

October 25th, 2015 by Billy Nye

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Preacher: Billy Nye

[0:00] Good morning. Well, if you will turn your Bibles to Psalm 16, it should sound pretty familiar.

Children, would you be dismissed to your classes? That was a close one.

Let me pray for us before we hear from God's Word. Father, we're grateful that you are all we need. And you are indeed all we want.

You are all that we were made for. God, would you let the words and the truth of this psalm written by King David reverberate in our hearts and our minds?

Would you distract us away from the distractions of our minds and get our hearts on the very source of life that is you, fountain of living waters?

[1:38] God, help us to listen today. Give us ears to hear. Give us hearts to incline to you. Give us wills to obey you. Satisfy us in your steadfast love this morning, God.

In Christ's name, amen. Well, I got a little quiz for us this morning. By day, I'm a teacher.

I won't tell you what I am by night. No, just kidding. I'm a sleepy father. I got a little quiz for us. I'm a teacher, and so it's just natural that quizzes come to me.

But this is not hard. It's only multiple choice. Only two options per question. Three questions and only two options per question. A or B. You guys ready? Okay, it's not hard. Just think it to yourself or whisper it to your neighbor.

Situation number one. Pick A or B. Ready? A. You are in a state of perfect health. You are breathing through both nostrils. Life is good. B.

[2:44] You're suffering from painful strep throat for a week. You have 103 degree fever, and you have chills so bad you can't sleep. I know it's hard. A or B.

Okay. Situation number two. No, that's a silent quiz. Silent. Situation number two. A or B. A. You're reading a gripping novel.

In a plush chair by a fire, crackling in the hearth. Or B. You're struggling for life in a half-frozen river in Siberia all alone. I know it's hard.

Situation number three. Last one. A. You're going through life lovingly connected to friends and family. Or B. Every single person you know betrays you.

How'd you guys do? A. It was an option quiz. There's no wrong answer. Well, unless you're an extreme adventurer or you really love pain, I'm thinking everyone chose option A.

[3:48] Is that right? Why? Well, option A was the good option. We tend to choose what's good for us, or at least what we think is good for us.

We don't knowingly aim ourselves for what is harmful, painful, and not going to satisfy. We aim ourselves instinctively as creatures.

We were built for happiness. We were built for pursuing our own well-being. We wouldn't last long if the opposite were true. We wouldn't intentionally step out in front of traffic.

We wouldn't intentionally isolate ourselves from any human contact. We wouldn't intentionally go out into a Wisconsin winter wearing flip-flops. Well, a couple of us do.

But for some reason that's popular. Well, that's just what we do. We were built that way. But as most of us know, at least, we have a problem.

[4:48] The problem is called sin. And what sin does is it paints a picture of what we think is what is good, but really it's a deception. Our sin broke our GPS of finding good.

It misdirects us away from what really is good to what we just think is good. And that's why I'm really glad Psalm 16 is in the Bible.

Because it is a neon sign saying, this is where your good is. It's unmistakable. Now, I know we read it a few minutes ago, but let's just scan it briefly.

And I want us to look for good words. Words that look like something good. Are you ready? Verse 2. You are my Lord. I have no good apart from you.

I'm a teacher, so I like participation. At verse 3. In whom is all my delight. Oh, that's a good word. I like that word. Let's look at verse 6.

[5:55] The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Indeed, I have a... Oh, great words. These are good words. Okay, let's keep going. Verse 9.

My heart is glad. My whole being... Ooh, gladness, joy, rejoicing. That's good. Okay. Look at verse 11. It's just packed full.

You may know unto me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures. It's not a bad word.

Not necessarily. Pleasures forevermore. Wow, this is a good, packed psalm. It is packed full of good. But did you notice something else in this psalm?

David's good is closely tied to his relationship with God. It's unmistakable as we read our way through the psalm.

[6:54] His good is found in God. It's not just a song about finding happiness and pleasure. It is a prayer to the God who is David's good.

If we can compare Psalm 16 to a tree. A tree has a trunk. And then there are branches. This is the trunk of Psalm 16.

Our good is in God. That's the big trunk of this beautiful tree. Our good is in God. And there are three strong branches that come out of this beautiful, strong trunk.

The first one is found in verses 1 to 4. The second is found in verses 5 to 8. And the third is in 9 through 11. We'll take them one at a time. Ready?

The first branch. The first big branch off of this big trunk that our good is in God is this. Our good is in God alone. Our good is in God alone.

[7:59] It's exclusively found in God. Let's read verses 1 to 4. Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, you are my Lord.

I have no good apart from you. As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones. In whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those who run after another God shall multiply.

Their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. The psalm opens with David in trouble. He's facing something. Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

He's in need of refuge. We don't know what the circumstance is. We don't know what his trouble is. And I'm actually kind of glad we don't. Because we can just put in our own trouble right there.

Are you in trouble? I'm in trouble. We can just say, David's in trouble. Well, where does he go from there? In fact, our whole church has been facing some trouble.

[9:00] For the past two months, it's been pretty hard. And so, we all, even if we're not facing personal trials on our own, we all should incline our ears to, David's putting his refuge in God.

How is he going to do that? Let's look at where he takes us. Verse 2. I say to the Lord, You are my Lord.

I have no good apart from you. Whenever you see the word Lord in all caps in your Old Testament, it is, behind it, is the personal name for God, Yahweh.

It's the same name that God told Moses to tell to the people of Israel, this is the God who's going to redeem you out of slavery. His name is Yahweh.

It's God's personal name. And it means, I am who I am. I will be who I will be. This is not just some generic God.

[9:59] Not some generic deity. He is the one who is. The God who is there. It pops up in this psalm four different times.

David's using God's personal name. He has related to David. He has come near to David. He has revealed himself to David and his people as their creator and as their redeemer.

They know who he is. This is not some generic faceless God. So what does David tell this God? He says, you are my Lord.

Do you hear the personal relationship there? I have no good apart from you. David is identifying Yahweh as his Lord. His master. His authority.

Remember, David's the king of Israel. He is a Lord. He is a king. And yet he knows that no earthly authority he possesses somehow comes from himself.

[11:02] Or makes him independent from his Lord. And he says, get this. I have no good apart from you.

Period. Period. I like the way another translation puts it. My good is not beyond you. Our good is in God alone.

This is such a dramatic claim. It's seismic in its circumstances that it gets us into.

If we really believe that God is our good alone. That our good can't be found outside of him. Then it helps us see every message that our hearts and our culture screams at us all the time.

To find our good somewhere else. We are told, and even if it's a good thing. Find your good in keeping up with culture.

[12:12] What's trending. We are told, and it might be a good thing. Find your good in a relaxing vacation. Find your good in the pleasures of food and drink.

Find your good in a larger paycheck. Find your good in a decent, comfortable life. Find your good in a perfect romantic relationship. Find your good in the right job. Find your good in raising the perfect children.

Whoever those are. Now let me be clear. All these things are good things. There to be received from our father. As good gifts.

With gratitude. But here's the deal. If we seek. Our ultimate good. If we say, if I only had this.

I would be happy. In the face. Of the living God. That is not finding our good in him. It is finding our good. Outside of him.

[13:09] With maybe a little bit of him sprinkled on top. And if we seek. To find our ultimate good in these things. We will not only be left dissatisfied.

But we will be left in a far worse situation. Than before we sought our good in those things. How do we know that? Skip down to verse 4. The sorrows of those who run after another God.

Shall multiply. Their drink offerings of blood. I will not pour out. Or take their names on my lips.

David sees some Israelites. Scurrying around.

Running after other gods. Participating in the twisted worship. Of these deities. They pour out drink offerings of blood. They take their names on their lips.

To try to seek their good in them. They pour their energy. They pour their heart. They pour their desire. Into those things.

[14:05] They're running after other gods. But what does David say? Your sorrows are going to multiply. Not only is it not going to dissatisfy you. It's your sufferings. The bad state that you're in.

Is going to be multiplied. If you run after other gods. And David rejects it wholesale. I will not pour out their drink offerings of blood. I will not take their names on my lips.

Running after other gods. It's a sober description of the human heart. Multiplied sorrows. As we chase after other gods.

To satisfy our deepest longings for good. The heart that scurries around. That tries to acquire little goods. Little gods. To satisfy its deep need for good.

Is instead going to acquire multiplied sorrows. And ever since the ancient garden. It has been so. When the slithering snake. Deceived us to think.

[15:01] That we could find our good. Outside of the God who made us. To delight in him. What are we scurrying after? What are we trying to acquire?

Are we setting our eyes on greener pastures? Are we telling ourselves. If I can only have this. Then I would be happy. Are we like the Israelites.

That God describes in Jeremiah 2. Abandoning the fountain of living waters. And carving out broken cisterns. That don't hold any water. Can we say to Yahweh.

You are my Lord. I have no good apart from you. Can we say that? Can we say. I will not pour out. Drink offerings of blood. To these idols. I will not take their names.

On my lips. I will not pour my energy. And hard work. Into finding good. Outside of God. David's in trouble.

[16:01] He's looking for good. But you know. He can't find it outside of God. Before we continue on. You might notice we skipped verse 3. There's a little branch.

Coming off of this big branch. I want us to see it. It has a lot of weight for us as a church. Listen carefully. As for the saints in the land.

They are the excellent ones. In whom is all my delight. God. Our good is found in God alone. That's our first big branch.

Of this beautiful tree. And as we drink from the fountain. Of living waters. Fully satisfied. We look up. And we see that we're not alone. There are fellow drinkers.

Fellow slurpers. At the fountain. Of God's goodness. David looks up from the fountain. His lips are wet. And dripping. And he sees his fellow Israelites. Some of them.

[16:59] Not all of them. Some are chasing after other gods. But some of them are at the fountain. And he sees them finding their good in God alone. And he smiles. And he says. Ah. As for the saints in the land.

As for these holy ones. As for these fellow refuge seekers in God. They are the excellent ones. In whom is my delight also. Because they're finding their joy in God alone.

Like me. Brothers and sisters. In Psalm 16. God is speaking to us profoundly. He's telling us to find our ultimate good and satisfaction in Him alone.

And He's calling us to do it together. Whether it's in small groups throughout the week. Here on Sunday morning. Worshiping. In homes. Sharing a meal.

Working together somehow. Throwing a party together next Saturday. Let's find our delight in Him. Alone. And together.

[17:57] As you find your good in Him. Let's delight in that goodness together. Be bold in doing this. Say. Listen. This week has been rough.

But man. This promise has been resounding in my heart. Can I share it with you? Just be that awkward person. Who just starts a conversation that way. Because the end result is always joy.

We are fellow refuge seekers in God. We are fellow sinners turned saints who drink from the fountain of grace together. And the only way to make it better is to share it. So as we walk through this hard season of change and pain as a church.

Let's find our good in God alone. And let's do it together. Let's be bold in doing this. Nothing ties us together more.

Not even our sorrows. Than the great good that we find in God alone. The first big branch of this beautiful tree. Is that we find our good in God alone.

[19:00] But what else does this tree tell us about our good being in God? Let's look at the second branch. It's very closely related to the first. Our good is in God alone.

And our good is being near to God. Our good is in being near to God. Let me read verses 5 and 6. The Lord, Yahweh, is my chosen portion and my cup.

You hold my lot. The lions have fallen for me in pleasant places. Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. Hmm. David calls Yahweh his chosen portion.

His cup. He talks about God holding his lot. Drawing boundary lines. And having a beautiful inheritance. What does that mean? Well, back when God brought the people of Israel into the promised land of Canaan.

He split up the land into different portions. Different inheritances for the different tribes of Israel. They lived there. They thrived there. Judah got some land in the south.

[20:10] Dan got some land in the north. Ephraim got some in the middle. Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. It was portioned off. They had chosen their lot. And their lot fell on this portion of land.

This was their cup. The place that was sufficient for them. This was their home. It was their source of life. But one tribe, the tribe of Levi, didn't have a portion of the land.

They lived on the other people's portions of the land. They didn't have their own. And these guys were special. Because they were God's priests to Israel. Israel's priests to God. They went both ways. They were privileged to come near to God in a way that the other Israelites could not. They served in the temple. That was the hot spot of God's presence.

When people of Israel wanted to meet with God, they came to Jerusalem. And they met with God in the temple. And the priests offered sacrifices to God for them. Because the priests were the only ones who were ritually pure enough to be near to God.

[21:17] And they didn't have a portion of the land. But they did have a portion in something else. There's a really interesting verse in Numbers 18. Let me read it for you. God tells the Levites, You shall have no inheritance in their land.

Neither shall you have any portion among them. Listen to this. I am your portion. And your inheritance among the people of Israel. This was the pattern and the privilege of being a priest. Their nearness to God was their land. Their nearness to God was where they found their good. It's where they lived. It's where they thrived.

But who's writing this psalm? David. David didn't belong to the tribe of Levi. He was the king. From the tribe of Judah.

Judah was the royal tribe. Levi was the priestly tribe. And never the twain shall meet. So why is David saying something that was true about the Levites?

[22:23] About himself? Well, I think it's because David's picking up on something. He sees that God's intention for his people was to be like the Levites.

To find their good in being near to God. He sees the Levite ideal. And he says, I want that. I want you, God, to be my portion.

I want you to be my cup. I want nearness to you to be enough for me. Even if the land is taken away from me, then you are enough. Just like you're enough for the Levites.

If I just have God, that'll be enough. If I lose everything else, the benefits of the land, God is my cup. He's sufficient for me. If I'm near him, I'm okay. If I'm close to him, then the boundary lines have indeed fallen in pleasant places. I really have a beautiful inheritance if my inheritance is God and God alone.

[23:26] God, you can withhold the rolling hills. I'll miss them, but you can withhold them. You can withhold the vineyards and the olive trees, the yearly harvest. You can withhold the beautiful home and the ideal family.

You can withhold the perfect life in this world. Withhold all those good things, but don't withhold yourself. Don't let me not be near you. Be my cup. Be sufficient for me. David says that it is good for him to be near to God.

And if everything else is stripped away, that's okay. In verses 7 and 8, David sees his good and his nearness to God in two specific ways.

Let me read verse 7. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel. In the night also, my heart instructs me. David's blessing Yahweh for his close counsel and friendship.

He's blessing the one who guides his thoughts as he ponders on his bed at night. His nearness to God is so vital as he seeks to reign over Israel, which is his responsibility and his call.

[24:37] He's searching his heart for the wisdom he needs because he knows that God is near to his heart. In Yahweh, he finds a close friend and advisor.

It's good for David to be near God. Let me read verse 8. You find something else there. I have set Yahweh always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

He knows that if God is at his right hand, if he is near to God, nothing can shake him. If he sets Yahweh before him, he is as solid as a rock.

Enemies can invade. Disasters can strike. Sickness can come. Major changes can come. And he will not be shaken. It is good for David to be near to God.

In his nearness to God, he finds stability. But how could David be near God? Well, for David, he had to go to God's temple.

[25:46] That was the hot spot of God's presence. He had to go to the Holy of Holies. But he couldn't go in. He had to have a priest go in for him once a year. Offer sacrifices of a substitute through the mediation of a priest.

David spoke often in other psalms of the joy of being close to God in his sanctuary. But he could only approach God's throne through the sacrifice and mediation of another. What about us? How can we be near God? Where is God's presence for us? Is it just kind of up there somewhere? How can we experience that good that can only be found in being near to God?

That close friendship. That stability of not being shaken because we are close to God. That's the beauty of the gospel. We can be near to God because he's drawn near to us.

John 1.14. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. He became flesh. God's presence is no longer in a place. It's in a person. It's in the person of Jesus Christ.

[26:54] It's in our perfect sacrifice for sin. It's in our perfect high priest. And through him, we draw near to God all the time.

Hebrews 10.19-22 is one of my favorite parts of the Bible. It says we can draw near to God, to his very throne, clenching in our fists, the confession of our hope.

That Jesus, his perfect substitutionary death is the way we can come near. And it's through our perfect righteousness in our perfect high priest that we can draw near without fear, full of confidence all the time.

And not just that, he gives us his spirit to dwell with us so that we can have him as our counselor and our friend, so that we can have communion with him.

That he can be our cup, he can be our portion, and we will not be shaken. Well, this beautiful tree of a psalm has one more branch. Our good is in God alone.

[28:03] Our good is in being near to God. And our good is in God's eternal joy. In verse 9, David releases a shotgun load of intense joy.

Read it with me. Therefore, my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure. Bam, bam, bam. Wow, why all this deep personal joy, David?

He gives the reason for it in verse 10. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy ones see corruption.

Sheol was the shadowy realm of the dead, in Old Testament thought, where the souls of men dwelled after death. It was a place devoid of life and joy.

It's just where you went when you died. It wasn't fun. This is the final enemy. This is David's ghostly trouble. The reality of sin and sin's full-grown form.

[29:10] Death itself. Whatever trouble David is facing in this psalm, death represents the full manifestation of his trouble. Because that's the end of the line.

What good is it to experience joy in this lifetime if death snatches it away in the end? And there's no joy left. But David seems confident in something.

He seems confident that God has the ability to overcome death on his behalf. That you will not abandon my soul to Sheol. You will not let your holy ones see corruption.

There's a real expectation that David will be at God's right hand after death. Read verse 11. You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

David really thinks he's going to be living with God eternally. And experiencing fullness of joy there. And that's where he's finding his good. In God's eternal joy. In his promise of that. But, we all know David's dead.

[30:13] A long time ago. He died. And all people die. Death is coming. It comes to us.

It is the final judgment on our sin. But, how can we reconcile the fact that David is dead? When he says, I'm going to be in your presence.

How can we put those two together? Well, the Bible is so cool. There's a spot in Acts chapter 2. Where this exact verse gets quoted.

Let me read it for you. You don't have to turn there. In Acts chapter 2. Peter stands up. After the Holy Spirit comes on Jesus' church. The first time.

And, the Holy Spirit comes. And they all start proclaiming in different languages. How awesome God is. Because of Jesus. And all the people around are like. Why are you guys speaking in other languages?

[31:12] You're a bunch of Gentiles. This is weird. And, this is what Peter says. Men of Israel. Hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus. Was delivered up according to the definite plan.

Of foreknowledge of God. And, you crucified him. And, killed him. By the hands of lawless men. But, God raised him up. Loosing the pangs of death.

Because, it wasn't possible for him to be held by death. And, then he quotes Psalm 16. Listen to this. For David says concerning him.

I saw the Lord always before me. For he is at my right hand. That I may not be shaken. That sounds familiar. Therefore, my heart was glad. And, my tongue rejoiced. And, my flesh will also dwell in hope.

For, you will not abandon my soul to Hades. Or, let your Holy One see corruption. You make known to me the path of life. You will give me fullness of gladness in your presence. Listen to what Peter says to comment on Psalm 16.

[32:10] Brothers, may I say to you. With confidence about the patriarch David. That he is both dead and buried. And, his tomb is with us to this day. Being, therefore, a prophet.

And, knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him. That he would set one of his descendants on the throne. He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ. That he was not abandoned to Hades.

Nor did his flesh see corruption. So, what's Peter doing here with Psalm 16? He's taking Psalm 16. And, he's looking back to the lens of the cross.

And, the empty tomb. And, he's saying, that promise was to David. But, it wasn't about David. That promise was about David's greater heir. That promise was that David and all those who would trust in God's promise of eternal joy.

Would be delivered from the clutches of death. Through the death of another. Through the death of David's heir. David's greater son, Jesus. The only one who didn't deserve death.

[33:13] The only one who could swallow the poison of shale. Die. And, absorb it into his life. And, kill it. Because, he was stronger than death.

He conquered it. For all who really deserved it. And, were held by it. He died and was buried. So, that he could be raised to newness of life. And, with him.

All those who would put their faith in him. God did not abandon his holy one. Capital H. Capital O. In the dead. In the realm of the dead.

But, he raised him. So, that David could taste real eternal joy. In God's presence. And, not just David. Unless Jesus returns in our lifetime.

We will face death. You and I. Will stare death in the face. It will come sudden. Or, it will come slow. But, we will all face it. And, yet if you've placed your faith in Jesus.

[34:14] In his cross. In his empty tomb. Then, you can stare death in the face. And, not despair. Why?

Because, if you were in Christ. His death conquered your death. And, his resurrection power. Ushers in your eternal joy. And, pleasure.

Forevermore. In God's presence. Because, of the pain. And, sorrow. That he experienced. On our behalf. And, this promise of eternal joy.

Is not just a future reality. Notice how verse 11 says. That God makes known to us. The path of life. It will lead us.

Through this life. And, into the next. With joyful confidence. Confidence that God holds. Our real eternal joy.

[35:16] Now. And, forever. If you're in Christ. You get to taste it now. You have the benefits of it. Even now. Dwelling in you. Through God's spirit.

He gives you tastes. Of his joyful presence. He gives you tastes. Of his resurrection power. Changing you from the inside out. Preparing you. For that eternal joy. If our ultimate trouble.

Death. And, eternal separation from God. If it has been overcome. By God's eternal joy. At his right hand. Through Jesus. Then, what can we say about our troubles now?

Now. The most agonizing personal troubles in this lifetime. Though. Incredibly hard. Are just peanuts compared. To eternity.

Apart from God. And, through Christ. We know the path of life. This psalm is a beautiful tree.

[36:19] Our good is in God. It's in God alone. It's in being near to God. It's in God's eternal joy. That he's given us in Christ. To taste now.

And forever. So, as I close. Let me ask you to consider three ways. To apply what we've meditated on this morning. First. Ask yourself.

How you might be trying to find your good. Apart from God. Is there anything you're saying. In your head. In your heart. If I only had this. Then I'd be happy.

Two. Let me challenge you brothers and sisters. To draw near in faith. To God. And do that. Especially in one thing.

Savoring the deep love. That he has for you. In Christ. How he has drawn near to you. Through Jesus. And brings you near.

[37:23] To your real joy. In three. Colossians 3 tells us. To fix our mind on things above.

Where Christ is. To get our mind on the eternal joy. That is prepared for us. Through Christ. Remember the eternal trouble.

Of hell. And how. Jesus experienced hell. For you. To bring you to eternal joy. Which we don't deserve.

Let your good be found there. Let's pray together. And sing praises to the God. Who is our good. Father.

Father we thank you. That. Apart from you. We. Find no good. That outside of you. God nothing. Will give us. The eternal joy.

[38:18] That we were made for. I pray. Father that you. As a church. God would. Equip us. With this solid. Reminder.

That. You are the path of life. And that. In your presence. Is fullness of joy. And at your right hand. Are pleasures.

Forevermore. May the pleasures. That this world. Fade. In comparison. To that. Help us to sing now. With joy. And with faith. In Christ's name.

Amen.