

Trust The Plan

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[0 : 00] We are approaching Easter, and I know we've been in the book of Psalms for several weeks now. And you may be thinking, well, it's Easter, so obviously we're going to be out of Psalms and looking more in the Gospels at the Easter story.

No, we're still in Psalms. But there's a reason for that. And the reason for that is God's Word all fits together. Do we understand that? All of it.

Old Testament, from Genesis all the way through Revelation, it all fits together. And so many things, even in the Old Testament, thousands of years before Christ, those things point towards Christ's coming.

God knew that plan even all the way back then. So even in the book of Psalms, as David writes, there's a whole lot of things that point us towards Easter, point us to what Christ would do in our lives.

So this morning we're going to be in Psalms chapter 16. So I would encourage you to turn there.

And again, Psalms is all about what? We've talked about this for a few weeks now.

[0 : 58] What is the book of Psalms all about? Praise. It is about praising God. And really at the heart of it, what is, and there's not a debate about this, there's not a question, what is the greatest thing we have to praise God for?

That's not a trick question. It shouldn't take that long to answer. What is the greatest thing we have to praise God for? Salvation. I know there's a lot of things that enter our minds.

It may be family. It may be children. It may be a home. It may be shelter. All those things are great. But at the heart of it, the greatest thing that we have to praise God for is the fact that He sent His Son.

Because that is how we have everlasting life. Psalms chapter 16. And I'm going to ask if you found that, if you're able, if you would stand as we read God's Word this morning. Psalms chapter 16, beginning in the first verse.

And this is what God's Word shares. Preserve me, O God, for in You do I put my trust. O my soul, You have said to the Lord, You are my Lord.

[2 : 06] My goodness extends not to You, but to the saints that are in the earth and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another God.

Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer nor take up their name into my lips. The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup. You maintain my lot.

The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places. Yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel. My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

I have set the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Therefore, my heart is glad and my glory rejoices. My flesh also shall rest in hope.

For You will not leave my soul in hell. Neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life. In Your presence is fullness of joy.

[3 : 06] At Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Let's pray together. Lord God, thank You again for this morning. I thank You for each one that's gathered in this place, from the youngest child to the oldest one that's here.

We just thank You for each one. And we thank You for Your presence here among us. And I pray, Lord, that You would speak to us through Your Word this morning. I know that You have a message for each one of us.

I pray that we would just have ears that are ready to hear it. And even more than hear it, that we have hearts that are ready to accept it and live it out. So speak to us this morning, Lord, and thank You for Your Word. In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen. Amen. You can be seated this morning. Again, the book of Psalms has so much to say about Easter. And this is one of the Psalms that was written by David.

Again, he didn't write all of them, but he wrote the majority of them. And this is one of them. And we're not going to look at this Psalm necessarily in order, verses 1 through, I guess there's 11 verses total.

[4 : 04] But we're going to kind of start in verse 11. So we're going to start at the end. And I want you to look at what it shares in verse 11. You will show me the path of life.

We all have something in common there. Do you realize that? We're all on a path. Do you realize that? Whether you want to admit it or not, every one of us is walking a path in our lives.

Are all of our paths the same? No. No. Do they crisscross? Yeah. Do they sometimes run next to each other for a while in life? Yes. But guess what?

We are all on an individual path. And that is true for everyone that has ever walked on this planet. There is a path that we follow. And, you know, as we think about Jesus, as we think about the days leading up to His death on the cross and His resurrection, you know, you walk through Jesus' life, the path that leads to Easter, the path that He took that led to the cross, the path that He took that led to the grave, the path that He took that led to the stone being rolled away, that was a path that He had to walk on.

And as we go through a path in life, the question is, whose path are we on? Because we have a choice, don't we? We can be on the path that God wants us to be on, or what's the alternative to that?

[5 : 29] Not a trick question. What's the alternative to that? You have a choice. You know that, right? You don't have to follow God's path for your life. What's the alternative?

Follow your own. Come up with a conclusion that I think I know better. I'm going to set out on my own way, and I am going to make my own path. Or sometimes we don't even intentionally think that, but we just kind of somehow end up on the wrong path and realize it's not going the direction that we want it to go.

How many of you have ever been hiking, on hiking trails, that are not always well marked? Have you ever ended up on the wrong path?

One of the things that I enjoy doing, I'm one of the crazy people that enjoys running sometimes, so when we go on vacation, I'll try to find these paths through the woods and just run down them. That has not always worked out well, because when you're running, you don't always pay real attention to the path that you're on.

And I know there are times when I've been running, and all of a sudden I'm on a path, and I'm like, I don't know where I'm at. Nor do I know how to get back to where I need to be. The path that we're on is vital. It is important to understand whether you are on the right path.

[6 : 43] The thing is, when it comes to the path that God wants you to be on, He gives us a guide that we can always look to. I mean, we have the Bible to say, is my life lining up with what God wants me to be doing?

This is the route to make sure we're on the right path. But here's the other thing. Even if we're on the right path, does that mean that the path is always smooth? Does that mean that the path doesn't ever have rocks, or roots, or tree trunks, or obstacles in it?

You can be on the right path, and it can be full of obstacles. Do we understand that? Being on God's path does not mean being on the easy path. We sometimes think those two things should go together.

If we're on God's path, things should be easy, right? Isn't that the way it should work out? God should bless us so our lives should just be easy. Folks, that is not the case. If you think that, or someone has told you that, they are not being truthful and honest with you.

Following God's will and being on His path will sometimes be a very difficult path to follow. As we look at Jesus and leading up to Easter and the path that He was on, do you believe that Jesus was on a path?

[7 : 55] Yes. How many times in the Gospels do you read about Jesus going off into the wilderness and spending time alone in what? In prayer. With who? With God.

With His Father. Jesus, so many times when He was here, He said, I came to do the will of my Father. Not my own will.

Not follow my own path. He said, I came to do my Father's will to follow His path for my life. And guess what? God's path that He had for His Son, Jesus Christ, His path led Him into Jerusalem. That's what we celebrate this morning on Palm Sunday when Jesus came into Jerusalem just days before His death on the cross. The path led Him into Jerusalem.

This was a time in the path where, guess what? The path seemed smooth. Because as He came into Jerusalem, just like the kids were doing, what was the reaction to that? Yeah, people were praising God.

[8 : 58] Shouting Hosanna. Waving palm branches. Throwing their robes in front of Him as He rode in on the foal of a donkey. He came in and people were celebrating that. Would you call that a good path to be on?

Yes. There is excitement there. What do you think the disciples were thinking and feeling at that point in time? Yeah, I think they were thinking, this is great. This is wonderful.

Everything is going as it should be going. We are certainly on the right path. I think the disciples were as excited as anybody else. And I think they thought, wow, things are finally coming together. This is just the way things are supposed to be. But that same path that Jesus was on, the path that His Father had for Him, very shortly after He entered into Jerusalem, do you know what it also led Him to?

That path led Him to confrontation. Is confronting people a fun thing? I shouldn't ask that. Some people enjoy confrontation. I'm sure it's none of you.

[9 : 57] But it didn't take Jesus very long after He entered into Jerusalem to have some confrontation with the religious leaders.

He went to the temple, and you know what the first thing it says that Jesus did? He got into Jerusalem. He went to the temple. What's the first thing He did? Yeah. He turned over all the tables and the money changers.

It says He made a whip or a scourge, and He drove them out of the temple. Folks, that is called confrontation. And the disciples go from watching this path that Jesus is on and watching people praising God, and they're thinking, this path is now smooth.

It's the way it's supposed to be. And next thing they know, they're watching Jesus drive people out of the temple with a whip and confronting the religious leaders. What do you think the disciples felt at that point in time?

I'm guessing they looked at it and thought, well, this path has taken a turn. I'm not sure they expected that. But that is where the path that Jesus was on led Him.

[11 : 00] It's where it was supposed to lead Him. Is confrontation easy? Might the path that God has you on, could it lead to confrontation? Yeah, sure.

It sometimes leads to things that aren't easy. It led Him to Jerusalem in celebration, but then it led Him to confrontation. Shortly after that, you know what it led Him to? Betrayal.

Jesus' path led Him to betrayal. What does it mean to be betrayed? What does that mean? Someone go against you. That's a part of it.

There's even a little more than that. Who can betray you? Think about that for a minute. Can an enemy betray you? Not really.

They're working against you to start, right? The only people that can betray you is someone that you've put some trust in to begin with. That's who can betray you.

[11 : 58] Jesus had called His 12 disciples, of which Judas was one. He was betrayed by one of those 12 disciples. The path that Jesus was on led Him to betrayal by Judas.

We know how the story unfolds. But again, as the disciples were watching Jesus on this path, it led Him to His betrayal and His arrest in the garden. Do you think they saw the path leading there?

They had just seen Jesus ride into Jerusalem and crowds were shouting and waving and praising God. And now they're watching the one that they had followed being betrayed by one of their own and being arrested.

What do you think they thought about that turn in the road? I think they looked at that and thought, wow, I'm not sure where this is going. Do you think they liked where it was going?

I mean, obviously Peter didn't. What did he do? What did Peter do when Jesus was betrayed and arrested in the garden? Took out His sword.

[13 : 06] Cut off the ear of one of the soldiers who was arresting Jesus. Then Jesus put the ear back on and healed it. Does that indicate that Peter liked where this plan was going? No. He

wanted to do something about it.

He wanted to get this path back where he thought it was supposed to be. But guess what? The path was already where it was supposed to be. Jesus was supposed to be betrayed. He was supposed to be arrested.

That was part of God's plan. Was it a part the disciples understood? Nope. Was it just as much a part of the plan that God had? Yes. And Jesus continued on that path.

After His betrayal and after His arrest, what was He? He was tried in court. Would any of you look forward to that?

Any of you think, oh boy, I hope somebody tries me this week. That'll be so much fun. Again, not a place that we would want to be. But that's where Jesus' path led. It led Him to the trial.

[14:05] And then, guess what it led Him to after that? Pain. Mockery. Mockery. Being spit on. All these things were where Jesus' path led Him.

And then after that, we know it led Him to death. That's where God's plan led Jesus. All through that, again, look at it from the disciples' perspective.

What do you think they thought about that path that God had for His Son? Very confused? I think that's probably very accurate. I don't think they understood this path that Jesus was on.

I don't think they probably liked this path that Jesus was on. I don't think they probably agreed with this path that Jesus was on. I think they thought it should end up differently. That it should unfold differently.

And here's the reality. How many times in our life do we think that about the path that we're on?

That we don't like the places it takes us. That we don't like the bumps in the road that we have to go through. That we don't like some of the news that we get.

[15:07] We don't like some of the results that we get. We don't like some of the hurdles and heartaches and pain and struggle that we have. Isn't that the truth in our lives? Let's be honest with each other this morning.

Do we always like the things that life brings us? But here's the thing. If you are a believer, if you are putting your trust and faith in God and following Him, guess what?

God's path is always best. Because even though His path led Jesus to betrayal, to a trial, to pain, to death on the cross, do you know where His path finally led Him?

Look in verse 11 again. You will show me the path. That's the path we've been talking about. But what it says right after that, the path of, what's this word right here?

Life. That's where Jesus' path led in the end to life, didn't it? He was put in a grave, but He rose from the grave.

[16:08] That's the resurrection that we celebrate. His path led to life for who? For Him, certainly, but who else? For us. For us.

For anybody that puts their trust and faith in Him. Guess what? God's plan always leads to life when we follow it. Do we understand that? Of all the paths that we may choose to follow, if we follow God's path and God's plan, folks, it leads to life.

It leads somewhere good. I've been on a lot of paths and there are times when we have taken trails and gone hiking. When you get to the end, have you ever been on a long hike? You get to the end and it's disappointing.

I remember hikes that we've been on to supposedly a great waterfall. And you hike and you go miles and you're sweating and there's bugs and all these other things and you get to the end of the path and there's this little trickle of water coming over.

And you're like, that's it? I did all this for that? But folks, when we follow God's path, that will never happen. The end result is always worth it.

[17:14] The life and the promises that He gives us are greater than what we will imagine. They will never be less. That is the path of life that it's talking about and the path that God has for us.

But there's something we must do. And that's in verse 1. We started out with the last verse. Now we're jumping back up to the first verse again. Preserve me, O God, for in You do I put my trust. In You do I put my trust. It requires us placing our trust in Jesus Christ. Placing our trust in God and the plan that He has for us.

And I do not know where that plan and that path will take you. I don't know the things that you are going to have to deal with while you're on that path. I do not pretend to know them. I don't even know my own path what it's going to hold for me.

We don't know the path but we know the destination. And folks, that is the most important part of it. Knowing what the destination is. All those hurdles and everything else in between, I don't know what's going to be there.

[18 : 22] But it will be like the paths that we've been on hiking where at the end there is a majestic waterfall and you think, wow, that was worth every bit of sweat getting here. That is what it's going to be like. That's why it says in the Bible, I reckon the sufferings of this present age are nothing compared to the glory that will be revealed in us.

That means what is at the end will always be worth it. The path that we're on, the struggles we may face will always be worth it if we're following God.

That does not mean, however, that we will always understand it. or that we will always like it. In verse 5, I want you to look at verse 5.

It says, the Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup. You maintain my lot. It says, the Lord is the portion of our inheritance and our cup. The cup, it's talking about what He has for us, the plan that He has for us, what is in store for us.

And folks, the cup that He has for us is not always easy. Even Jesus, and I think of this cup that it's talking about here, when Jesus was in the garden praying, what did He pray?

[19 : 32] What did He ask His Father for? Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. What did He mean by that? He said, if there's another way, let's do it that way.

He knew the pain and suffering that was waiting and He said, if it's possible, I don't want this cup. I want a different one. I don't want this path. Give me one that's a little different than that. But He said after that, but nevertheless, not my will, but yours.

We will not always understand the path and we will not always like the path. But if it is God's path, it will be worth it.

And as we think about Psalms and the things that Christ experienced and the way that it points us to Easter, turn just a few pages to Psalms chapter 22 because this is part of the path that God has had for His Son.

When Jesus was on the cross, whose sin did He take on? All of ours. Do you know how much sin that would be? Okay, here. Everybody look up here for a minute.

[20 : 39] I know our time's getting... Look up here. Not that you're judging anybody in this room, but how much sin do you think has been represented in this room? If you take all of our lives, all of the sins that we've committed up to this point, how much sin is represented in this room right now?

So we're going to go around and everybody say all the sins that they... No, I'm not going to do that. How many of you would want to do that? Yeah. I don't think any of us are going to sign up for that. But think just this room right now, how much sin is represented in this place if you take all the sins that we've committed in our lives.

That's just one room in Arthur in the middle of nowhere. What about the sin of the whole planet right now? And not just right now, but throughout time. Folks, that is a lot of sin.

And who took on all that sin? Jesus. Jesus. And that's why in Psalms 22, Jesus refers back to this verse. And this verse points forward to Jesus when He was on the cross.

Because what were some of His last words that Jesus spoke? Psalms 22, verse 1, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Does that sound familiar? Folks, this was written a couple thousand years before Jesus died on the cross.

[21 : 53] This is pointing forward to the cross and the cross is pointing back to this. They're tied together. And Jesus said, Why have you forsaken me? Because He had all that sin of all time on His shoulders.

And guess what? God turned away from that sin. That was the price that Christ paid. That was the cup that His Father had for Him that He didn't necessarily want, but He was willing to take because He knew the end result.

Folks, we have a choice whether to be on the path that God wants us on. I want you to look back in Psalm 16.

Don't tune out yet because I want you to look at verse 9. Because this is what Christ had and this is what we have when we follow His path.

Verse 9. Therefore, my heart is glad and my glory rejoices and my flesh also shall rest in what? Hope. That's a wonderful word, isn't it?

[23 : 01] Hope. Folks, if we follow the path that God has for us, it will lead to hope. It says, My heart will rejoice not just in our circumstances that we go through.

We may not rejoice in them, but we'll rejoice in what we get in the end. The hope that God has for us. Folks, this morning, Jesus was on a path.

That path took Him through some very difficult things. If you follow God, He has a path for you too that may take you through some very difficult things, but that path that Christ was on led to life.

If you're on the path that God has for you, you know what it's going to lead to? Life. Not just life here, but everlasting life in heaven with our Father.

Don't always expect to understand the path. The disciples didn't. If they didn't, guess what? We won't either. But trust the path.

[24 : 02] Trust that God knows where it leads and trust that God will get you through. Let's bow our heads as we close in prayer. Lord God, we thank You again for Your presence in this place and we thank You for Your Word this morning.

And I pray, Lord, that You would remind us that this path that Your Son was on that You had for Him was not an easy path, but it was one that in the end led to life. It is one that we can rejoice about even in the midst of the difficulty that we see Christ go through because we know the end result.

But Lord, remind us that the same is true for our lives. When we follow Your path, what You have set out for us, when we place our trust in You and in Your Son, Jesus Christ, that we are on a path that will lead to life, it may take us through difficulty, we may have challenges.

Lord, in fact, it's probably certain that we'll have challenges. But You will give us the strength that we need to get through and at the end, there is life and hope waiting for us. I pray, Lord, that we would never forget that, but we would hold on to that.

And we would know that You have life and hope always ahead of us in our future. Thank You for that promise, Lord. And Lord, if there's anyone this morning that is in this place that has never given their heart to Jesus Christ, I pray that they would do that today.

[25 : 22] That they would acknowledge that they have sinned, that they fall short, that they would believe that Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again for their sin. That they would ask You to forgive that sin and come into their heart and they would have a desire to live for You.

Lord, if there's anyone in here that has never done that, I pray that they would do that this morning. But Lord, for each one of us, I pray that You'd help us to remember to stay on Your path to put our trust in You no matter where that path may lead.

We just ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ and all God's family said, Amen.