you ask mommy and daddy, can Jesus come into my heart?

Or can you borrow Jesus from your brother or sister or even a friend? No. You need Jesus for yourself, don't you? In your own heart. You need your own ticket in order to get to heaven.

You need to love Jesus and trust in Jesus and follow Jesus with all your heart. You need Jesus in your heart. That's your ticket to get to heaven. And when you look up to heaven, like this backpacker was doing, the only way we can get to heaven is by having Jesus in our heart.

Yeah. And so in Psalm 121, this backpacker, he's looking in four different directions. But he's looking, first of all, he's looking up to heaven. Because that's where he wants to go. He wants to go to heaven.

And that's where we all should want to go. We should all want to go to heaven. So he's looking up, but then this backpacker, we're told he looks down. He looks down.

[12 : 38] He's looking up, then he's looking down. We're told in verse 3, he says, He will not let your foot be moved. He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

So after looking up to heaven, this backpacker, he looks, where does he look? Down. So if you look down, what do you see? Well, if this backpacker looked down, what did he see?

What do you see? You see the floor. What else do you see? Shoes. You see your? What's on your, what's at the end of your legs?

Feet. Yeah. You see your feet. And I hope you all have something on your feet. You've got shoes on your feet. That's good. We don't want smelly feet in here. And I'm sure that we all have different shoes on, don't we?

Do you have shoes like this? No. Some people have big shoes. Some have small shoes. Some have black shoes. Some have grey shoes.

[13 : 39] Maybe some of you have pink shoes. Does anybody have pink shoes today? No. No? Blue shoes? But we all wear shoes, don't we? And why do we wear shoes? Why do we wear shoes?

To keep our feet warm? Warm, yeah. But also, when we go outside, and we're standing on the stones, and there's things outside that are sharp, we want to protect our feet, don't we? And that's what this backpacker wanted to do. He wanted to protect his feet before they get sore on his journey towards heaven. Because this backpacker knew that his journey towards heaven would be very difficult.

It would be a long journey to get to heaven, but also a difficult journey to get to heaven. And you know, boys and girls, that's what it's like to be a Christian sometimes. Sometimes being a Christian and being a follower of Jesus is like going on a long and difficult journey.

Now, I'm sure that sometimes when you're in the car, and maybe you're on holiday, and you're traveling somewhere, and it's taking ages, what's the question you always ask?

[14:49] Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Well, that's what we have in our car. Are we there yet? Sometimes you feel that the journey is taking forever. Well, sometimes the Christian journey to heaven is a long journey.

But I assure you, it's worth the wait. But sometimes the Christian journey to heaven is also a difficult journey. Because along the way to heaven, there are temptations that can trip us up.

There are worries that can take over us. There's sickness that can come upon us. There's pain and heartache that can come into our lives. But you know, what this backpacker discovered, this person who was traveling towards heaven, what he discovered, and what we need to discover, is that Jesus promises to keep us safe.

Jesus promises to keep us safe. Jesus promises to watch where our feet are going and protect us. But you know, boys and girls, if we're going on a long journey, and a difficult journey to get to heaven, what would you need at night if you had to sleep over?

Imagine this person who's backpacking for days on end. And they have to stay the night. What do they need? A bed, yeah. What would they sleep in though?

[16:08] If they were outside? A tent. A tent, yeah. Have you ever gone camping? Yeah. Yeah, some of you have gone camping, yeah. And is it warm and is it comfortable sleeping in a tent as it is, sleeping in your own bed?

I sleep in a caravan. Oh, a caravan. Well, this person didn't have a caravan. But you know, if you were in a tent, I'm sure you would find it hard to sleep, wouldn't you? And that's what this backpacker found.

He found it hard to sleep. And you know, there are times when we can find it hard to sleep. Maybe when we're not in a tent, but we're just at home and we're worried about things.

We're worried about something and we can't get to sleep at night. And we could be worried about maybe someone who's sick or someone who's hurt or something that's happened at school. Or we're worried about what someone has said to us.

Sometimes we get worried and we can't sleep at night. But you know what this backpacker learned? Is that God never sleeps. Do you know that? God never sleeps.

[17:11] He never, never, never sleeps. And you know that? Why? Because God doesn't need sleep. We need sleep and it's good for us to go to bed early. But God never sleeps.

And so, boys and girls, if you're awake during the night, maybe sometimes you are. You can't sleep. You're worried. Do you know, if you're awake during the night, remember God is also awake.

God is also awake during the night. And you can pray to God and you can ask him for help. And you can ask him, you can ask him anything. So remember, you can ask God for help at any time.

During the day or even during the night. But you know, boys and girls, when this backpacker, when he was looking down. So he was looking down and he saw his feet. But also, what's under his feet?

The road. Wasn't it? He would have been walking on the road. This backpacker. And as a backpacker wanting to travel to heaven, he knew that there was only one road to get to heaven.

[18:15] Isn't there? There's not many ways. There's just one way. There's only one way to heaven. And Jesus says, I am the way. But in order to follow the right way, what do you think this backpacker needed?

What do you think he needed? A map. Yeah. And, well, what do we use our map for? Does anybody know? Does anybody know what we use our map for? To look where we're going.

What do we call that? That, what's the light? Directions. Yeah. Because our map gives us directions. Our map gives us direction. And that's what we need to get to heaven.

Heaven. Heaven. Do you think this map would lead us to heaven? No. No. So what do you think the map is that would lead us to heaven? If this map wouldn't do, what do you think would lead us to heaven?

The Bible. Oh, the Bible. The Bible's a good map, isn't it? The Bible is a map. The Bible is the only book that can direct us to heaven. In fact, there's a verse in the Bible, and it's on the intimation sheet today.

[19 : 21] There's a verse in the Bible that reminds us that the Bible is the only book to direct us to heaven. And it says, Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Can you say that? Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Yeah. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

And so in Psalm 121, this backpacker is looking up, up to heaven. Then he's looking down, and he's looking down knowing that God will direct him towards heaven.

But then he's looking around. He looks around. And it's always good to look around to what's around you. So he's looking up, he's looking down, then he's looking around. And that's what we see in verses 5 and 6.

It says, The Lord is your keeper. The Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. So as this backpacker is, he continues his journey towards heaven.

[20 : 24] He looks around him, and he sees the hot sun. The hot sun shining in the sky. Now, although we don't have a hot sunny day today, we've had a few hot sunny days over the summer holidays, haven't we?

Have you? Yeah. And I'm sure that when you had a hot sunny day, were you wearing a big woolly jacket? No. What were you wearing? Shorts.

Shorts and a? T-shirt. T-shirt, yeah. But, oh, that's my next question. When you're in the sun for a long time, what do you have to put on? Sun cream. Sun cream.

And you have to put it on your ears, and your face, and your arms, and your legs, don't you? Put it everywhere. And on your neck. You have to cover yourself in sun cream.

Why do you have to cover yourself in sun cream? To protect you from the sun. So you don't get sunburned. Yeah. And that's what, you know, that's what this backpacker is saying.

[21 : 22] That on his journey towards heaven, he needs protection. He needs protection during the hot sunny days. But he also says, oh, I forgot to take out my sun, show you my sun cream.

This is my sun cream. Factor 50. That's my hot, that's my sun cream for the hot sunny days. But, you know, during the cold, dark nights, what would a backpacker need?

A jacket. A jacket, yeah. So this is my jacket. Do you like it? It's a bit small, is it? Do you think it'll fit? Do you think this would fit me? What once have I opened it?

Do you believe there's a jacket in here? Yeah. Yeah. That's cool. So they would need a jacket. So a backpacker would need a jacket.

And why would they need a jacket? For protection. Yeah. So we need protection during the hot sunny days, but also the cold, dark nights.

[22 : 20] Now, who promises to give us protection? I'm waiting for that. Who promises to give us protection? Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Who promises to give us protection as we journey to heaven?

God and Jesus. What if we don't have protection, though? It will be dangerous. Yeah. Because, well, during the hot sunny days, if we didn't have protection, we'd get burnt.

Burnt, yeah. And during the cold, dark nights, if we didn't have a jacket on, we'd be cold. Yeah. We need protection. And without protection, it's dangerous. But what this backpacker learned was that on his journey to heaven, he's looking around and he sees that Jesus promises that he will protect him from danger.

And, you know, that's a promise for us, too. That when we ask Jesus to save us and to trust, and when we trust in him, Jesus promises to protect us and to keep us safe as we journey towards, where are we going?

Heaven. Yeah. So, the backpacker is going towards heaven. He's looking up. He's looking. He's looking. Up.

[23 : 35] Around. Up. Down. Around. And then, what's that way? Straight ahead. He's looking ahead. So, he's looking up, down, around, and straight ahead.

And that's what we see in the last two verses. The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore. So, as this backpacker looks straight ahead, he's looking to the future. But, you know, he doesn't know what's ahead of him. He doesn't know what the future holds.

Just like we don't know what the future holds, do we? Does anybody here know the future? No? Does anybody know what's going to happen tomorrow? Does anybody know what's going to happen tonight?

No? Okay. So, as backpackers journeying towards heaven, we're to look ahead. Because Jesus promises to keep us. That's the word that's used a lot in the psalm.

[24 : 37] Keep us. Jesus promises to watch over us all the days of our life. That's what's been said here. And that if we trust in Jesus with all our heart, Jesus promises to watch over us today, right now.

Jesus promises to watch over us today and every day. From this time forth and forevermore. So, Jesus promises to be with us on our journey to heaven.

All the days of our life. Yeah. And we don't know what's ahead of us in our journey. None of us knows what's ahead of us in our journey towards heaven.

But the amazing thing is Jesus does. Jesus knows. And Jesus promises to be with us. He promises to watch over us. He promises to care for us.

And to go before us in our journey towards heaven. Jesus promises to be with us. When we trust in him with all of our heart.

[25 : 37] Yeah. And so, boys and girls, in Psalm 121, we have the Backpackers Psalm. What is it called? The Backpackers Psalm.

The Backpackers Psalm. And in the Psalm, we have been reminded that we are going to heaven by trusting in Jesus. And we need to look. Where?

Look up. Look up. Because that's where we're going. Need to look up because that's where we're going. When we trust in Jesus with all our heart. But we also need to look down. Because Jesus will.

What does a map do? Give us direction. And what's the map? What's the map? The Bible. Yeah. So, we're looking up to heaven.

Down to the Bible. Looking around. The hot sunny days. The cold dark nights. And when we look around, Jesus promises to protect us. Doesn't he? And then lastly, the Backpacker is looking ahead.

[26 : 37] Trusting that Jesus will be with him all the days of his life. We don't know what's ahead of us. But Jesus promises to be with us. So, the Backpacker Psalm. In order to get to heaven, we need to be looking.

Up. Looking down. Looking around. And looking. Straight ahead. Straight ahead. So, let's make. All make sure. That we're on the journey towards heaven.

Trusting in Jesus with all of our heart. Okay? So, thank you for listening. You've been very, very good. And thank you for talking to me. The adults didn't speak at all.

We're just going to close in a wee prayer. Okay? We'll clasp our hands. We'll close our eyes. Heavenly Father, we give thanks that Jesus has made the way for us. That we're able to get to heaven.

And Lord, we pray that we would keep our eyes firmly fixed upon him. That when we look up, we would see him in all his glory. That when we look down, we would see him in the Bible.

[27 : 37] When we look around, that we would know his protection. And when we look ahead, we would be assured of his promises. That he is always with us. Lord, bless us, we pray. Watch over us and guide us.

Keep us, we ask. For we ask it in Jesus' name. And for his sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion. We're going to sing in that psalm.

Psalm 121. Psalm 121. It's on page 416. In the blue psalm book.

Psalm 121. And we're going to sing the whole psalm.

I to the hills will lift mine eyes. From whence doth come mine aid. My safety cometh from the Lord. Who heaven and earth hath made. Thy foot he'll not let slide.

[28 : 36] Nor will he slumber that thee keeps. Behold, he that keeps Israel. He slumbers not. Nor sleeps. So we'll sing the whole psalm. Of Psalm 121.

To God's praise. Amen. I to the hills will lift my eyes.
Though whence doth come my aid. My safety cometh from the Lord.
Through heaven and earth hath made. Thy foot he'll not let slide.
Our will be slumber that thee keeps. Behold, he that keeps Israel.
[29 : 48] He slumbers not. Nor sleeps. The Lord thee keeps.

The Lord thy shade. On thy right hand doth stay.
The moon by night. The Lord shall keep thy soul.
He shall we serve thee from all else. Henceforth thy going.
Our tandem God keep forever well.

[31 : 05] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.