

Christ Will Rise

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Preacher: Canon David Short

- [0 : 0 0] Heavenly Father, we ask now that you'd pull back the veil again and that you would show us something of the fullness of joys that we have with you.
- And we ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Well, as you're turning to Psalm 16 in the Bible from the seat in front of you, if you would turn up to Psalm 16, which covers page 453 and flips over to 454.
- However, isn't it wonderful to see the video footage of the Bible camp? It's so exciting. You just get this sense that in every one of those pictures, there's a whole group of things that are happening, a bit of a deeper world.
- And having one child at the end saying the text, that was just terrific. I don't know about you, but sometimes as you read the Psalms, you come across a line that is radioactive.
- I don't know how to describe it. There's a line that will just hit you in the right place. Stand off the page. It sings and it stings and it brings you into the presence of God.
- [1 : 1 5] And it seems just impossibly right and impossibly true, overwhelmingly filled with the goodness of God and hope. And Psalm 16 is full of those kinds of lines.
- Just look down at the Psalm with me for a minute. At the end of verse 2, King David says, Or just over the page in verse 8, Or verse 11, Now don't you feel we could just take a long time and sink into each one of those?
- And we could have a very profitable couple of mornings meditating on those things. The trouble is, for me, is at the same time, whenever I read the Psalms, there's a strangeness.
- There's a bit of an alienness about them. Some of the lines in the Psalms, I just can't identify with. You know, David says in two Psalms away, As soon as they heard of me, they obeyed me.
- Foreigners came cringing to me. Can you say that? All together now. I can't say that. I find there are lots of phrases that are much easier to relate to.
- [3 : 0 0] My favourite is the one where my friends and companions see I have the plague and walk on the other side of the street to avoid me. So there's much in Psalm 16 that I wish I could say.
- But I just feel I'm often not up to it, frankly. And the repentance Psalms are easy. I can get myself into those. But this one, Psalm 16 and some of the others, seems it's above my pay grade, really.
- And what do you do with that when you're reading a Psalm and it just seems so wonderful? Do you, you know, just say, oh, it's just poetic license and hold on to the juicy bits that work for you?
- The trouble with that is that you become highly selective until you only read the parts of the Bible that make you feel good. And you end up with a God that looks like you. And you don't want that, trust me.
- One of the amazing things about Psalm 16 is it deals exactly with this problem. It teaches us how to pray. And it gives us two very precious gifts.

[4 : 05] A pattern for prayer and the power to pray. So let me look at these two things with you. The first point's longer than the second. The pattern of prayer takes the first two-thirds of the Psalm.

One of the most important things to know about Psalm 16 is that it is a practice of spiritual self-talk. It teaches us how to preach to ourselves.

While the whole Psalm is spoken in God's presence, it's only the first four words that are prayed to God. The rest of the Psalm, David is speaking to his own heart, his own soul.

It's spiritual self-talk. So a famous English preacher died in the 80s, Martin Lloyd-Jones, wrote a book called Spiritual Depression.

Very helpful book. And he says this. Have you realised that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you're listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? We all talk to ourselves.

[5 : 13] I found myself talking to myself this morning when I was cleaning my teeth. It was quite frustrating. He says, you have to take yourself in hand. You have to address yourself. Preach to yourself.

Question yourself. You've got to say to your soul, why are you cast down? What business do you have being disquieted? Turn on yourself. You've got to rebuke and condemn yourself and exhort yourself and say, hope in God.

Instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way. And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, who God is, what God is, what God has done, what God has pledged to do. Okay. We all do this and we all know this, but this is a spiritual discipline in prayer.

And how does Psalm 16 help us with this? What is the pattern of self-talk? And what the Psalm does is it gives us two questions to ask ourselves as we begin to pray, when we don't feel up to praying this way.

And the first question is this. You ask yourself, where are you? So look at the first two verses, please. Preserve me, oh God.

[6 : 17] That's the prayer. And David says, in this life, there's no evidence. By the way, could you turn my volume down just a little bit, please? Thank you.

I don't want to echo. Can people hear me still? Okay. If you can't, don't worry. I'm sorry. What a stupid question to ask.

Can you hear me? Where was I? Preserve me. That's right. This is an idea of someone who cares about you. And there's no crisis David is facing, but he's asking God to take him and care for him, not just in this life, but through death and through eternity.

And then he says, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, that's not quite right, you are my Lord.

I have no good apart from you. Now, we all take refuge in things. Some of you take refuge in good looks, clever words, brilliant success.

[7 : 21] But the best and only safe place of refuge, of course, is God himself. And this is where David begins. He says, in you I take refuge.

So, you see, the first thing we do when we come to prayer, the first part of self-talk is saying, where am I? Not in Vancouver. I'm not in my home. Spiritually, where am I? And the answer is, in God.

I take refuge in God. And the reason this is self-talk is in the second verse, the first word is feminine. Just, he's speaking to his soul.

The second verse should be translated, oh, my soul, you've said to the Lord, you are my Lord. I have no good apart from you. You see what he's doing?

He's talking to himself. He's saying, listen, soul. Where are you really? In God, right? Why is that important? Because I've said to him, you are my God.

[8 : 20] I've taken him as my Lord. I have no other Lord. I have no other real place of refuge apart from him. He's made himself a refuge to me. And all I have and all I have, I've given to him.

And is that it? Why is that any good? You say to yourself, well, it's the best. Because I have no good apart from God. There is no true good outside of him.

All my good is in him. He is all I need. You see? I wonder if you can catch this. I mean, listen to these words. I have no good apart from God.

Really? We have all sorts of good in our life, don't we? Yes. But as we begin to see where we are, that we've taken refuge in God, all the good that we have in our life has come from him.

And it's only good because it's come from him. Not only that, but the enjoyment of the good comes from him. So why do mangoes taste so good?

[9 : 24] It's because God enables us to enjoy. I'm sorry for those who don't like mangoes. Replace illustration favorite fruit. Just think, it's very practical.

It's way more than saying God is good. Sometimes you hear us Christians say God is good all the time, usually when something has turned out very well for us. And that's great. It is good.

But David is not saying God is good. He's saying, apart from God, outside of God, I have no good. It's more than saying God gives me good things. It's more than even saying all goodness is in God.

It's in the negative. It's stronger. I have no good outside of him. Nothing outside of God is good in itself. It's amazing, isn't it?

It only draws its goodness from its connection to God. Every other good God gives me in this life, I receive with thanks from him, and I treat it according to how God would have me treated or treat them.

[10 : 30] Now, just think about this for a moment. As you're beginning to pray, what does this tell you about God? I think it's impossible to imagine what it would be like to have all good in yourself.

Not to have accumulated good things, but to be the source. I mean, it means at least about God that he needs nothing outside himself, does he? And yet, and yet, this is the God who offers refuge for us and offers joys at his right hand, which we'll come to in a moment.

Now, I know this still sounds a bit airy-fairy, and David shows, gives us a concrete example of how it works in his attitudes and relationships.

So look at verses 3 and 4, and he shows, he's still on Where Am I? He says, And one of the great goods that God has given us is other fellow believers.

And then he says, So the prayer comes out at God's people.

[11 : 52] You can't take refuge in God, and you can't believe in his goodness, without being somewhat committed to the fellowship of believers. In fact, it's often one of the early signs of losing sight of the goodness of God that you lose sight of the goodness of other believers.

So when you take refuge in God and you get a sense of his goodness, it will create fellowship, it will create unity, and it will create community. So the first question of self-talk is, Where am I?

I'm in God. I take refuge in God. And the second question that we ask ourselves is this, Who is in front? And this is the middle chunk, verses 5 to 8.

Again, David speaks to his soul. Let me take you down to verse 8. See, it's no good if all goodness is in God.

It's no good to us, absolutely no use to us, unless we know how to draw on that goodness. I mean, God can be as gracious, kind, and willing, and able to be our rock, and our treasure, and our refuge, but it's not going to do us anything, any good, unless we learn how to take hold of him.

[13 : 10] I have set the Lord always before me. It's a physical phrase. Set means literally, I just clear out the ground right in front of me from everything else.

I level it off, and I put. I have set the Lord before me. Before I walk on step by step, I put the Lord right in front of my eyes. I put the Lord between me and between everything else.

Now, the Lord is present with us always. We know that. But this is collecting ourselves together and reminding ourselves that God is here, and seeing him as the closest thing to you, and that through you, you look at all the people and all the events through him.

Who is in front? I have set the Lord before me. When you think of the most difficult things in life, think of an issue that you're facing right now. I'm aware some of us face deep grief and loss.

You may have had a terminal diagnosis. You may be facing something you've got no idea how you're going to get through. Since you are in God, set the Lord before you, and between you and the thing you are facing, and the Lord who can never be moved, who's way more powerful than that thing, you take and you put the Lord in front of you and say, I want to look that thing in the eyes through God.

[14 : 38] You know the story in the book of Two Kings. When the people of Israel were surrounded by a vastly stronger army, they seemed doomed. And Elisha had a servant who was panicking, panicking, panicking.

And Elisha simply prayed that God would open the servant's eyes. And God does. And around Israel is a mighty, vast host of army, army of angels in mighty chariots and fiery clothing.

And the king comes to Elisha and says, now they're all afraid and been struck blind. Shall I kill them? And Elisha says, no, no, no, make them a banquet and send them home. And he does. Because if you look at things through God, it changes.

Or it could be something wonderful and brilliant that you're facing, or, you know, something you really, really want. And it looks like you're going to get something you've hoped for a long time. You set the Lord in front of you, between you and that thing.

And you start to see the thing through the eyes of God. God. Or you may be dealing with someone who's really, really difficult. He's hurt you, or she's hurt you, or rejected you, or you just don't like them.

[15 : 45] You set the Lord between you and that person. You can't begin to forgive someone or love someone selflessly until you see them through the Lord's eyes, until we set the Lord before us. And the key to this is our affections.

I've been amazed at our hymns today so far. The hymns that were sung on the video, the hymns that we've sung, they're all the language of affections.

And David is using the language of affections. Just flip back, cast your eye down verses five and six. You know, the Lord is my chosen portion, my cup. He is, you know, he's the best slice of cake.

He's the best piece of pie. He's my cup. He's, he's how I enjoy it as well. He's my lot. My, you know, the best piece of land. And they've fallen in pleasant places.

Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance, David says. I've said this before. Affections are not just emotions or feelings. Our affections are the bias of our hearts.

[16 : 49] The things we, we gravitate to, our love, the things we love or hate, we're drawn to, you know, what we think is beautiful, what we think is terrible. And the expert in this was a guy who wrote in the 1970s called Jonathan Edwards.

And he says, he says, true faith in great part consists in holy affections, hot and holy affections. And our hearts have two abilities. One is to understand things and the other is to love things or to hate them.

Light and heat. And, you know, you can, you can understand baseball and not love it. You can love cricket and not understand it.

And when it comes to God, to have one without the other is just, oh, it's tragic really. To have heat without light, the easiest illustration is the young men and women who've left their home and families and joined up with ISIL.

Plenty of passion and enthusiasm, but there's no light of the true God in it. And you can have light with no heat. You can have vast knowledge and your heart is as cold as a tomb.

[18 : 00] I almost never start my prayers hot. I confess this. My heart is distractive and distance and detached.

And I never go from zero to a hundred quickly. Sometimes it happens. Maybe once or twice a year. Mostly it just, you take a few steps. I know God wants to fill me with joy and brightness.

But without this self-talk, I'm sunk, reminding myself where I am, reminding myself, setting the Lord before me, stirring up my affections. And David shows us something of how he does this.

He does it in the nighttime. Verse seven. He says, David's meditating on what God said.

And he's meditating on his life. And he's setting the Lord between the two of them. And he starts to understand. So here are two, two questions, two self-talk questions, two pieces of a pattern of prayer.

[19 : 13] Where are you? Who is in front of you? And I want to say, well, that's all very fine, but there are just two problems with this pattern. The first is that David often didn't live up to this, did he?

You know, we study David's life. He had some significant sliding and sinning and covering up. He did not set the Lord before him when we had sex with his neighbor's wife and then murdered his husband.

The first problem is David. And the second problem is me. I just, even though I've said these things, I feel I don't have the power to do this. And if, as most preachers do, if we just hold David up as an example for us to follow, we are going to be a very depressed people.

Because we can never be as good as this, I don't think. It's like taking Jesus as our example. He is our example. But if that's all he is, I might as well give up now.

Because I'll never be as pure and loving and kind and clear and truthful as Jesus is. There's got to be something else. There's got to be some power by which God lifts me out of myself, or gives me the power and desire and affections to feel as David felt, to do as David did, and to pray as David prayed.

[20 : 29] So I now move my first point about pattern to the second shorter point about the power. Where does this power for our prayer come from? And the answer is, it comes from the future, and it comes from Christ.

See, under the power of the Holy Spirit in Psalm 16, David is deliberately punching above his wake. speaking above his pay grade. And this becomes clear in the last three verses.

Verse 9. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices. Is everyone with me so far? Is everyone awake?

Do I need to show the video again? This is better. Verse 9. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure. Really? David, you died.

You died 3,000 years ago. 4. Verse 10. You will not abandon my soul to corruption, or let your Holy One... Sorry. You will not abandon my soul to shale, or let your Holy One see corruption.

[21 : 34] Really? You see yourself as God's Holy One? And your body did see corruption. Each one of us can get a plane ticket, and go to Jerusalem, and then pay \$300 to get a guided tour of David's tomb.

Or 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. Really? How do you know that? You've never been there? Well, David...

King David was the bearer of massive promises. God had anointed him as king through a prophet. And that anointing word is Messiah.

He had Messiah... He was the Old Testament Messiah. And God had promised to him one day to set one of his descendants on the throne to be an eternal king. God's ultimate and true Messiah.

And by God's spirit, David, in the Psalms, often speaks as though he is this true Messiah. Which means that the Psalms, listen, the Psalms are the prayers of Jesus.

[22 : 42] The Psalms are the prayers of the Messiah. Let me show you this. So if you'd like to keep one hand in Psalm 16, if you have a Bible, and turn to Acts chapter 2.

It's way to the right. A thousand years later, day of Pentecost, Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, is preaching.

Page 910. Do keep your hand in Psalm 16. He's preaching all about Jesus.

There are many people in the crowd who had a hand in crucifying Jesus. And so I'm going to start at verse 23 and read a few verses. No, I'm going to start at 22.

Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

[23 : 42] This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death because it was not possible for death to be held by it.

Why? Verse 25. Because, for, David says, concerning him, Jesus, I saw the Lord, and here he quotes from Psalm 16, I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken.

Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced. My flesh will also dwell in hope, for you will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your Holy One, capital H, capital O, see corruption.

You have made known to me the paths of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence. Isn't that amazing? So Peter takes the words of Psalm 16 and applies them straight to Jesus without any hesitation whatsoever.

Why? Verse 29. Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David who died a thousand years before. He both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day.

[25 : 01] Being therefore a prophet and knowing that God had sworn an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of Christ that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

This Jesus God raised up and of that we are all witnesses. Let's go back to Psalm 16. So, Psalm 16 verse 11.

When David says, you will not let your Holy One see corruption, those words are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. Why does Jesus go through death and resurrection?

It's verse 11. You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there's fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. See, Jesus chose to die and rise again so that he could enter the joy of God and as he enters, as he comes and approaches the horror of crucifixion and suffering for our sin, he does so because of the joy that is kept for him at the right hand of the Father and by his death and resurrection he opens the door to us to share that joy, that fullness of joy with us.

So, you see, for everyone who trusts in Christ, the words of these bear with me, the words of the Psalms become ours more deeply and more concretely. Where does the power come from to pray these words?

[26 : 36] Jesus himself prays these words in us and through us so that we can enter Psalm 16 in a way that's even deeper than David could. It's Jesus' death and resurrection that gives us a new power, a different heart.

So the prayer isn't just a pattern to follow, they become words of power from Christ through us. Think about them. You have made known to me the path of life. Where is our path of life?

Jesus is the way and the life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. We are now in God's presence because of the work of Jesus Christ and though we have not seen him, we love him and though we do not now see him, we believe in him and we rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father. I am united with Jesus Christ. I seek the things that are above where Christ is.

Since Jesus has died and risen again, these words are now ours and that is the pattern and power of Psalm 16. and I just want to say two things, two takeaways before we finish.

[27 : 55] The first is, if this is true, it makes the devil's work almost impossible. If there are pleasures forevermore at the right hand of the Father, how hard would it be to be the devil?

In C.S. Lewis' wonderful book, The Screwtape Letters, Screwtape Lewis writes as in the voice of a senior devil and he complains to his junior devils about the unfair advantage that God has.

Here's a quote. This is the devil, this is one of the devils speaking about God. He's a hedonist at heart. All those fasts and vigils and stakes and crosses, they're only a facade.

They're like foam on the seashore. Out at sea, out in his sea, there's pleasure and more pleasure. He makes no secret of it. At his right hand are pleasures forevermore. Then he says, I don't think he has the least inkling of that high and austere mystery to which we devils rise in the miserie vision.

He's vulgar, Wormwood. He has a bourgeois mind. He has filled his world full of pleasures. There are things for humans to do all day long without his minding in the least. Sleeping, washing, eating, drinking, making, love, playing, praying, working.

[29 : 13] Everything has to be twisted before it's of any use to us. We fight under cruel disadvantages. The second thing to take away is this.

It is amazing the God-centeredness of this psalm. What makes heaven heaven is the presence of God, the source of joy, the source of life, the source of goodness, and our brother, Jesus Christ.

That's what we're made for. And if we could accumulate every pleasure and every treasure in this world, if you could have everything your heart desired without God, it would have no power, no joy, or satisfaction.

Even if you had immortality, without God, it would be joyless. Amen. Let's pray together.