

PSALM 121

*I look up to the
mountains.*

*Does my strength come
from the mountains?*

No!

*My strength comes from
God.*

*He made heaven,
and earth,
and the mountains.*

*Your guardian God will
not fall asleep.*

Not on your life!

*Israel's Guardian will
never doze nor sleep.*

*God is your Guardian,
right at your side to
protect you:*

*shielding you from
sunstroke and sheltering
you from moon-stroke.*

*God guards you from
every evil.*

He guards your very life.

*The Lord keeps watch
over you as you come
and as you go.*

**A LETTER
FROM THE PASTOR**

BUILDING A SAFE
COMMUNITY

*This Sunday is the
Sunday we focus on
our mission in the
community. One of our
means of reaching
people in our
community is through
the opportunities we
have to support
ministry in schools,
government schools in
particular. In the north
we provide support for
Pastoral Care Workers
at the two Kapunda
schools. In the south,
we support and
encourage Pastoral
Care Workers at the
Roseworthy and
Wasley's schools. And
at Freeling we are
involved in the
Breakfast Club. There
were also some
encouraging*

relationships forged by both Carli and Astrid with the Wellbeing seminars also involving students from the Freeling school. Today, both Carli and Astrid are sharing with us their role in caring for vulnerable children in their schools.

We are also using this Sunday as an opportunity to focus on how we are attempting to build a safe community, not only for our children, but for all vulnerable people. This is critical in the light of a history of abuse which has tormented the church and those have been victims of spiritual, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

My focus this Sunday will be on Jesus as our safe place, our safe person. In the past when we have talked of making ourselves safe, there have been different images, most of them directly out of the Old Testament.

The Lord is my Refuge and Strength.... The God of Jacob is my Fortress! (Psalm 46). We sing the Reformation Battle Hymn: A mighty Fortress is our God.

Psalm 18 uses a number of images, both military and personal: "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

*The image that King David first penned is the one that I have often called on: **The Lord is my shepherd.** In that song the safe place that we need, the safe*

person that we need, is framed in the shape of a person, a shepherd. Jesus takes that image when he talks about the role he has in our lives.

*But there is an even more comfortable image that Jesus uses. “**I call you friends.**” Jesus speaks to his disciples in this way to encourage them to be confident in his presence. In John 15 Jesus is changing the framework of the disciples’ relationship with him, from one of obedience alone, to a relationship of intimacy, trust, love and mutual commitment.*

It is Jesus’ claim on us as his friends which guarantees our safety and comfort in a place that is fraught with danger.

Your shepherd-servant and brother in Christ.

Pastor Geoff