

**Psalm 16**  
**“Preserved On The Path To His Presence”**  
**Wednesday, September 29th, 2021**

**[READ PSALM 16]**

**Intro:**

Whenever we look at a letter, or a book, or a particular verse, or in this case a Psalm, we always want to begin to ask some rudimentary questions at the outset and sort of interrogate the text to see if we can suss out the context and set the stage, right? So, for example, some of the questions we might ask are **who** wrote it? **Why** was it written? To **whom** was it written to? What’s the author talking **about**? And why is he saying it **THAT** way? Is there something in the text that gives us a clue as to the **timeframe** in which it was written or what was **happening** when it was composed? Why is this Psalm in the bible? If it’s a theme that’s repeated throughout scripture, **WHY** is it repeated? Etc.

Some questions:

- Who wrote it? David - the superscript above verse 1 tells us as much.
- What’s a Miktam? A word whose meaning is lost to us however, there are 5 other Psalms that include that titling (Psalms 56, 57, 58, 59, & 60).
- What’s the thrust of this Psalm? This is (chiefly) a Psalm of protection.

Point of interest:

- Even though it was written primarily about David’s own experience, the book of Acts records a sermon that Peter gave at Pentecost where he references this Psalm and says

that this Psalm refers to Christ (rather than to David) which is to say that it was written **by** David but points **to** the Messiah.

So how do we read & interpret this Psalm? Should we do so as it was during David's time? Or do we read it (as Peter suggests) with Christ in view. The answer is really both. And the reason is that the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is an unfolding revelation of the Person and Work of Christ - it all points to our Lord Jesus. But for this study, we will mainly focus on the original Davidic interpretation.

### **Verse 1:**

Verse 1 begins with a prayer and a plea for protection. "*Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge...*". David KNOWS that God is his refuge. The application point for us is this: that no matter what comes, let us, JUST LIKE DAVID, settle our hearts in our reassurance in the favor of our God. Let us always remember that though we may seem to be all alone, **we are not so**. God IS our refuge, an ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1). When we resolve to trust Him and Him alone for our redemption and rescue. David knew that. **We** might rattle and roll, but the Rock upon which we stand will NEVER move.

### **Verse 2-3:**

In the first part of Verse 2 we read, "*I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord...'*". There's a sense of "ownership" there. David takes possession of his relationship with the Lord; he has submitted and committed himself to Divine authority and in saying "You are my Lord", he swears off any self-righteousness by that declaration. It's actually one of the evidences of true faith: he declares his allegiance to the Almighty and in so doing, forsakes any notion of being able to justify himself in the eyes of the Lord in the matter of salvation.

And then of course he continues with the 2nd part of verse 2 saying, *"I have no good apart from you."* God is David's ultimate treasure, his greatest and most profound joy. Everything David had was only good by virtue of them being from God AND most importantly, gave him more OF God.

Moving into Verse 3, David begins to underscore and emphasize the value of God's goodness in him by looking at how David sees godly people. David writes *"As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."* Speaking of those who treasure God, who value righteousness, and holiness, David finds his delight in them. They are not his greatest treasure apart from God of course; he just seems to be saying that he delights in the godly which is in contrast with David's displeasure and disgust with the ungodly. In other words, with regard to people, no one gives him pleasure and delight quite like the godly do.

In a sense, when you look upon other believers, we actually look upon a miracle in the making. We are surrounded by the mysterious regenerative atoning work of Christ in the hearts of sinners. And this extends to eternity to the heritage that we who are in Christ all have. The permanence of our familial bond as the body of Christ. I'm personally convinced that in heaven, we will see every other believer as though they were our best friend in the world.

#### **Verse 4:**

And now here in Verse 4 we come to a more somber note regarding the sorrows of idolatry. David writes, *"The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips."* We as Christians tend to think of idolatry in terms of other gods or belief systems. But consider that when we set up something in our hearts above God, when something occupies our hearts over Christ, we are guilty of idolatry. We as humans were created for worship. But because of our own depravity, we find

ourselves worshiping others (and ourselves). The thing which captures our hearts is what we worship. If I'm being honest, I do this all the time. Hobbies for example. There is a time and place for hobbies, to be sure. But I find myself dedicating way too much time to them. Inordinate amounts of time to the peril of further study in the Word. To the peril of more time in prayer. To the peril of the affections of my heart. That's idolatry. It's one of the reasons that social media can be so dangerous to our souls. We feed on that which doesn't satisfy our souls, and then we chew on that which stunts our growth in the Lord.

We have a duty to separate ourselves from the sin of this world and its influences in not only life but in words too. I'll use myself as yet another sad example: I'm guilty of using coarse language, I watch movies that don't edify my soul, and I sometimes listen to music that's questionable in its morality. And even struggling with those things can become idols. You might say for instance, "Well, if I can just get my tongue under control". And so that becomes the pet sin. And we make a mountain out of it. And we begin to sneakily set that struggle up as an idol. So the focus is on the struggle and not the grace with which we have been given IN our struggles. And how foolish we are to abandon our all-satisfying Lord for idols. Those things we set up in our hearts, those things we secretly worship can all become great temples. And when the storms of life and the earthquakes of our experiences come, those temples we set up can come crumbling down around us and bury in their rubble, imprisoning us and becoming our tombs.

### **Verse 5:**

Leaving our reflections on idolatry in Verse 5 here, David emphasizes and effectively repeats what he said in Verse 2. He writes, "*The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.*". Back in verse 2 he said, "*You are my Lord, I have no good apart from you*", and here he underscores that. David knows that nothing can satisfy his soul but the sweetness of God Himself. You might have read about David's life. You'll know that he's certainly made some

errors along the way and has chosen other things over God at times in his life. So either this Psalm was written the day before David died or (more likely) it points to the fact that because we have all fallen and there is none good among us, that it is our regenerated hearts; our new affections towards Christ that testify to the same truth.

And I think that this also speaks of our future, final satisfaction in Christ when we are glorified in His presence in Heaven. He **is** our greatest good. David uses the wording “you hold my lot”. God holds David in the hollow of His hand. And the same goes for us who are in Christ. Consider that even at this very moment, our Lord Jesus, is making intercession on our behalf before the Father. THANK GOD that our salvation does NOT depend on our ability to hold on to **Him**; it depends on His ability to hold on to **US**. God’s word is FULL of promises that He will preserve and keep us.

### **Verse 6:**

David continues rejoicing when he writes, “*The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.*”. The wording there of “*the lines have fallen for me in pleasant places*” is not entirely understood. It certainly could mean that it speaks of borders or boundaries (as in “land”). But it’s likely that the wording has less to do with the literal and more to do with the figurative and here’s why. The word used there for “*pleasant places*” is from the Hebrew word for “pleasures”. And this very same word is used later, in Verse 11 in fact, to describe the pleasures to be found at the right hand of God forevermore. That God IS his inheritance. God IS his ultimate treasure. And the same goes for us. But let us never forget that because God is Sovereign, He ordains all things for His glorious purposes and for our benefit. It's been said so many times before from this pulpit: don't pray so much to get **out** of a trial; rather, pray that we **get everything out** of a trial. That we learn everything we are to know. To see everything that God has intended we see. And through it all, remembering that He is truly

our inheritance. To see the heritage that we share in Him for eternity. The heritage we share with other believers in the greater body of Christ. The witness of the Holy Spirit in us, doing a work of sanctification. Causing us to become more and more like Him. What an inheritance we have whereby we are recipients of God's favor. A favor that is straight from the hand of our Father in heaven, in the blood of Christ, by way of the Holy Spirit, through His Word.

Consider how unimaginably fortunate we are that we live in this country. We now live at the apex of human achievement (in terms of information, medicine, tech, etc. And so often we pursue things which will never satisfy us. The contrast between a 1st Century Christian and a Christian in 2021 is astonishing.

**Verse 7:**

David writes "*I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.*".

So God isn't just a refuge by way of His providence. Here David suggests that God is his refuge by way of instruction, by way of counsel. He is certainly the provider of our refuge spiritually, but He is also our refuge by way of His instruction on how to find safety in Him. He instructs us to walk in the way of Life and not death. His word is a guidepost to us in the darkness. And that leads us to our refuge **IN** Him.

God is our treasure in matters of His wise counsel, His wise instruction, His words of Life, and His many encouragements to us in the dark. His counsel is always a salve to our hungry souls. His guidance and counsel is always good and can always be trusted because they lead us to refuge in Him. God is sovereign and He doesn't "need" any of us to accomplish His will. In other words, He can do whatever He wills without our permission. Yet God has voluntarily chosen to use us as a means for exercising His power. Sometimes, through encouragement we have received, through the Word He has given us, the counsel He gives us, we can then allow that to

manifest in our daily walk in the lives of those around us. And in so doing, effectively we become an instrument of His power.

### **Verse 8-10:**

Coming now to Verse 8 and we see David effectively saying, "Because of the truth of God that I just declared in the previous 7 verses, I will use that to stand firm for what's to come". Verse 8 David writes, "*I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.*". David declares that he will stand firm because of Who God is. "I am now confident that I will be preserved..." he says. He moves from fear to certainty. By standing on what he knew to be true about God, he shaped his petition into a declarative prayer of strength and NOW no longer **asks** God to preserve him - he now says God **WILL** preserve him. BECAUSE of these things, David won't be moved. He won't be shaken. Having a sense of the presence of God in our lives AND standing upon what we know to be true about Him (as He has revealed Himself in His word to us of course) provides us our best support. We have the same confidence - we too, right along with David can say, "I will not be moved. I will not be shaken. I will be preserved".

### **Verse 9 & 10:**

Finally in Verse 9, we come to these words, "*Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.*". With God's preserving power now at hand, we can see why David's whole being rejoices. He then says something interesting: "*...my flesh also dwells secure*". Could it be that David feared for his life? When you take that with the following verse (verse 10) which reads, "*For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.*", it's entirely possible. If so, that means that the joy of Verse 9 is based on the

confidence in Verse 8. David is certain that all that God has been for him (his refuge, his treasure, etc) will be those things for him FOREVER. Death doesn't negate these truths that David came to know. Death is not the end of our relationship with God - on the contrary, God is the God of the living, not the dead.

David finishes Psalm 16 in Verse 11 with these words, "*You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*". Fullness of joy in perpetuity. That the way of life through death that God shows us this: "in your presence there is FULLNESS of joy; pleasures FOREVERMORE". Fullness. Forever. Not even death will keep us from the fullness of joy in the presence of our Lord, the beautiful eternal pleasures at His right hand.