**Psalm 124. A song of ascents. Of David.**

*God is our only rescuer*

**1**If the Lord had not been on our side—  
    let Israel say—  
**2**if the Lord had not been on our side  
    when people attacked us,

*Without God’s help we would be done for*  
**3**they would have swallowed us alive  
    when their anger flared against us;  
**4**the flood would have engulfed us,  
    the torrent would have swept over us,  
**5**the raging waters  
    would have swept us away.

*Praise for God’s rescue*

**6**Praise be to the Lord,  
    who has not let us be torn by their teeth.  
**7**We have escaped like a bird  
    from the fowler’s snare;  
the snare has been broken,  
    and we have escaped.

*God is our help*  
**8**Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
    the Maker of heaven and earth.

**Notes on Psalm 124**

*Thanksgiving and dependence upon God*

**Psalm 124:1–2. *God is our only rescuer***

* A pair of verses in John’s gospel that expresses dependence on God:
* John 5:30. “By myself I can do nothing”
* John 15:5 “Apart from me you can do nothing”

**Psalm 124:3–5. *Without God’s help we would be done for***

* Thomas Merton wrote: “Greatness is to pass through the needle’s eye of your own absolute insufficiency.” (Merton, cited by Ringma.)
* What does it take to pass through that needle’s eye? What does it take to say, “by myself I can do nothing”?

**Psalm 124:6–7. *Praise for God’s rescue***

* Meye wrote: Thanksgiving is the heartbeat of Pauline Spirituality. For Paul, thanksgiving marks the dividing line between belief and unbelief, between the obedience and disobedient heart’ (Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:11–13)

**Psalm 124:8, *God is our help***

* “To depend on God doesn’t mean that we become inactive and passive. It actually means the opposite. We still exert ourselves. We still strive and work hard. But we embed our activities in prayer and our zeal and strength we draw from God.” (Charles Ringma)

**Prayer of dependence by Henri Nouwen**

Dear God,

I am full of wishes,

full of desires,

full of expectations.

Some of them may be realized, many may not,

but in the midst of all my satisfactions

and disappointments,

I hope in you.

I know that you will never leave me alone

and will fulfill your divine promises.

Even when it seems that things are not going my way,

I know that they are going your way

and that in the end your way is the

best way for me.

O Lord, strengthen my hope,

especially when my many wishes are not fulfilled.

Let me never forget that your name is Love.