

Christ Will Rise (8:00 am Service)

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[0 : 00] I'll pray for us. Father, we thank you for this morning, a chance to be together, a chance to hear from your word, and a chance to remember you.

I pray that your Holy Spirit will be with us, and he will help us to understand and to believe in you. Amen. Amen. Well, good morning. Good morning. This morning, Olav shook my hand and said, you're still here, which was an interesting greeting this morning. I said the same thing to Olav. Well, we just read Psalm 84, which is just the psalm of the day, which says, my heart, in verse 2, my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

And Psalm 84 is one of the psalms that invites us to pray, just like the psalm we're going to look at today, Psalm 16.

And what I want to do this morning is invite us together to pray, to pray joyfully. When we read a psalm like Psalm 16, it does a few things to us, because prayer is a funny thing.

[1 : 15] When we pray to God, we are talking to a person. And every time we talk, we are speaking about ourselves and listening and revealing something about who we are a little bit.

But talking to God is not like talking to other people, because God is not like any other person. He knows everything about us, which can be a bit scary.

And he loves us completely, which can be scary in its own way as well. Just when we have a deep friendship, where we express parts of our hearts, so in prayer, we express parts of our hearts to God.

And there's a kind of two-way process, where we learn to see who God is better, and we have our eyes open to see ourselves better in response. It's kind of the two-way street of what prayer is.

And the irony is, we need to learn. We need to learn how to be a human again. We need to learn how to pray. We need to learn how to understand myself.

[2 : 18] I need to learn how to understand my relationship with God. Because as I come to understand my identity as a child of God, that will shape how I see myself.

And we can do this, but we need help. And Psalm 16 has been given us to help us with this process of prayer. I spent much of my 20s doing swing dancing.

I don't know if other people have done much of that. And as you dance more, you kind of learn how to dance better, and you take classes. And after a couple of years, I took an intermediate class, kind of a little bit higher level, better moves, whatever.

And at the beginning of a class, teachers often do something. They will show off. The two teachers will dance.

And what they do is they show what the dance can look like. Because when you're learning, you don't look like that. But when people have danced for years and years and years, they do look amazing.

[3 : 22] And they dance at the beginning of a lesson, a class, to show you what it could be like. And I think this is what Psalm 16 is doing to us. David is showing us what prayer could be like.

And we are all on this hill somewhere below David, actually. And he has seen God's face in a way that few of us have seen sometimes. And it's not to shame us, but to inspire us to say, yes, I could go to God and I could pray like this.

So, we learn about three things this morning. The security that God gives, the threats to the security, and the joy of security. Okay.

Let's open up our Bibles. I've got my Bible here to Psalm 16. And I'll start right at the most important image. So, Psalm 16, verse 5 and 6.

That's the center of the psalm. So, the main picture in Psalm 16 is a picture of land.

[4 : 27] Verse 5. The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup. You hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

And the vocab is a little bit different than ours. But all the words are land words. So, the boundary lines are the lines that mark out a piece of land.

The lot is the lot of land. We use that. The inheritance. Inheritance is particularly about land.

It's the land that one family has given to another, given to another. Now, today, we buy land. Land is something we purchase and we sell.

And equity is involved in land. But the way land functioned in the ancient Near Eastern culture was very, very different. They never, ever, ever buy land. You don't buy land in the ancient culture.

[5 : 24] Land is much more significant. And there's at least three things that come from it. It's a family inheritance. So, there's kind of a sense of permanence from my fathers, fathers, fathers, fathers, to my sons, sons, sons.

It goes this way. Land also is my food and my welfare. These are farmers. And from their own land, they eat. That's why Naomi and Ruth have such a hard time when they come back to Israel.

They don't have land. So, they can't eat food. Then, the grace of God is they are able to eat and then have Boaz. And land also is how they connect to the covenant of God, actually.

The identity of Israelite people were as God's people who had been given land. And so, the land is their welfare, is their family identity, is their covenant access.

Land brings security to the Israelites. Fiscally, food, identity security, all those things are bound up together in land.

[6 : 35] So, what is David saying? Verse 5, What David is saying is that everything that somebody gets from land, David gets from God.

Everything that land can provide for someone in the Israelite culture, David is getting from God.

God is the provider who gives food. God is the wall who gives security.

God is the rock who secures his identity. There is a kind of trust that absolutely frees David from fear. He is sure that no matter what, he is going to be secure because God is his land.

God is his security. My favorite illustration for faith is walking onto ice. I like this. It kind of gives the sense of faith really well.

Faith is when there is a patch of ice and you decide, am I going to step on it? Faith has this kind of like stepping onto ice moment. And in this psalm, David is putting on skates and running out onto the ice to skate around.

[7 : 49] He is just going for it. God is my security. I trust him completely. And in this prayer, David is committing himself to walk out on that ice. I went through the Old Testament.

This is the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they said to Nebuchadnezzar, If the God we serve exists, then he can rescue us from the power of you, the king.

Even if he does not rescue us, we want you as king to know that we will not serve your gods or this gold statue. This is the faith of Mordecai speaking to Esther.

If you keep silent at this time, liberation will come to the Jewish people from another place. And you and your father's house will be destroyed. Who knows?

Perhaps you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this. There are people who know that God is their security. And they can say to all the circumstances outside of them, God is my security.

[8 : 55] There is a security that looks away from the circumstances of life and looks to God and says to the things outside of us, You are not bigger than God's.

In this prayer, David acknowledges that God is the only source of security. And David steps out onto the ice. So, the first point is that God is our security.

The second point is that there are some threats to this. And David is concerned about two things, two threats that he sees that threaten our ability to trust God, really.

And the first one is from verses 2 to 4. The clear statement is in verse 4. The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply.

And David is looking and sees that there are people who run after other gods. And that's why he says in verse 2, I say to the Lord, you are my Lord, I have no good apart from you.

[10 : 02] And he is making a statement of faith to God. He is committing himself to this God and that there would be no other gods. So, the first threat is idolatry.

But there's another threat, and that's fears. And the clearest expression of this is verse 10. You will not abandon my soul to Sheol or let your Holy One see corruption.

And if you've read about David's life, you know David had lots of things to fear in his life. And death was the biggest one, but not the only one. And there are things external to David that threaten him. And he is saying, these things, I trust God will let me have them. Now, people look to all kinds of things for security. I was thinking about it this week, and one way of talking about, I guess, fear and security, is thinking about the public-private split.

We have fears that operate in very different ways. So, there's kind of public fears. And when there's big things that happen out there, we look to someone else that's bigger than us to solve them.

[11 : 24] So, it's been very interesting for me listening to the radio, and there's this awful thing happening, the fentanyl crisis, we call it. And it's really terrible.

I think if you've learned about it at all, it's quite an awful thing. But it's really interesting to me, listening to the radio, the CBC, what they do, as soon as they start thinking about this bad thing that's happening, they go and talk to the person in the government who's in charge of health and drugs, and say, what are you going to do about this?

And they say, you have this responsibility. And I think we feel this, the sense that surely someone should be taking care of this. And I think reading the news is often a temptation to fear.

There's lots of bad stuff that happens in the news. And when we read the news, it's a great temptation to us to look for somebody else to help us.

That's the public fears that operate. And for others, the real fears are the private ones, the ones that work in myself. This is the career-driven person, or the pleasure-driven person, or the body-image-driven person.

[12 : 48] There's all kinds of ways these things work out. But there are some who, the main driving fear for them is the private ones. Now, why do I say this?

The thing is, David has two concerns. The first one is idolatry, and the second one is fears. But they are not two concerns. They are one concern.

Because we worship the thing we believe that will give us security. We will go to the idol that we think will answer our fears. Fear causes us to hunt after other gods.

That's what the verse in 4, those who run after another god. This week I was reading Spurgeon, the prince of preachers. I thought I would share a little bit from him.

He is great. Spurgeon says, Spurgeon's good.

[14 : 05] He says it helpfully. Yes, I think our fears and insecurities will cause us to do all kinds of things that are not faithful to God.

Fear is a powerful motivator. But the thing is, we have a God who is much bigger than all the fears that we have in the world. The government does not control the public sphere because God does. God is in control of the fentanyl crisis. I do not control my private life because God does. God is much better at organizing my life than I am.

I'm quite bad at it, frankly. And God is wonderful at it. God is a father who loves us. So let us go to him and love him.

There is a security that God offers which is far beyond everything this world can offer us. Whether something outside of us or whether something inside of us.

[15 : 09] And we, as it were, walk right past the one person who offers us security and look for security in all kinds of other places. So, let us go and trust the Lord.

Now, my last point is the fruit of security. And the point is that there is joy when we find security in God.

And I want to say that I'm not here to try and make you feel guilty. I think it is true that we walk past God. But it's possible for us to berate ourselves and to be guilty about not praying enough.

What my hope is today is that we can watch the dancer dance. We can be amazed and feel called as David has found joy in his security in God.

For example, verse 8 and 9. I set the Lord always before me. So the whole passage of verse 7 to 11 is about joy, basically.

[16 : 14] I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices.

My flesh dwells secure. Yes, David has found something. He has found security in God. And he has joy. I'm going to spend a little time in verse 11.

Verse 11 says, You make known to me the path of life. In your presence, there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

And some commentators say that there's two things here that are a result of having an intimate walk with God and knowing him as a security. And the first one is, you make known to me the path of life.

And the second is, in your presence, there is fullness of joy. And there are pleasures forevermore. So the second one is the promise of the blessing of knowing God as a father.

[17 : 21] The blessing of having an intimate walk with God. There is fullness of joy in the presence of God. And the first thing is the first one, the path of life.

This is a picture from the wisdom literature, the path of life. And it's the life of obedience to God. The path of life is the path of wisdom. And I know how to live with God's commands. He shows me how to live. And as I walk on those commands, I live. And walking as God would have us to walk. Now again, the most important thing about this verse is that there are not two ideas.

There's one idea. Because the holy life is the happy life. I was listening to tapes of Jim Packer recently.

And he said, it's very important for preachers to say this phrase, the holy life is the happy life. So I'm glad I'm doing my duty as a Jim Packer follower.

[18 : 24] As Christians who receive the new birth, it is perfectly natural for us to obey God's commands. Now, we act unnaturally sometimes.

And we don't live as we should. But the person who is a Christian who walks on the path of life finds that there is fullness of joy. Now, how this works, the prayer-joy-fears complex is a process of self-work, soul work.

And there's an illustration for this, which I've been learning about recently because I got married a few months ago. And just before I got married, my soon-to-be father-in-law gave me a piece of advice, which has been good.

He said, when you are married and you have to work on something, you need to talk. You need to discuss things.

And every time you have a piece of conflict, it's like an opportunity. there's a wall and you are going to the wall and taking a brick off that wall. And if you work through this conflict, it's like this more relationship there, more openness.

[19 : 43] And I've found it to be true. Every time Kelsey and I have to talk about something, a few things happen all at once. We work on a problem.

We develop more openness between us in that moment. But there's kind of like a deeper happiness that happens between us outside of that moment.

And this is what prayer is like for us with God. We go to God and we say to Him, these are the fears that I have right now. And I'm feeling nervous about this.

And we do soul work. And we talk to Him about the thing. What's this thing? But every time we do that, we take a brick off the wall and there is more openness between me and God.

And I find there is more joy and I understand the path of life better. There's this process that David is calling us to to pray and to give our hearts to Him.

[20 : 42] Now, I just need to finish by saying this. I said at the beginning that I did dance lessons and sometimes there would be a great teacher dancing really well.

Well, I want you to imagine that David is the one praying and dancing. But the New Testament teaches us that there is somebody else who comes along and shows us how to dance. And that's Jesus.

The great prayer. The New Testament teaches us that this psalm is a psalm about Jesus. Jesus is the one who trusted God. who in the face of temptation said no.

Who could say no to Pilate with no words. Who said no to Satan himself, to all fears around him.

And Jesus trusted God so much that he could say verse 10, I trust you even with death.

You will not abandon my soul to Sheol. And the teaching of the New Testament is that our security is based on the faith of Jesus Christ. So even when we have fears and when there are things around us that we can't understand, we can know that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God.

[21 : 55] Amen.