

Psalms

Week 4: Resurrection Hope and Confidence in God -- Psalm 16

Imagine standing in a crowd in Jerusalem on the morning the church was born. The streets are packed for the feast, the air is electric, and a fisherman named Peter, who weeks earlier had been hiding in fear, stands up and preaches the first Christian sermon in history. To prove that Jesus had risen from the dead, he does not appeal to a private vision or a clever argument. He reaches back a thousand years and quotes a song of David: "You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption." David died and was buried, Peter says; his tomb is right over there. But David was a prophet, and he was singing about Someone else, Someone whose body the grave could not keep. Three thousand people believed that day. Psalm 16 was the text.

That is the kind of psalm we open this week. On the surface it is a quiet song of contentment, the prayer of a man who has found his deepest satisfaction in God. "The Lord is my chosen portion," David sings. "The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places." He is like a person who has stopped chasing and finally come home, who can say with a settled heart that he has everything he needs because he has God. There is a peace in this psalm that most of us are starving for.

But underneath the contentment runs something even deeper, a confidence that not even death can interrupt the believer's fellowship with God. "My flesh also dwells secure," David sings, "for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol." David could say this only in hope; he did die, and his body did decay. But the Holy Spirit was carrying his words toward a day when they would come true in the fullest sense, in a tomb outside Jerusalem that stood empty on the third day. What David glimpsed from a distance, Jesus accomplished in fact.

So this is our great resurrection week. We will see why the empty tomb is the unshakable ground of the Christian's hope, why Jesus is alive and reigning at the Father's right hand right now, and how a life anchored in the risen Christ can find the kind of contentment David describes, secure in life, secure in death, secure forever. Read Psalm 16 slowly, and let it lift your eyes to the One who walked out of the grave so that you could follow Him through it.

Group Discussion: David sings, "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken" (v. 8), and finds in God a contentment the world cannot give. Our culture offers countless other things to set before us as the source of security and satisfaction. What are people most tempted to make their "portion," and why do those things always leave us shakable in the end?

Personal Reflection: David says to the Lord, "I have no good apart from you" (v. 2), and calls God his "chosen portion" (v. 5). Be honest about your own heart. If you finished the sentence "I

have no good apart from ____," what would you most be tempted to put in the blank? What would actually change if God truly became your chosen portion?

Read Psalm 16

Study Questions

1. David prays, "Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you'" (vv. 1–2). What does it mean to take refuge in God and to say we have no good apart from Him, and how is this different from merely believing God exists or adding Him to a life that is already full of other securities?
2. David delights in "the saints in the land... the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight" (v. 3), and turns away from those who run after other gods (v. 4). Who are the people most shaping your loves and choices right now? Are they drawing you toward God as your portion or away from Him?
3. David sings, "The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places" (vv. 5–6). The language comes from the way Israel divided up the promised land, yet the Levites were given no land because "the Lord is their inheritance." What does it mean that God Himself, rather than His gifts, is the believer's true inheritance, and how does that reshape what we count as a good life?
4. David says the Lord "gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me" (v. 7), letting God shape even his private thoughts. What voices are actually counseling you in the night, when you lie awake? What would it look like to let God's word, rather than your fears, do the instructing?
5. David declares, "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken" (v. 8). What is the practice of setting the Lord always before us, and why does a life ordered around the constant awareness of God's presence become stable in a way that other lives are not?
6. David says, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure" (v. 9), a settled joy that reaches all the way down. Where in your life are you living shaken, anxious, and insecure, rather than secure in God? What is one fear you most need to bring under the truth that the Lord is at your right hand?
7. David sings, "For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption" (v. 10). Yet David did die and his body did decay. In what sense could David sing these words in hope, and why does the New Testament insist that they find their true and full meaning in someone greater than David?
8. David faces the future, even death, without panic, because his confidence rests in God. How does the way you think about your own death, or the deaths of those you love, reveal what you are really resting in? How might the resurrection of Jesus begin to change the way you face it?
9. At Pentecost Peter quoted verse 10 and declared that David "foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see

corruption. This Jesus God raised up... Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God” (Acts 2:31–33). How does Psalm 16 ground the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and what does it mean that the risen Christ is reigning now at the Father’s right hand rather than waiting to begin His reign in the future?

10. The psalm ends, “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (v. 11). Look back across the whole psalm. Name one specific way you sense Jesus, the risen and reigning One, forming you through it. What is the single truth from Psalm 16 that you most need to carry into this week?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Acts 2:22–36, Peter preaching the resurrection from this very psalm; 1 Corinthians 15:20–26, Christ the firstfruits and the reign that has already begun; Colossians 3:1–4, our life hidden with Christ who is seated above; Romans 6:3–11, buried and raised with Christ in baptism to walk in newness of life; Daniel 2:44, the kingdom that God set up to stand forever.