

Psalm 16 - Refuge and Rest

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 June 2017

Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge. I said to the Lord, You are my Lord. Apart from you I have no good thing.

As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight. 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. You have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely I have 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 shall 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 grave. Nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

[1 : 03] 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. Let's pray.

Let's pray. You are my Lord.

Apart from you, I have no good thing. Father, our prayer this morning is that we all here would be able to say that apart from you, without you, we have no good thing.

So please bring us to that place where we are resting in you as our eternal refuge.

Teach us this morning by your Holy Spirit. Speak to us in such a way that we turn away from all our other places of refuge.

[2 : 30] And turn alone to you. Help us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, in 2014, Muhammad al-Hajj Ali escaped the terrors of Syria with his two sisters, brother and parents.

Muhammad fled to the city of London.

Being granted asylum, he settled down to begin a new life. Tragically, Muhammad was the first named victim of the Grenfell Tower fire disaster just the other week.

His friend commented, He survived the war in Syria, only to die in a tower block in London.

This is horrible after all he has been through, and a place of safety leads to death. Let those words sink in.

[3 : 48] This is horrible. After all he has been through, and a place of safety leads to death.

It makes us wonder, is there anywhere we can find true refuge? You see, we all look for safety and security. In fact, our whole lives are focused on trying to build or create a bubble or this place of protection around us.

We install security systems. We buy cars with the latest braking technology. We go on special diets and fitness regimes. We go to health and safety classes.

We strive to build a place of protection around our fragile lives. But the experience of life keeps reminding us that not one of us is safe in this world.

Accidents do happen. Sickness strikes. Wars rage on. Tower blocks do go on fire. And if we manage somehow to escape all of those things, we do eventually die.

[5 : 06] So is there anywhere we can find refuge? Well, Psalm 16 that we read together just now shows us how and where we can find refuge.

Look at verse 1. And don't forget the little heading. A miktam. I don't know what that is, nor does anybody else apparently, when you read the commentaries.

It could be a musical term. Who knows? It's a miktam. More importantly, it's David. King David. Who wrote it. And listen to what he said.

Verse 1. Keep me safe, O God. For in you I take refuge. This Psalm is showing us that refuge is not found in a place.

It's not a physical location. Not in a place, but in a person. In you, O God, I take refuge.

[6 : 13] The Psalms, if you were to go through them, speak often about God being a refuge. We started this this morning. Psalm 46.

God is our refuge and strength an ever-present help in trouble. Or what about Psalm 61, verse 3. You have been my refuge.

A strong tower against the foe. Or Psalm 91. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.

Refuge, shelter, protection is not found in a place, not found in a building like this, but in a person. God is our tower.

So let's see how we can know and experience God as a refuge. We're going to look at two big ideas from this Psalm.

[7 : 23] First, God is our refuge in life. Verses 2 to 8. If God is our refuge, what does that actually look like?

What is it that constructs the shelter in which we can say God is our refuge that we run to? Well, three things. God is all sufficient in life.

Look at verse 2. I said to the Lord, You are my Lord. You are my boss. You are my master. Apart from you, I have no good thing.

Or without you, I have no good thing. Nothing else satisfies and provides like God.

You see, we can own a house and a car. We can have a job. We can have good health. We can have friends. We can have family. We can have all of these things.

[8 : 26] And all of these things are good things that God has given to us for our enjoyment. And in some sense, they provide us and give to us refuge. These are the things we look to, the people we turn to when we need safety and security.

But all of these things, none of them, are guaranteed to last. They are all false refuge. In fact, they can all disappear in the passing of a day.

A letter of redundancy from our boss, unexpected news from our doctor, a freak accident. Everything can be taken just like that. You see, look at verse 4.

The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. Now, we might worship pagan gods or have little temples built up in our back garden, but we've all got our little gods, haven't we?

Gods that we look to for our refuge. It might be the security of a job. I've got my job. I've got a good income. I'm safe. Or I'm married.

[9 : 40] I've got a wonderful wife or husband. They're good to me. Or I've got great health. Never been to the doctor. Never had a night in hospital. But none of those things are guaranteed.

They are all a false refuge. Verse 4. For the sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. So if we look for our refuge in other things or look for our rest from other people, well, ultimately, he's saying, you will experience sorrow.

They'll not satisfy. They will not be the shelter that we need. You see, if we are to no true refuge, we are to run away from our false refuge and run to, literally repent, turn away from and turn to the all-sufficient God.

Verse 2. Who is my Lord? Apart from you I have no good thing. Now, part of God's sufficiency, part of God's provision and care is experienced through his people.

So look at verse 3. Remember, David is writing, he says, as for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.

[11 : 08] David was a king and he enjoyed all the privileges and the status of being a great king, access to so much. But look who he looks to. It's the saints, God's people, he delights in.

The people are his support and strength. He says it's good to be with them. And that's what God has done for us. He has provided a shelter for his people, the church, not just a physical building.

When we talk of church, we're thinking of God's people, people who trust in him. And through his church, through his people, God provides rest for the broken.

him. That doesn't mean to say church takes the place of God. No, the community of God's people is the means by which God brings refuge.

So if you've come here this morning and you're seeking that refuge and you're looking for that rest, well it could be coming from the person you're sitting beside, through the words that they speak to you.

[12 : 15] Now I know we let each other down, we're not perfect people. And I know that I have let down many of you. But amidst all our flaws and failures of saying the wrong thing and doing the wrong thing, God in his goodness works through people like you and me to speak words of encouragement as we point each other towards God who is our refuge.

God works through his people to bring refuge and care and comfort to one another. So can you say in verse two, you are my Lord, apart from you I have no good thing.

Can you say that? That God is sufficient, that God is enough and he is my refuge? refuge. Well, another way in which God provides refuge, not only is he sufficient in providing and giving to us, he is sovereign over our life.

To be sovereign means that he's in charge, he rules over everything. David, of course, the writer of this psalm, was a king. He ruled over a people, over a nation.

But he looks beyond himself to the ultimate king, the ultimate sovereign. Look at verse five. He says of God, Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup.

[13 : 51] Whatever I have, everything that we have, our health and strength, right down to our places of work, everything comes from God.

He supplies, he sustains, in fact, our whole life, is in the hands of God. Look at verse six. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

Surely I have a delightful inheritance. Let's think about that, the boundary lines falling in pleasant places. We've got to think back in here a little bit in our history to when God had rescued his people out of Egypt and brought them into the promised land.

Remember when God did that great act and he gave orders, he gave instructions about where each group, each tribe should live. Boundary markers were laid out and said, this family is to live here, this is your boundary, this family is to live here, this is your boundary.

And so as David looks back over the course of his life, he can see that God has ordered and directed his life, he is where he is because God has them there. And this God is sovereign over your life.

[15 : 11] He sets boundaries, boundary lines for your life. Have you ever thought about where you're living right now? You live here in Carragalline, okay, but the house where you live, the place where you work, the person you're married to if you're married, all of these things have all been set part of God's boundary lines.

Nothing takes God by surprise. Nothing happens in our life without God's permission. Our life is not a random set of chances in which I've just kind of got to figure my way out and do my best.

God is over my life. And knowing that the God who created the universe in which we live has set a boundary around our life means that in God I have a refuge.

And that's what David is looking to here. He says the boundary lines have fallen for me. I can trust this God. He has my life in his hands.

He directs and orders your life. He alone permits and allows what is in your life. God. So we rest in the knowledge that God is over everything.

[16 : 30] He is sovereign. But he's not just sufficient. He's not just a sovereign over our life. He is a God who stands with us through life.

Look down at verse eight. He says I have set the Lord always before me. So his focus, his attention is on God.

Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Now to have someone at your right hand is to have someone who stands with you.

It's like an armed soldier in battle. he stands alongside you, covering you, covering your back, protecting you, looking out for you. Or to have someone at your right hand in court is to have someone who speaks up for you, pleading your cause.

Or others talk of it in this way as if you were going on a journey, to have someone at your right hand as you go on your journey is someone who will be a companion to you, a loyal friend who walks with you, doesn't give up, supports you.

[17 : 49] They're on your side, they stand with you, not against you. And David is looking to God and saying, you're my right hand. You stand alongside me.

Well, in what sense does God stand alongside us? How does he kind of speak up for us and how does he support us? God do you know?

Well, I think the clue for us comes in verse seven, the preceding verse. Look what it says in verse seven. He says, I will praise the Lord who counsels me, even at night my heart instructs me.

So, you see, it's through the counsel and the instruction of God that he stands with us. Do you remember Psalm 1 we looked at the other week?

Have a look back there, just flick back to the beginning of the Psalms, Psalm 1. Remember these opening words? Blessed, so blessed we were thinking there about a blessed person is a happy, contented person.

[19 : 00] So the contented or happy person does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. So they're not listening to what the wicked have to say. They don't stand in the way of sinners or they don't sit in the seat of mockers.

They're not looking to them for advice or for instruction. Instead, verse two, his delight is in the law or the word of the Lord. And on his law or on his word he meditates day and night.

So you see, it's through the word that God draws alongside us and counsels us and instructs us. God's word is like a refuge.

So the Bible that we're using here this morning, that we're speaking from, this in a sense is our refuge. It's how God speaks to us.

It's how he counsels us, how he instructs us. He's at our right hand as we listen to him. He is speaking those words to us, giving us that sense of refuge, speaking comfort, speaking assurance, speaking help.

[20 : 15] So first, in life, God is our refuge. He's all sufficient. He's sovereign over your life and he stands with us as we walk through life.

But he's not just our refuge in life. Here's the second big idea. He is our refuge in death.

You see, even when death threatens us, God is our refuge. There's three promises here we're going to look at.

Here's the first one. The promise of physical protection. Look at verse 9. It starts, therefore, my heart is glad.

Therefore, why is he saying therefore? Because God is a refuge in life. He's sufficient. He's sovereign. He stands with us. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.

[21 : 16] My body, that is my physical body, as we are sitting right now, my body will rest secure. How can we be so sure that we'll just rest secure?

Look at verse 10. Because, he says, you will not abandon me to the grave. You'll not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your holy one see decay.

What an incredible promise. God is saying to David, you're not going to die. you're not going to decay.

Whoever or whatever is threatening David's life, we're not told, but something is threatening his life, he has absolute confidence and total assurance that God is going to preserve his life.

Sickness isn't going to kill him. People aren't going to kill him. David is somehow going to escape death. you will not let, or look at verse 10, you will not abandon me to the grave.

[22 : 25] He's going to be protected. God is his refuge, keeping him safe and secure. Now, isn't that the kind of refuge you and I want as we go about our day-to-day lives?

One who will keep us and preserve us even when life is threatened. Do you think that's possible? Well, hold that thought in your mind and we'll come back to it.

Because that's not all that is promised. There is the promise of lasting pleasures. Verse 11, at the very end of the psalm, he says, you've made known to me the path of life, you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

hand. David has this total confidence that God will be his eternal refuge, not just a shelter through life, not just preservation when life is being threatened, but a refuge forever.

Do you see what it said at the end of verse 11? With eternal pleasures at your right hand. God was at his right hand through life, life, and God is going to be his right hand for all eternity.

[23 : 51] You see, at the very beginning, David cried out in verse 1, keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge. And now with absolute assurance at the very end, he can say to God that not even death itself has the power to destroy or break down the shelter that God has over David.

David's life is eternally safe and secure. He will have eternal pleasures. Now just think about that.

Is that actually true? Is that possible? How could David be so sure his life was safe?

Because in some sense his life in the world is no different to you where he faced dangers and struggles and people got sick and how could he be so sure his life was safe?

Well, there's a third promise. The promise of the prophet. Remember, David was God's king.

And God also had prophets. Prophets were people who spoke on behalf of God to the people. And Nathan was one prophet who spoke to King David.

[25 : 16] And we're going to have a look at what this prophet spoke to King David. So go back to 2 Samuel chapter 7 which I think is on page 311.

If you're using a church Bible, that's the red-covered one. It's on page 311. 2 Samuel chapter 7 we'll pick it up verse 12.

So MBC students should all be familiar. Get your hermeneutical hats on and do your interpretation here. So 2 Samuel chapter 7 verse 12.

So Nathan the prophet is speaking to David, King David. and here's what the prophet says. Verse 12. Nathan's speaking to David.

When your days are over and you rest with your fathers. Now, hang on a minute. David's just been saying in the psalm, I'm not going to see the grave, I'm going to be protected in death.

[26 : 22] And now somebody's coming along saying, well no actually David, when your days are over and you rest with your fathers, you are going to die, you are going to go to the grave.

So what's going on? Well let's read verse 12 again. When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.

He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. So, you see, David knew he was going to physically die.

The prophet had told him, you know, you are going to die, David. He would be placed in the grave, he would decompose and decay like everybody else, his body would rot and be eaten like worms or whatever else, he would die.

But David also knew that God promised through the prophet Nathan that there was an eternal king to come. One of David's descendants whose kingdom and throne would never ever end.

[27 : 43] Look at verse 16 of 2 Samuel 7. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

Now go back to Psalm 16. An eternal king, one of David's descendants would come who would defeat death or somehow destroy death and therefore he would reign forever, he would live forever.

And because of this promise, because of this death defeating king that was coming, David could say in Psalm 16 verse 10, you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your holy one see decay.

So he's no longer talking about himself, he's talking about your holy one, one to come. So David knew that his life, his future destiny was wrapped up in God's holy one to come, a promised king who was going to come, an eternal king.

And because this king would reign and live forever, it meant that David would also live forever. David's refuge is in God who promised, a death defeating, death destroying king.

[29 : 15] Well you say, well that's great for David that he had this king who was going to come and live forever and somehow be able to deal with David's death, but what about you and me?

Because you and I are going to die, what's going to happen to us? Well, have a look at Acts 2, which is on page 1094.

Acts 2. Acts 2. 24. You see, the Bible is not just a random set of books or stories just kind of collected and shoved in together between two covers.

It's one big story and every story connects to the greatest story, the story of Jesus. So look at what Acts 2 has to tell us.

Acts 2, verse 24. And the person here speaking is Peter, one of Jesus' disciples. And he's preaching. He's telling the people about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that Jesus died and he rose again.

[30 : 28] And look what it says in verse 24. He says, Acts 2, verse 24, God raised Jesus from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

So Jesus died but death couldn't hold its grip on Jesus. God brought Jesus back to life again. That's what Peter is talking about.

Then Peter starts quoting Psalm 16. Look at verse 25. David said about him.

Jesus, 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 will also live in hope because you will not abandon me to the grave nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

[31 : 48] You have made known to me the path of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence. And now Peter starts commenting or explaining this Psalm.

Look at verse 29. He says brothers, brothers and sisters, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David, King David, died and was buried in his tomb.

It's here to this day. So go check it out. Go down the road. You can dig it up. You'll find his bones. David died. He's dead. But, verse 30, David was a prophet.

So as he wrote, he was speaking prophetically and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

Seeing what was ahead, looking into the distance, not quite knowing everything what it would be like, but looking ahead, David spoke of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

[33 : 02] God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of that fact. You see, Jesus Christ is the promise, death-defeating, death-destroying, eternal king.

Jesus did die, but he was not abandoned to the grave. He did not see decay. Three days later, we read that he rose from the dead, becoming an eternal refuge for all who would trust in him.

You see, the world we live in is not a safe place. Our places of protection, the little bubbles that we create around us, cannot withstand the onslaught of death.

One day, death is going to confront us, and whatever little protection we have around us, it ain't going to work. Sooner or later, every single one of us in this room will die.

But, if like David, our faith is in Christ, because as he wrote, he was looking forward to God's promise, that there would come a king who would defeat death and destroy death.

[34 : 22] So if our faith is like David in Christ, then as we look back to Christ and to his resurrection, then Jesus becomes our refuge in death.

You see, our whole life is wrapped up in the eternal destiny of Jesus. If Jesus rose from the grave, we too will rise from the grave.

Yes, we will physically die, but he will come back and he will restore us to life in his eternal kingdom. So in that sense, death is not the end.

And we can say with David, with absolute confidence and total assurance, Psalm 16 verses 10 and 11, you will not abandon me to the grave.

You will not let your Holy One see decay, for you have made known to me the paths of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

[35 : 24] what a promise, refuge, shelter, protection for all eternity.

No more evil, no more suffering, no more burning down towers, no more wars, no more death. And that is all found not in a place, but in a person, the person of Jesus Christ who conquered death and lives forever more.

So my question to us all, to myself included, is where is your refuge? Where do you run to or who do you look to to keep you safe?

there is only one, and that is Christ our refuge, the eternal death-defeating, death-destroying king.

Can you say, Psalm 16, verses 1 and 2 for yourself personally, can you say this? May this be our prayer as we close.

[36 : 46] keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge. I said to the Lord, you are my Lord, apart from you I have no good thing.

Can you say that for yourself? Can you confront death with the confidence and say, my refuge is in him, apart from him I have no good thing.

run to him. Find your refuge and your rest in our eternal king. Let's pray together. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.