Psalm 121 The Passion Translation (TPT)

God Protects Us

**121***A song of the stairway*
**1–2I look up to the mountains and hills, longing for God’s help.
But then I realize that our true help and protection
come only from the Lord,
our Creator who made the heavens and the earth.
3He will guard and guide me, never letting me stumble or fall.
God is my keeper; he will never forget nor ignore me.
4He will never slumber nor sleep;
he is the Guardian-God for his people, Israel.
5Jehovah himself will watch over you;
he’s always at your side to shelter you safely in his presence.
6He’s protecting you from all danger both day and night.
7He will keep you from every form of evil or calamity
as he continually watches over you.
8You will be guarded by God himself.
You will be safe when you leave your home
and safely you will return.
He will protect you now,
and he’ll protect you forevermore!**

I wanted to share this psalm with you today as its is one of my favourites and I chose this particular translation from The Passion as I think it is so relevant to what we are currently living through, especially vs 8 about God’s protection in our homes and when we leave our homes to maybe do our daily exercise or shop for essentials. At this time, we all need to focus on the fact that even though things are out of our control and we may be fearful, one thing we can rely on and count is that God’s unfailing love and protection will surround us every day wherever we are.

Yesterday was St George’s Day a day when legend says that brave George a soldier in the Roman army slayed the dragon and saved a princess. When I worked at Country View Nursing home as an activities co-ordinator, we used to mark this date in an incredibly special way. The red, white, and blue bunting would be hung around the home, we would all enjoy scones and jam, the residents were extremely competitive in my proverb quiz and I was always asked to sing songs like Rule Britannia and Jerusalem. By the end of our session we always got round to the subject of what it was like living through and growing up during the war years. I was amazed to hear stories of how an 8-year-old girl who lived in Swansea spent every night sleeping in a shelter with her Mother and brothers because they lived close to the port. Accounts of what it was like to be sent away from your family to live in the countryside in a house full of strangers and to live with the fear everyday that you may never return home to your parents. Stories of lost loves who sadly never returned home and all the hopes and dreams of a bright future taken away. Now when I remember these stories I am inspired by their courage, bravery, and resilience. Even though all these people lived through these awful experiences when you ask them about it, they all said that these events changed their lives and made them the people they were today. I think this is so true of these uncertain frightening times we are now facing. I wonder how we will change from this experience and how the courage and resilience that we are building will affect how we handle situations in the future. If we think about the Disciples who went through the awful experience of the arrest, trial and finally the Crucifixion of their Teacher, friend, and brother Jesus. Everything they knew had changed, they felt afraid, lost without their leader, they faced uncertain times locked away from the rest of the world because they feared for their lives. Then with the events of Easter Day their lives changed forever they had a new viewpoint a new understanding, a deeper faith, courage, and resilience to go out and share the good news of the Gospel. The Disciples who were once the followers of Jesus now became the teachers.

Another hymn that was a favourite for me to sing at the Nursing home was Amazing Grace a hymn wrote by John Newton this is an inspirational hymn that talks about forgiveness and redemption. The Author of this hymn had no particular religious conviction up until the point in his life when he was faced with death aboard a ship during a violent storm he called upon the help of God and the conversion that took place changed his life forever.

The prayer I want to share with you is wrote by Chris Swift who is the Director of Chaplaincy and Spirituality at Methodist Homes. As you say this prayer remember the names, Pat, Beryl and Jim who are the people behind the stories of growing up during the war, real people who are still alive and at the moment are having to draw on their strength and resilience again to stay alive. We also remember everyone who is in a care home at this time and maybe feeling alone and isolated.

Lord when life feels less certain and fear enters the hearts of your children, still our souls with a knowledge of your love. When we cannot sit beside those who are dear to us, and distance makes us yearn to be close to others, may your spirit comfort our hearts. In these days of Easter, when Disciples where behind closed doors out of fear, may your presence enter unbidden and speak the words of Peace, in the name of Jesus Christ Amen.

I wanted to share this recording I made last week at the Church, it is a different style for me, but I feel its important we all embrace new opportunities, hope you enjoy it. God Bless you all Caroline

 (click the icon to hear )