

# Psalm 16

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good evening everyone and thank you. Thank you for the invitation to come and to share with you. Thank you for the warmth of your welcome. Thank you for picking the passage that I have to preach on. I feel you've done some of the work for me this evening and I appreciate that very much. Thank you for picking a psalm. I love the psalms. I presume that's because you're working through a series on the psalms which is a great thing to do. I know it's a great thing to do because we're doing it. So it must be. We're thoroughly enjoying that. We started our series on the psalms by reminding ourselves of how much Christians like to fight about books. We went all the way back to 1637 and Jenny Geddes, who you might have heard of, as the minister began to read from the Book of Common Order, she threw her stool right at the minister's head, apparently. And you can trace that line all the way through church history up to the modern day where we still love to fight about books, whether it's CH3 or Believers. That's the two books that we use at the Ebenezer in Airdrie. I pass my love and best regards to you from the Ebenezer. Or whether it's CH3 or CH4 in the

Scotland, whether it's Redemption, all manner of books we like to use and we like to debate about which one is the best if we need any at all in this day and age. But surely all believers, all true believers can agree that the book of Psalms, this God-breathed book of praise and prayer, is one for which we should be truly thankful. A gift from God to his people.

And the psalm I've been asked to speak on this evening is Psalm 16. So if you have your Bible to hand, if you could turn with me to Psalm 16. We'll read the whole psalm together.

Psalm 16. I'm Mick Tam of David. Psalm 16.

The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips. Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup.

[ 3 : 2 9 ] You have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely I have a delightful inheritance.

I will praise the Lord who counsels me. Even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand. I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.

My body also will rest secure. Because you will not abandon me to the great. Nor will you let your holy ones see decay.

You have made known to me the path of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

[ 4 : 3 4 ] Amen. Sometimes when you read scripture, as you know, there's a particular verse or a particular phrase or a particular sentence that will just come alive to you as you read.

And as I read Psalm 16 through for the first time preparing to share with you, I read these words. Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.

I said to the Lord, you are my Lord. I thought, what a thing to say.

I said to the Lord, you are my Lord. Imagine you're walking through the streets of Wyshaw. And you see a very attractive, desirable person walking past.

And you tap them to stop them and you say to them, you're mine. How do you think that would go down? It might not go down so well.

[ 5 : 49 ] I could lose a few teeth. Maybe you're more attractive and desirable than I am. But I wouldn't just turn to someone very attractive, very desirable and say you're mine.

So what right do we have to take those words of David to our lips this evening? I said to the Lord, you are my Lord.

Maybe we might think to ourselves, well, I can see how David could say that. David's this great man of God, isn't he? David's this great man of God. When the people of God had this great enemy that was standing there day after day, issuing his invitation to come out, mocking God's people and therefore mocking God himself.

Who was the man, who stepped out, who stood up, who brought Goliath down.

It was David. And the people of God needed a king. Who took the throne? It was David.

[ 6 : 59 ] Who was the one person in Scripture said to be a man after God's own heart? It was David.

So maybe you might think, well, he's a great man of God. So I can see how he might say to the Lord, I said to the Lord, you are my God. But you might think I'm not a great man of God.

I'm not a great woman of God. What right do I have to take these words to my lips?

Well, Psalm 16 was written by David, but it was quoted by Peter. This man who had abandoned his Lord under the slightest pressure.

So we've seen on our television screens recently a presidential impeachment, which Donald Trump managed to get through.

[ 8 : 05 ] The last presidential impeachment trial was Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton, when he was making his case to say that he had no improper relationship with Monica Lewinsky, stared into the lens of the camera at one point and assured those who were watching that he did not have any inappropriate relations with that woman.

And Monica Lewinsky later said that throughout the whole ordeal, the thing that had hurt her most, the thing that had cut most deeply, was the fact that he had used that phrase, that woman.

He hadn't even used her name, she said. And you'll remember, of course, how Peter denied Jesus.

Not just that he denied Jesus three times, but that he called down curses and said, I don't even know the man.

He denied Jesus in a cruel and in a cowardly fashion. And yet this same man is the man we meet in Acts chapter 2.

[ 9 : 35 ] Now he has been changed. He has been transformed. He has been filled by the Holy Spirit. He is empowered. He is emboldened.

He is proclaiming Christ to the crowd. And he says to them in Acts 2 from verse 22, Men of Israel, listen to this.

Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge. And you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

All of the cowardice has gone now. The courage it would have taken to stand before a crowd of Jewish men and to say to them, God has sent his anointed one, his chosen one.

[ 10 : 45 ] And you, with the help of wicked men, crucified, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. What does Peter mean?

I mean, surely it wouldn't have taken a whole crowd of people to hammer in the nails to Jesus' hands and his feet. Actually, this was a right that Rome reserved for itself.

So none of the Jews would have been involved in the act of hammering in those nails. What does Peter mean when he says that they, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross?

Well, maybe some of the people in Peter's crowd had been in that other crowd shouting, crucify him. Possibly. But I don't think that's what Peter means.

All of the people to whom Peter preached had sinned. And it was their sin that saw the Lord Jesus Christ lay down his life on the cross.

[ 12 : 07 ] And so Peter's accusation echoes down through the generations, doesn't it? All the way to us here in Bells Hill today.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? You'll know that old song, I'm sure. And we answer, yes, I was there.

Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.

It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished.

Jesus died for our guilt. Jesus died for our guilt. For our sin. For our shame. For our rebellion against the rightness of the rule and the reign of God in our lives.

[ 13 : 18 ] He died for us on the cross. He took our place. But that's not the end of the story. So when we gather together as believers in Christ Jesus on the Lord's Day, we don't gather together to commemorate the life of a good man who lived and died a long time ago.

We gather together to celebrate the life of the Lord Jesus Christ who died and lived and is alive today and will come again for his people.

And that's what Peter is doing here as he preaches. He points us to the risen Christ, to the victorious Christ Jesus. That's what the Spirit does, isn't it?

He empowers us. He emboldens us. That's true. But he also points us to Jesus. So we go back into this sermon from Acts 2.

Peter says, But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

[ 14 : 27 ] And David said about him, and here's our quote. Got there eventually. Here's our quote from Psalm 16. I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. My body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

You have made known to me the paths of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence. That's the end of the quote from Psalm 16. Peter says, Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David, who incidentally wasn't perfect, as we know, the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him an oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

God has raised this Jesus to life. Jesus has conquered even the grave itself, and he invites those who have sinned, no matter who we are, where we are from, what we've done, to come to him, and to trust in him, to follow him where he leads, and to share in his glorious victory over sin and death.

[ 16 : 15 ] And if we have done that, if we are doing that, then we have every right to take the wonderful words of Psalm 16 and all these other Psalms to our lips, all the promises contained within, not because of our goodness, but because of the goodness and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How great is his grace and his mercy that we can take these words penned by David, attributed to Jesus, as our very own, all because Jesus has taken our sin and given us, gifted us, his righteousness and all of the blessings that come with it.

We are, if we are trusting in Jesus, in Christ this evening. Where is Christ? He is at the right hand of God the Father.

So who is God to us from Psalm 16? Firstly, he is our refuge. Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.

Verse 1, I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand. I will not be shaken. Verse 8. We are so apt to forget how vulnerable, how fragile we and the lives that we build actually are.

[ 17 : 48 ] And then every now and then something comes along to remind us and to turn us back to God.

We are forced to think about where to go to find shelter, to find security, to find a solid rock on which to stand. I am sure you, like me, have been watching your television screens, watching these poor people in these enormous cities in China facing this new and invisible enemy, desperately seeking a safe place, a place of refuge.

Are they safe, locked behind the doors and windows of their homes? Are they safe behind these wee paper thin face masks that they are all wearing?

No one seems to know. Maybe it is health issues a lot closer to home. Palm Sunday 2011 for me, everything seemed very normal.

I was young. I thought I was healthy and strong and fit, good for another 50 or 60 years anyway and all of a sudden I'm on the floor in an ambulance.

[ 19 : 19 ] I'm in a hospital. I'm in a big machine. I'm in a wee ward and I'm being told that nothing will ever be the same again.

And then you're forced to think, well where do I find my refuge? Where do I find my shelter? Where do I find my security? Maybe for you it's something else, some other circumstance that you are facing, some other battle that you are fighting.

Maybe it's just the weather which is quieting down now which is unfortunate. I was in bed not last night but the night before. I'm sure it was glorious here in Bells Hill but it was stormy and air dry and I could hear the gale force winds outside battering against a window and I found myself thinking I hope that window holds tonight.

And it did, you'll be glad to hear. But it won't hold forever. It won't hold forever. And so many of the things that we find ourselves trusting in are like that.

They hold for a wee while but they won't hold forever. We shouldn't build our lives upon. Others might find refuge from the dangers and from the struggles of this world in money or in entertainment or in TV or in football or in drugs or in alcohol or in any number of things.

[ 20 : 49 ] Some of them not sinful in and of themselves but we ought to be like David. We ought to say I look to you Lord. We ought to say I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand.

I will not be shaken. Our youngest daughter is five years old Grace and she's a bit like the toys that we sometimes buy for her.

children's toys if they're battery powered tend to have a wee switch which is two modes. So there's a try me mode or a demo mode which when you press the button it plays through a wee tune once maybe a wee light's gone and all that kind of stuff but not enough times to run the batteries down.

Really cheap batteries. then you buy the toy you get it home you change the batteries for more expensive ones and you switch the switch and your reward for doing all that is that it doesn't just play it through once it plays it through again and again and again and again and on it goes and that's what grace is like she doesn't have a switch that I've found anyway but she's got two modes she's either fully on you can't control her she's running about crazy all over the place too much energy not enough things to spend it on or she's in her other mode where she's really shy and sheepish and when she's in that mode she cooies in either to her dad or more often to her mum because when she's with one of her parents she knows that she's safe and that's what the

Christian life in many ways ought to be like we ought to continually be drawing near to God living in his will trusting in him hungering for his presence knowing that it is there that we are safe from the storms or even in the storms of life our heavenly father will stand strong he's the one who loves with a perfect love who knows with a perfect knowledge who acts in perfect strength and so we rejoice in declaring him to be our rock and our refuge our shelter and our shield secondly he is our lord i said to the lord you'll notice that lord there the first lord is all capitalized which means it's the name for god yahweh i am so this isn't a god that david's just made up i believe there's a god up there somewhere in the sky i said to the god that's not what david is saying at all nor is it a god he's made because this god is palatable to him a god who always happens to agree with david or palatable to the people around him that's not at all what david is this is the god who has revealed himself to abraham isaac and jacob this is the god of the law and the prophets i said to the lord you are my lord here is king david bowing before a higher throne a greater king as all kings will one day that day do and we are no better of course than him our old sinful nature wants to be lord wants to be god but we must say with david i said to the lord you are my lord we must be those in this world who say that we are not in charge of our own lives there is a counter cultural message for the society in which we live no one can tell me how to live my own life well actually we are those who say there is one who can tell us how to live our own lives i have said to the lord you are my lord and i will bow before you i will trust that your ways and your wisdom is higher than my way and my wisdom and that's not a bad thing it's not a sad thing it's not a miserable life because our lord is the lord of love he's working for our good he is the god who desires his people to know the very joy of jesus and so it's a joy to know him as our lord which leads us into our third point he is our

[ 26 : 49 ] joy and our treasure i said to the lord you are my lord apart from you i have no good thing so here david acknowledges that every good thing he has comes ultimately from god himself many years later james would say every good and perfect gift is from above every good and perfect gift is from god's good and gracious hand what's the best thing that god gives us in love the very best gift what's that it's the gift of himself isn't it the gift of himself above all other gifts you have made known to me the path of life you will fill me with joy in your presence with eternal pleasures at your right hand there is joy at the right hand of god the father in the fullness of the presence of god there is joy we are to be found as i said a few moments ago in christ jesus we are secure in him we will spend eternity enjoying the presence of god we can taste it now by his spirit but we look forward to that day where we will hear our lord's voice saying well done good and faithful servant we look forward to that day where he will wipe every tear from our eyes and he will welcome us in to the glorious reality of the presence of god the fullness of the father's presence he is our highest joy our truest treasure and no matter what we are facing we look forward with eager expectation maybe some of us here this evening have good days behind us maybe some of us think that our best days are behind us maybe our body isn't quite as good as it used to be quite as strong quite as agile maybe our mind isn't quite as sharp as it once was and we think our best days are behind us well if we are believers in the lord jesus christ our best days are before us the best is yet to be we are a people of hope and for us in christ hope is a strong word a sure and certain word we have a hope that will not disappoint we look forward with expectation and with anticipation to that day when the lord comes for the people that he loves with such a profound and lasting love finally by way of conclusion he is our guide i will praise the lord who counsels me verse 7 you have made known to me verse 11 the path of life so he hasn't prepared all of these wonderful blessings for us without showing us the way to get them we receive them by grace through faith in jesus and we remain on that narrow road that leads to life by continuing to trust in jesus the lamb who was slain for the forgiveness of our sins as we remember in a short period of time who is

also our good and faithful shepherd as he leads us all the way home how thankful we should be that in christ jesus god is our refuge and shelter he is our loving lord he is our highest joy and truest treasure and as we journey home to god as we journey home to glory he is our faithful guide amen