

## **Where are You Looking? Psalm 121:1-2**

*I look up to the mountains;  
does my strength come from mountains?  
No, my strength comes from GOD,  
who made heaven, and earth, and mountains.*

Most of the time when we fall prey to the temptations that turn to destructive thoughts and deeds, it is because of our eyes. Our eyes are what transports our thoughts that turn dangerous temptations, into actions that find us in places we should not be. In a similar respect our eyes are the instruments that raise our fears and doubts. When we step into a plane, then watch it take off there is always a bit of fear that moves through us. We see ourselves flying up in the air with nothing underneath us, realizing that we are dangling in the wind over a cliff. Not until we get up in the clouds, where we cannot see the ground, do we start to feel at ease.

Several years ago, I took a trip to Ireland where I traveled to the Cliffs of Mohr. Back then you were able to walk to the edge of the cliff, that had no railing, and look down. Not wanting to appear a coward I walked close to the edge, began to see the bottom as I walked closer, then my legs turned to jelly. Still not wanting to give up, I crawled to the edge, looked down and felt paralyzed. I slowly crawled backward, feeling the power come back into my legs, turned around and felt relieved. My eyes saw the hills behind me which gave me comfort.

Our eyes control much of what we feel, what we want and what we need. The Psalmist understands this basic human function. When he says, "I look to the mountains; does my strength come from the mountains?", he is expressing two perspectives of what mountains provide. First, for someone who is on a pilgrimage, that needs to go over those hills, the mountains represent the obstacle that needs to be overcome. Secondly, they represent the place where God was most alive to Israel. The most important events in Israel's life happened from those that traveled up to the mountains to create a memory and way of life for the nation----Moses and the Law, Abraham and Isaac.

When the pilgrims, who were on their way to Jerusalem, represented in this Psalm, saw the mountains these two thoughts were fast at work in their consciousness. It all depended on what glasses they were wearing to see the mountains. Were they wearing the fearful and tired glasses, or were they wearing the glasses ground with faith? The first pair of glasses creates despair and drudgery. The second pair of glasses creates a spiritual joy, that propels them over the mountain with memories of stories that define them. But above all they are excited about a God that has given them strength and energy throughout their life and the life of Israel. So, the question is where are you looking, or more importantly who are you looking for? The eyes of your heart will lead you to what you desire.

*In this time of self-quarantine turn your eyes to the mountains and beyond to the one who defines your faith and very existence.*

With this email you will find a link to the sermon for this week. We have decided to make this a youtube link, which we will expand in the days to come. The text for the sermon is Mark 7:13-25. Be safe and take heart in these days of isolation.

Jesus called the crowd together again and said, “Listen now, all of you—take this to heart. It’s not what you swallow that pollutes your life; it’s what you vomit—that’s the real pollution.”

<sup>17</sup> When he was back home after being with the crowd, his disciples said, “We don’t get it. Put it in plain language.”

<sup>18-19</sup> Jesus said, “Are you being willfully stupid? Don’t you see that what you swallow can’t contaminate you? It doesn’t enter your heart but your stomach, works its way through the intestines, and is finally flushed.” (That took care of dietary quibbling; Jesus was saying that *all* foods are fit to eat.)

<sup>20-23</sup> He went on: “It’s what comes out of a person that pollutes: obscenities, lusts, thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, depravity, deceptive dealings, carousing, mean looks, slander, arrogance, foolishness—all these are vomit from the heart. *There* is the source of your pollution.”