

# Psalm 16 A miktam of David

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[0:00] Find that psalm, Psalm 16. So I thought perhaps we'd better mark the 400th anniversary with a quote from the Bard.

! Quite a well-known one this, Shakespeare puts in the mouth of King Henry IV, ! Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

I won't read the whole passage out, it's up there on the slide, but the point of it is that the sailor in his wet and uncomfortable bed can find sleep, but the king in the comfort of his palace finds that sleep eludes him.

And in fact, even King David seems to have had this problem. We do read in several places in the scripture where he was awake at night for one reason or another, including in this psalm indeed. But if David didn't have entirely a solution to the problem, at least he had a plan. He knew what to do about it. And what he should be doing if he's awake at night is to seek the Lord.

[1:19] So what can we say about this psalm? A few issues with the text and translation. There are a variety of psalms that are called miktams.

They're all attributed to David. According to Derek Kidner's commentary, the scholar's best guess is that the word derives from an Akkadian word, which means to cover.

But that doesn't really tell you very much, even if you know that. So really, we don't know what a miktam is, but this is one. It's obviously a type of psalm.

There are a few translation issues with this psalm. So the word that's translated saints or holy ones, depending on what translation you've got in verse 3, it is actually an unusual word.

It could possibly refer to the pagan priests of verse 4, but it seems the meaning given in our English translation seem to make much more sense, that David is comparing the people who worship God with the people who worship these other gods.

[2:31] Just for interest, really, the word that's translated heart in verse 7 is literally, in fact, the word for kidneys. Sometimes translated bowels in the older editions, older translations, but it clearly refers to the seat of the emotions, so translating it heart is a reasonable thing to do.

The word for heart in verse 9, actually, is a different word, and it seems to have more of the meaning of the, not so much the seat of the emotions as the core of our being.

There is another issue that relates to verse 5, as you would have seen, if you have the original NIV, the church Bibles, that translates verse 5 as, Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup, suggesting that it refers to David's inheritance in the land, but in fact, a more likely translation, which is the one supported by Kidner in his commentary, and it's the one in the English Standard Version, the old one in the old King James Version, and in fact, is adopted in the new version of the New International Version, says it's not that the Lord assigns me my portion, but that the Lord is my portion.

In other words, he's not directly referring to his inheritance in the land, but that says my inheritance actually is the Lord, and we'll come back to that shortly. So there are a few issues with the text.

Hopefully that cleans some of those up. The main thing to say about this, of course, is that it is a messianic psalm. David writes here as God's anointed king.

[4:17] The word Messiah in Hebrew, or Christ in Greek, of course, means the anointed one, and it usually refers to an anointed king, because oil was poured on the head of the king as a kind of a coronation rite.

And we saw in Psalm, when we looked at Psalm 2, verse 8 last week, that it said, ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. And we saw that this

really could not refer to David or Solomon, but only to Jesus of Nazareth.

And a similar thing applies here. David, of course, did die. Both Peter, in Acts 2, 25 to 31, and again Paul in Acts 13, 34 to 37, point out, of course, that David did die and his body decayed, in spite of what David says in this psalm.

Peter even tells us, in fact, if you look in Acts 2, that in his day you could even go and visit David's tomb. The sight of that is now lost, but apparently in Peter's and Roman times you could go and actually make a trip to visit the pilgrimage, to visit the tomb of David if you wanted to.

So Psalm 16, verse 10, which says you will not let your, my body see the pit or corruption, it could be translated either way, it can mean the grave or just the corruption in the grave, it doesn't really make much difference, in the literal sense, applies only to Jesus.

[5:55] And Peter and Paul are very keen to point this out when their sermons in Acts, as we read of it. And so we know that this psalm is really a psalm about the Messiah, about the anointed king, in fact, about Jesus himself.

But we'll say a bit more about that. But it is a messianic psalm, there's no doubt about that. The other thing you may notice is it's a very personal psalm.

If you look through it, you find that the words I and me and my run all the way through it. He's always saying, I keep my eyes on the Lord, he will not let my body see corruption, and so on.

This is very personal, the way it's worded. And then we need to ask the question here, who does the my refer to? And I think we have to actually give three answers to that.

It refers firstly, of course, to David himself. I mean, I think it is a personal testimony of David himself. But supremely, of course, it refers to Jesus, to the true anointed king, Jesus.

[7:16] But thirdly, and Phil was touching on this this morning when we looked at the servant song in Isaiah, because we are united with Christ, then many of these promises and things can be, I think, applied to ourselves as well.

And it's not wrong, I think, to take some of these things and apply them to ourselves. And so as we go through the psalm, I'd like to bring out those three things, really, to show that it does apply in some ways to David as an illustration, as a type of Christ.

It applies to Christ himself, but also, in many ways, some of these things should be applied to ourselves as well. And I think it's not wrong to do that. As I say, I won't go in, Phil went into some detail on this this morning, so I won't go into such detail.

But I think it's not wrong to do that. And I'd like to look just at the message of the psalm under five headings, pick up this word of my. And so the first couple of verses, I'll talk about my security.

And then David talks about my people. And then he moves on to talk about his inheritance. So we'll look at my inheritance. And then he looks at my delight.

[8:28] And finally, I've called it my destination. I was originally going to call it my destiny, but I thought that sounded a bit odd. So I changed it to my destination.

But as we go through these, we need to keep these three meanings of the word my in mind. So let's look at them a bit at a time. So first of all, let's look at my security.

This is what he talks about in verses one and two, and also touches on, you'll notice, in verse nine. David. David, you might think of as one of life's achievers.

High flyers, wasn't he? A shepherd, a soldier, a musician, a king. Whatever he turned his hand to, he was one of these people who seemed to succeed at it.

And yet David was in no doubt that all this came from God. Without the Lord, he says, in verse two, he was nothing. All the good things that he had came from the Lord.

[9:43] And in fact, though he doesn't specifically say that here, we know from the life of David that when he took his eyes off the Lord, and when he gave in to deceit or lust or even murder, then things very rapidly went downhill for David, didn't they?

David, however, did always admit his mistakes and come back. He always reminded himself of that. It was only through the Lord that he really could achieve any good.

But this, again, applies primarily, doesn't it, to Jesus. Jesus was depended on the Father for everything.

We did, again, kind of touch on that this morning, but we could look at it again. Jesus was tempted by Satan to go it alone, wasn't he?

In Matthew 4, verses 1 to 11, Jesus was tempted. And so, Satan said, you know, be your king in your own right or worship me and I'll give you all the nations of the earth.

[10:50] He was offering to give what he didn't really own, but what he'd laid claim to. But what did Jesus reply?

It said, it is written, man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Jesus was going to keep as his guide the word of God, what came from the mouth of God. And then later on, he says, away from me, Satan, for it is written, worship the Lord your God and serve him only. Jesus was the one supremely who lived out that every good thing comes from God, from the Father.

And on another occasion, he said this, just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.

So because Jesus learned obedience and followed, we should copy him. That's what Jesus says. That was John 6, 57, if you're wondering. One who feeds on me will live because of me.

[12:12] That's what Jesus says. So let's not think to go where David nor Jesus went and to go it alone, to do things in our own strength.

We can do, without God, we can do nothing at all. But we have the pioneer, the one who's gone before us, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we can keep our eyes fixed on him and follow him.

For without him, we can do nothing. Jesus said that again also. Without him, we can do nothing.

Let's move on to the next couple of verses in the psalm and look at my people.

It's not much of a king. He has no subjects, is it? What use is a king with no subjects? And David took a delight in his kingdom.

And notice, it's my, not you, in verse 3. He says, I, the saints in the land, the holy ones in the land, those who acknowledge the Lord, are my delight.

[13:21] This is David saying that. But who were his true subjects? They were the ones who kept themselves holy to the Lord.

God. Notice there's no multiculturalism here. Those who worship false gods, David will not acknowledge them as truly part of his kingdom, even if they happen to live there.

He says he will not name them, whether it's the people or the gods, he won't name. It's not entirely clear. But either way, he's saying that, no, they're not in my register of citizens.

They're not, they may live in my kingdom, but they're not truly part of my kingdom. Says David, my kingdom are those who worship the Lord. And so Jesus says a similar thing, doesn't he?

Again, if you think Matthew 7, 21 to 23, Jesus says the following, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my father who is in heaven.

[14:41] Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you.

Away from me, you evil doers. Perhaps a slightly different claim then because these people are claiming to do things in the name of Jesus, but of course they weren't really. But they were not the ones who were doing the way of, the will of the father.

And David, Jesus like David says, I won't acknowledge them as part of my kingdom. So some may claim to be in the kingdom, but they're illegal immigrants.

If you're familiar with Pilgrim's Progress, you read in one point of somebody who gets in by climbing over the wall instead of coming through the wicket gate.

Somebody who seems to be in the kingdom, but really is not. In fact, they're not just illegal immigrants, they're terrorists. Their aim is to undermine all that the kingdom stands for.

[15:51] just as these people were in David's kingdom who were naming false gods and pouring out blood to those who were not the Lord. They weren't just neutral, they were undermining the kingdom.

And the king will not acknowledge them. But Jesus had other things to say about the kingdom and the people who were in the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God. Here's something else that Jesus had to say about the kingdom of heaven.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor, provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

So Jesus has said that in fact the kingdom is given to his people in that sense, that they have an inheritance at least in the kingdom, as part of the kingdom.

And that's what David leads on to of course in verses 5 and 6 of this psalm. He starts to talk about his inheritance. I don't know, perhaps David had a favourite spot in the palace or its grounds.

[17:23] Perhaps he would sit there and take his ease among the pleasant surroundings. Perhaps he was thinking back to his life as a shepherd on his father's farm and thinking of the allocation of land that he had been given or his father's, his father's inheritance which would have dated right back to the days of Joshua that his clan would have been given an inheritance in the land.

And the promised land had been described hadn't it as a land flowing with milk and honey. And yet it wasn't a perfect land, was it?

It was, wasn't, it still had its desert places. It still had its rocky crags. The famine, the flocks were not exempt from famines and as David certainly knew very well, the flock was not safe from predators. That's how David learned his weapon skills, wasn't it? Learned with a sling and probably a spear and learned to kill predators who were attacking the flock.

Yes, there was a pleasant inheritance in the land but that wasn't the true inheritance of the people of God. David knew that well and when David came to the throne was it all perfect and plain sailing?

[19:00] No, not at all. Kingdom was riven by internal factions and it was threatened by external enemies. So just as the true citizens were not defined by geography, so the true inheritance, the true scenic spot if you like, the spot where you might sit down and say my lines are fallen in pleasant places, this is the place I want to sit.

It was not really a matter of geography. The land was subject to all kinds of threats but David says my inheritance is secure because his true inheritance was found in his relationship with the Lord himself.

and Jesus tells us, didn't he, what he received from his father. John 17 24 says the following, Father, I want those whom you have given me to be with me where I am.

Jesus says his inheritance, in fact, what he got from his father, the people, those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

Jesus' inheritance was not a matter of geography or the promised land. It dated from before the foundation of the world, before the creation of the world. It was a kingdom that wasn't of this world at all, but a kingdom whose citizens were citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

[20:51] And so Paul writes the following to the Ephesian Christians, and again, this touches a bit on what we were thinking about this morning. Paul writes Ephesians 1, 13 and 14, you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory.

It says we were included in Christ. And it says the Holy Spirit is a deposit that guarantees our inheritance in the kingdom, in the land.

God's God's God's God's name. The Holy Spirit is the seal that says that you're marked with a seal.

That's the official document. That's the will and testament that says, yeah, you're marked. You haven't got it yet, but it's all signed and sealed.

[22:06] It's there waiting for you. And so our inheritance also, we can say with David, is the inheritance of the Lord himself and the kingdom, the Lord's own kingdom, that city that's built not by men at all, as Jerusalem was on earth, but the city whose builder is God.

The inheritance is due to Jesus Christ, but we're included. He shares it with those who believe. And that, David said, is a pleasant place to sit.

Surely the lines have fallen in pleasant places. He means the boundary lines, of course, the boundary of my inheritance is in a pleasant place.

It's a great place to sit and say, yes, this is a truly pleasant place. And because of that, we're invited, as God's people, to take delight in it.

We don't know whether David was sitting at ease in the palace garden, or whether he was lying awake in his bed at night.

[23:26] Verse 7 suggests that at least some of the time when he was thinking about this, he was awake. But, instead of just lying there worrying, he turns to seek the Lord.

And his seeking, he says, is met with sound counsel and instruction. What is it that David really desires? It's the Lord himself. It's his relationship with God which is the central fact of his life.

But for David, of course, that wasn't always the case. He already said sometimes he would take his eyes off the Lord and then things would very rapidly go wrong.

But again, this is truly fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. Jesus never turned aside from his father's will, whatever the cost to himself.

And notice David's not saying here, Jesus is not saying it's all plain sailing. He's not saying there is no struggle. What did Jesus himself say in Matthew 26, 39?

[24:43] My father, if it's possible, may this cup be taken from me, yet not as I will, but as you will. Was Jesus a sort of masochist who was delighting in suffering for its own sake?

Well, from these words, clearly not. Indeed, he said, if it's possible, take this cup from me, and yet, not what I will, but what you will. And the writer to the Hebrews explains why.

Hebrews 12, verses 2 and 3 says the following, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. And again, we were thinking of that this morning, weren't we?

Again, he set his face, as it says, like flint, to go to Jerusalem. Where else should a prophet die but except in Jerusalem? Well, but not because he gloried in the suffering itself, but as he said, the Lord vindicates me.

[26:05] And he knew that he set the Lord before him. And he says, more specifically he says in Hebrews, he set the joy before him. He knew that to take delight, to do what had to be done, to find the joy that God had for him.

He needed to go through this suffering. And the writer to Hebrews reminds us that if we don't want to grow weary and lose heart, we also need to take delight in the joy that's set before us.

Jesus set his eyes on the Father because he was seeking joy. That was the reason we're given. He was the one who could truly say, I've set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand. I shall not be shaken. And what does the psalm say at the end? Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.

David is not going to be miserable. Jesus is not going to be miserable because of the joy set before him. And so as that Hebrews passage is said, let us fix our eyes on Jesus that is set him before him always before me at our right hand.

[27:33] And where is this going? Henry the fourth, at least in Shakespeare's interpretation, could not find sleep.

He lay awake at night, wondering about the factions, divisions in the kingdom. The War of the Roses of course was when he was around. He would lay awake probably fearing the assassin's knife or the attack from an enemy.

And perhaps David feared those things as well. Perhaps he was kept awake at night sometimes worrying about enemies in the kingdom, worrying about the knife of the assassin.

But then how could David find sleep in his bed? He thinks that he need not fear the assassin's knife, he need not fear the assaults that threaten the king.

He can find sleep in his bed because he knows that even in the grave he will not be abandoned. Even if the assassin were to strike that night and David were to go straight to his grave his death then he says I will not be abandoned because not just in my bed verse 9 but even in the grave verse 10 I can sleep secure.

[29:05] But David clearly had some idea here of an eternal salvation. Sometimes people say this was kind of invented in the New Testament but it's not. It's not so clear in the Old Testament certainly.

Solomon in Ecclesiastes talks about the spirit returns to you put eternity in the heart of man and the spirit returns to God who gave it. It's not so clear and it wasn't entirely clear even to David.

In fact I'd say a more accurate translation of these last verses that the path of life he will show me the path of life. It wasn't yet entirely clear.

It was still being made known. In fact it awaits the coming of the one whose body literally didn't stay in the grave.

The one whose body literally didn't see corruption. salvation. Jesus is the pioneer of salvation as we've said the one who mapped out the path.

[30:16] But Jesus was the one who did make the path of life clear. And David had a foretaste of this. He didn't entirely perhaps understand it but he knew there was something to be coming.

But in Jesus we find it fairly set out. What did Jesus say? He said this. If you're wondering it's John 14, 1-7.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. In my father's house there are many rooms.

If it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I'm going. Of course Thomas said no we don't. Lord we don't know where you're going so how can we know the way? Jesus answered these famous words.

[31:31] Jesus answered I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.

If you really knew me you would know my father as well and from now on you do know him and have seen him. So David knew there was a path to life being revealed but it wasn't clear to him perhaps exactly how it worked but now it's clear now in Jesus we see that Jesus himself is the way and the truth and the life itself and it's through him that we will not be abandoned to the grave.

Yes our bodies might die and indeed might be eaten by worms again as we were thinking this morning our bodies might see corruption but we're not abandoned to the grave because Jesus said if anyone believes in me though he die yet shall he live.

So that was David's hope he looked forward to it but we can look back and see Jesus who said I am the way the truth and the life. So we need to ask ourselves again the question this night have you found the path to life?

Are you trusting in Jesus or are you still like Thomas saying Lord I don't know where you're going or so I don't know the way there? Let's remember Jesus' answer I am the way the truth and the life if we want to find the path to life.

[33:14] If we want our destination to be the kingdom of heaven the city built by God then we need to go follow the way of Jesus and put our trust in him and he will ensure that we're not abandoned to the grave.

So let's sing again to conclude our time and then I'll ask Chris to come up perhaps to close in prayer and then ending ending ending ending ending ending ending ending