

Introduction

- Do you ever get to wondering whether anything in life is **dependable**?
- Do you look back over the things that have happened to you and wonder that nothing seems to last forever?
 - during my childhood we lived in Tranent, but my parents are from Glasgow
 - we would go through to visit relatives, and on every trip as we passed through mum & dad would almost inevitably comment on something or other that had **changed** since their childhood!
 - *notably the whole area round Charing Cross that now has a huge great motorway through the middle of it!!*
- Even in the few months I've been here in **Dundee** I'm conscious of that:
 - aerial shots of **Fintry** as it was **being built** in the vestry drawer!!
 - **Jenny Farquharson**, Fintry Mains, remembering picking tatties in the field where her house now stands!!
 - **Linlathen High School**
 - big **flats in Whitfield** behind Longhaugh School are being cleared ready for demolition...
- **Not just places that change, either:**
 - **friends** you knew have moved on, moved away; (when I went to University no-one from my school came to Edinburgh, and I basically lost touch with all my school friends)
 - **relatives who have died**, perhaps grand-parents or parents, or even siblings...
- Even our **own lives**, we come to realise, are **limited and unreliable**.
 - health, energy, fitness, mobility...
- **Can anything be relied upon? Is anyone worth leaning on? Is anyone worth trusting or committing oneself to?**
- The Psalmist says **"YES!"**
 - but **only God** is worth dependable, not anything of this earth!

God is: Dependable

- Psalmist uses three pictures to get his message about God's reliability across...
- The first image is tied up with the solidity of the created order:
 - there is some ambiguity as to whether the hills are potentially a source of shelter or of threat!
 - is the thought that the Psalmist might be thinking of fleeing to the hills as a place of safety, hiding there amongst the rocks?
 - or is the thought that from the hills might come danger...?
- Hard to be sure, but where he is sure to get help from is clear!
 - from the Lord, the maker of the hills, the maker of the whole earth!
- There is something about hills that puts humanity in its place:
 - whether its scaling a peak out in the wilds and looking down on the world around, getting a sense of the scale and majesty of the world;
 - or whether its the glimpse of hill from closer at hand
 - *Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, Ochils from our bedroom window in Motherwell, Sidlaws at the back of Dundee...*
- To the ancient mind, someone like the Psalmist, the hills stood for all that was dependable, solid, immovable.
 - they had no concept of geology, plate tectonics, erosion!
 - only that towns, nations, kings, civilisations come and go, but the hills around are solid and reliable.

- God is the same:
 - doesn't change - get up this morning & feel grumpy!
 - so can be relied upon!

God is: Alert

- Second picture Psalmist uses is of **God as a watchman**.
 - a while back I was disturbed to hear that lighthouse keepers have been largely replaced by computers
 - *for all I'm a computer geek, I don't find this a comforting thought!!*
- Alert watchmen who looked out for danger and warned shipping.
- God is a watchman who never sleeps, never misses anything.
 - nothing can happen to us without God being there, watching over us!

God is: Protector

- Final picture Psalmist uses is of **God as a shade and protection**.
- Palestine is **hot in the day**, but can be **cold at night**.
- Sun beats down, can't stay out in it... need a shade to protect you.
- At night, temperature plummets - need something to keep you warm.
 - pictured as the moon being an evil force.
- God is like that - **exactly protecting us from that which threatens us**.
- Not maybe meaning we don't have any troubles:
 - just need to come to the prayer meeting and hear the needs that are shared to know that!
 - but **protecting the most important thing, our life in him**.

Conclusion

- So, the Psalmist concludes - **lift your eyes up to God**.
- Rely on him, always, for he is reliable.
 - dependable;
 - alert;
 - protector.
- That's one thing that stands behind our ability to approach God in worship:
 - we come to a God who is **not fickle**
 - indeed, we come to a God who is **dependable**, but **not obdurate** like a rock
 - rather we come to a God who is **reliable like the best of best friends**
- **And praise him!**