

Press Play

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: 31 October 2021

Preacher: Andrew Macleod

[0 : 00] Let's turn to Psalm 16 and we'll read it and then we'll go into it. We read it this morning as well. Let's hear the word of God.

Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, you are my Lord. Apart from you, I have no good thing. I say of the holy people who are in the land, they are the noble ones in whom is all my delights.

Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips.

Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup. You make 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 keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand I will not be shaken.

[1 : 12] Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. My body also will rest secure. Because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead.

Nor will you let your faithful one 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. Amen. This is God's word. God's word. Just a few weeks ago I was working from one of our churches in Inverness.

Another free church in Inverness. And as I was working in one of the rooms throughout the day there was a steady queue of people going past the door of the room that I was in.

Going through the whole building and out into the car park. All of those people were there to be vaccinated.

[2 : 19] To receive their first or second vaccine. And without being political I thought to myself these people are here not because the government has told them to.

Not because it's free. But ultimately they've come here because they want to live and they do not want to die. Many people don't like to think deeply about life and death.

Serious questions. They certainly don't want to entertain any thought about what's going to happen to them once they die. For a few moments tonight let's think seriously and think deeply about life and about death.

Because in this psalm that we've been singing and reading today and studying in Psalm 16 we began this journey as we began it we didn't need to go forward or backwards we had to stand still. we had to press pause. David was taking stock of his life. He was taking stock of God.

[3 : 42] He was taking stock of the people who are around him. And now as we near the end of the song David presses play singing about his life and even about his death.

death. So I want us to look at life and death. Begin then by thinking about life in verse 7.

So we're looking and concentrating on verse 7 to the end. I will praise the Lord who counsels me even at night my heart instructs me.

David David sings in review of who God is and what God has done. He's praising him because throughout his life the Lord has counseled him.

The Lord has guided him. So how does the Lord give counsel? How does the Lord counsel you throughout your life? Through the word of God.

[4 : 50] Through the Bible. we mentioned the first psalm earlier this morning too and in that first psalm the believer walks away from the wicked's counsel and instead he meditates on the law of the Lord day and night.

The law of the Lord is the Bible. He spends his time in God's word. And this is not only available to King David but for every one of you.

as you open up your Bibles as you take time out not just a couple of times a year or even once a week on a Sunday but every day.

We come aside from the busyness of life to the business of faith. In verse 7 David is meditating on the word and this is a part of our own personal devotions and worship that I think we have largely lost.

We think we don't have time to sit down to read our Bibles and yet the Lord is saying we don't have time to do anything else until we have sat down to read our Bibles.

[6 : 05] We need to chew over the scriptures what you're reading morning or evening or whatever part of the day. Let it linger into your mind and your heart.

Stew over what you are reading. This is our daily bread. This is what is equipping you day by day. This is what is preparing you for what you are going to face. This is the counsel which the Lord God is giving to you. And he goes on to say in verse eight, I have set the Lord always before me.

You see, David has decided sometime in the past that this is the one and only way for him to live his life. And now, however long it's been, weeks, months, years, down the track, that decision remains intact and is the reason for the music on his lips.

And so with the Lord always before him, he is granted a standing and a security that he wouldn't have otherwise known in his life.

[7 : 21] faith. And tonight in this church, the majority of you are like David. Many of you have decided to follow the Lord.

The Lord has opened your eyes and your heart to receive him. And so you have made that decision to put your trust in Jesus Christ alone.

And that decision may have been recently, it may have been many years ago, and yet it still impacts and affects your life tonight.

It's a daily walk. It's every day that we need to pick up our cross and follow Jesus. It isn't the token we receive and go on the rest of our life, but every day of our life we receive the tokens of grace.

But there are some others who have not yet decided to make that decision. You have not yet given your whole life over to Jesus Christ.

[8 : 41] Perhaps the glitter of this world, it still tempts you and lures you to itself.

But Jesus is asking you, even tonight I wonder, is Jesus calling you to him? I wonder tonight, have you made the intentional decision to put God first in your life, like David says here in verse 8.

You don't need to wait for communion, you don't need to come forward, you don't need to raise your hand, you simply need to ask Jesus right now in the silence of your own heart, promising that you will endeavour to love him and to serve him.

coming to him with all of your sin, seeking to be forgiven by him. Will you fail as a Christian?

Yes. But will he let you go? Never. Following the Lord is not just for Sundays or for times of crisis, but David goes on to say, the Lord is at my right hand.

[10 : 11] Throughout his life, the Lord is close by him and is that your experience as a Christian? But the Lord is close by you each and every day. He is in contact daily with God.

There is a relationship, there is a friendship, there is love between David and his God. The 19th century theologian Charles Hodge, perhaps he shed some light on what God at our right hand means when he spoke about his own childhood.

Listen to Charles Hodge. As far back as I can remember, I had the habit of thanking God for everything I received and asking him for everything I wanted.

If I lost a book or any of my playthings, I prayed that I might find it. I prayed walking along the streets, in school and out of school, whether playing or study.

I did not do this on obedience to any prescribed rule. It seemed natural. I thought of God as an everywhere present being, full of kindness and love, who would not be offended if children talked to him.

[11 : 22] You know, he was right. God's not offended if children talk to him, nor is he offended when his own children, that's the Christian, talks to him.

However, he is offended when his children do not talk to him. Surely, one of the main reasons, if you are cold spiritually tonight, if you seem distant and far from God, is because you are not constantly, or frequently, or even genuinely talking to God.

How often are you praying, not just in your public meetings when others are there to hear you, but in your private prayers, when nobody is there to hear you but God.

Realize and remember that the Lord is at your right hand through every single day. He's eager to hear from you, to help you, and to uphold you.

Well, with the Lord at his right hand, David says, I shall not be shaken. Throughout his life, he's not going to be shaken. And it reminded me of the story that Jesus tells about the two men and the two houses.

[12 : 53] one man built his house on the sand, an unstable foundation. When the winds blew and the rains came, when the rains came, that house crashed to the ground.

And in contrast, another built his house on the rock, the solid ground, and when the winds blew and the rains came, the house stood strong.

That's true of Christ's church, this church, and it's true, of the Christian's life. Will there be winds and rains of suffering in your life?

Yes. But will you be destroyed? Never. And David goes on to sing in verse 9, therefore my heart, because of all this, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.

are you happy? Are you content? Because another consequence for David of setting God before him, choosing to follow the Lord alone is joy, real and lasting joy.

[14 : 13] Not just temporal joy when Kilmarnock get promoted and then get relegated. But real and lasting joy that is far more substantial than anything that this world can offer us.

Remember this morning we spoke about verse 5 and 6 when David speaks there about contentment. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

He wasn't content because his life was just a bed of roses. We mentioned that David suffered all throughout his life. People tried to kill him.

He plummeted deep into sin. He had another man killed. David could tell you about a guilty conscience. And yet he can now tell you about his glad heart and the songs on his lips not because life was easy but because the Lord was his life.

And so is the Lord your life? Not just part of your life not just a church you attend but is the Lord your life?

[15 : 23] Every day 24-7. Children's talk today I showed you that picture and talked a wee bit about the zip wire. I had to step off the platform and trust that this harness was going to support me and as the boy said that the wire would keep me all the way to the very end as well.

Support me and carry me to the other side. But following Jesus is a step into the light not a leap into the darkness. What confidence you can have and enjoy right now in your life if your safety and security is not found in even the strongest of harnesses that this world can offer you but in the solid rock of Jesus Christ.

David sings about his life. But we move on and we must talk about death. Because putting God first for David in his life was a life-defining decision.

But now David goes on to sing about how it was also a death-defining decision. in verse 9 and 10, my body also will rest secure because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

David is able to look into the face of death and not be afraid. in life and even in death, he has total security and safety in God.

[17 : 13] And in these verses, he repeats himself three times, speaking about his pending funeral. the reality is we're all going to die, aren't we?

We have not known anybody in our lives who didn't have to die. David is not dismissing here the very real pain we have all faced attending the funeral of our loved ones.

Even if that person was a believer, there is still a separation that hurts and that saddens us and that makes our hearts sore. David is not unfazed about literal death.

He is talking here about what comes after that. That death is not the end for the Christian. That the grave is not going to be forever. That he can face his funeral with hope and not with fear because the Lord will not abandon him in the grave.

Death may be inevitable but hell is avoidable and heaven is possible. David was assured of God's care in this life and in the life to come.

[18 : 36] He was assured that God would not leave his soul in the grave. You see, death is not going to separate him from the Lord's love. Death is not going to bring an end to David.

Death is not going to have the final word on David, nor on anyone here who loves the Lord Jesus Christ. David concludes this song in verse 11 by singing, saying, 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. The path of life has been revealed to David just as it has to us through the gospels.

And he sings here of a quality of life for the believer. David anticipates being brought into the presence of the Lord, and in his presence there is fullness of joy, overflowing joy.

But this path leads not only to a quality of life, but to a quantity of life. There are, he says in verse 11, eternal pleasures at the Lord's right hand.

[20 : 01] Don't you just love how this psalm turns around? In verse 8, David says, he has placed the Lord at his own right hand. But now in verse 11, it's David who's placed at the right hand of the Lord.

This is a life that's not going to go on for eight years or 80,000 years. As that hymn, Amazing Grace, concludes when I've been there 10,000 years bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first began.

This eternal life for you and me who love the Lord will go on forever and ever. There is a quality and a quantity of life that David anticipates and he sings about.

The commentator Bruce Watke, he writes, the joy of fellowship with God in this world will be rewarded with the overflowing joy when we see him face to face.

David is assured that the Lord who has been his refuge throughout his life will continue to be his refuge beyond this life.

[21 : 33] But these verses, verses 8 to 11 especially, they're not actually first and foremost about David, are they?

Because if you were to turn in your Bibles to the New Testament, and you can do this when you go home, in Acts chapter 2, the apostle Peter, he stands up to preach the gospel and he quotes Psalm 16 verses 8 to 11 and he applies them to Jesus.

He, Jesus, is the holy one whose body will not ultimately see decay. He, Jesus, was the one who rose from the grave. The soldiers, the disciples, the women, the angels, they all testified.

He is not here. He is risen. Jesus stepped out of his grave. He defeated and he destroyed death.

Before death could turn Jesus to dust, he crushed death once and for all, for all his people under his nail-pierced feet.

[22 : 50] And isn't that a thought? Jesus' nail-pierced feet grinding death. Death that so often grinds us into the ground.

There is Jesus grinding it under his nail-pierced feet. And the resurrection of Jesus is the authentication for you and the confirmation for you that he is the Messiah.

resurrection but his resurrection, his rising from the dead is also the preview and the pattern for what every one of you can expect as well.

That is why David can sing about life and even about death. That is the confidence that you have tonight as a believer in Jesus.

that we can bury the Lord's people in hope from this congregation. The Christian can die knowing that the Lord will receive their spirit the very moment they breathe their last.

[24 : 02] But their body will rest secure. Their body will remain secure until that great day that Christ returns and he comes and he calls out, arise my love, my fair one and we will come out.

That is the Christian hope. That is the confidence we have when we bury our loved ones who love the Lord.

When we will be buried ourselves. We bury them with the sure and certain hope that Jesus will say like he did to Lazarus, come forth and we will come.

Is your confidence in this Jesus or in the sparkle of this world? The grave can be a fearful thing, can be a dreadful thing for the unbeliever.

The cemetery is a hopeless place for the one without Christ. And it doesn't matter how many flowers are placed on top of or inside the coffin, it's a hopeless place without Christ.

[25 : 26] But the believer, you can be confident. You can be confident that the grave has no more victory, that death has no more sting because of what Jesus has done, because of what Jesus has accomplished.

David was able to sing with joy about his life and about his death because the Lord was at his right hand. Will you take that step of faith today, not trusting in the strongest harness this world can offer you, but trusting in Jesus Christ alone.

Let's pray. Oh, Lord, our God, we thank you that your word assures us that you have saved us, not only for this life, but for the life to come.

And we thank you for the Holy Spirit that has been given to us as a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. Like the engagement ring that a man may give to his future bride, his word, his promise is enough, but the ring is given as a token that the wedding day will surely come.

And, Lord, your word that we read in your Bible, it is enough. It is enough of a promise. But you have been gracious to us, and you have given us a token through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we have all received.

[27 : 19] We have this Holy Spirit as a token, as a deposit, guaranteeing that that wedding day will come. between us and Jesus Christ.

Oh, Lord, we look forward to living the rest of our life with you. And every day in eternity, when we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first began.

Oh, Lord, may you assure us this evening that we are safe in the arms of God. May each of us be still and know that you are God.

May we sing all of our days, rejoicing in Christ alone. We ask it in your name. Amen.

Amen.