

One King to Defeat Sheol

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[0 : 0 0] Psalms, they are an inspiration to every one of us. Many are even quoted at funerals, particularly by non-believers. They're also quoted during times of crisis.

David began his life as a shepherd. He was the king of Israel. He wrote 70 of these Psalms. From them we can gain an insight into the life of David, his experiences and how God has always been with him.

The contexts vary. David was often on the run, being persecuted for his life. There were also occasions where he rebelled and he came back to God to seek his forgiveness.

Through them all, David knew that God was always with him. We have all faced hardships of one kind or another. Some of the issues which David faced, we face today.

Even 3,000 years after. So let us commit our time to prayer. Heavenly Father, may your word continue to teach us, encourage us and inspire us to Christian growth and maturity.

[1 : 1 5] May we be ready with open hearts to receive from you. In Jesus' name, Amen. Please open your Bibles with me to Psalm 16. Psalm 16 is a psalm of trust, a psalm of confidence in God.

The focus of our psalm today, Psalm 16, is on the goodness of God. David had been reflecting on his life and his relationship with God and through his assessment, he has seen the hand of God through the good times and the bad times.

This psalm points to the benefits of living in a life with a relationship with God. It illustrates what it means to throw one's lot with God. The person who puts his trust and life in God's hands has no reason to fear this present life or the future.

From the outset in verse 1, we have David's statement of faith. He begins in prayer to God. Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

David commends himself first to God. God is his protector. When we look at the life of David, we often find him on the run like a fugitive. For example, in his early years running from soil in the wilderness or having to resort to hiding in caves.

[2 : 3 8] But through it all, God was there in every situation through the highs and the lows. This assurance of protection is part of the covenantal relationship that David had with God.

David was called a man after God's own heart. With his covenantal relationship, he had the same privileges as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had.

Through this, God would bless him and direct him day after day. But this was on the proviso that David would remain loyal and obedient to God.

We too must be fully committed to God. If we seek God, he will be our protecting hand. We can then say with confidence, as David did in verse 2, I say to the Lord, You are my Lord.

You are my chosen portion. I have no good apart from you. David in this covenantal relationship acknowledges that his Lord is sovereign.

[3 : 45] He is perfect and complete goodness who provides for his every need. His well-being is fully dependent on God. In saying, My Lord, You are my Lord, David is declaring his faith and that he is totally submitted to God as ruler and master.

He firstly acknowledges that the Lord is his one and only God. The Lord is his all in all. David recognises that he is nothing without God.

David can do nothing that will improve his life because God has already done it and will continue to do so. God is his ultimate guide, his treasure.

His treasure is more precious than any other. These two verses are a prayer, a statement of faith, affirmed many times throughout this psalm which we will be looking at.

He then goes on to set the reason why his faith is placed in the Lord. As humans we have been created by God. It is only when we recognise our sinful, sinful human, that we are sinful human beings that we appreciate the grace that has been provided through Jesus' death and resurrection.

[5 : 03] This bridges the gap and we recognise that we are nothing without God. God's grace through Jesus, our most valuable treasure, cannot be bought or sold.

We can be confident that Jesus provides us the salvation and the wisdom for us to live each day. Jesus is our Lord. We have no good apart from him.

In verse 3 and 4, we have the contrast of two peoples, those who are in a relationship with God and obedient to him and those who have rejected God and go after foreign gods.

As for the holy ones in the land, they are noble, in whom is all my delight. Those who choose another God multiply their sorrows. Their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips.

David here is drawn to the holy ones in the land, those who are noble and loyal to God. These people are not some super saint or super Christian.

[6 : 13] These are men and women who are humble. They exemplify godly character and their lives have been transformed by God. To use this covenantal language, God calls them to be holy as the Lord God is holy.

I believe that these verses contain a special challenge to us today, especially in our culture where the church and our world become so intermingled.

It is crucial for us today to spend time with other believers, to join a Bible study group, to pray with each other and to read the scriptures.

We need to know what the Bible says about holy Christian living and we need to keep each other accountable. We need to look at the godly examples around us, spend time in prayer with those who exemplify God's character, ask them questions about their Christian walk.

This is why it is very important for those of you who have been Christians for such a long time to get alongside those who are younger in their faith. We need you.

[7 : 28] The church needs you. We need you to give godly insight and to be good role models for those who are new Christians. The Bible says to either serve the Lord or serve the world because we cannot do both.

We are warned to be on our guard when we associate ourselves with the non-believer as this could put us into a situation where we could be tempted and we could sin against our God.

If we hang out with people who despise God and enjoy rebelling against him, the tendency is that we could be tempted to do the same and accept what they say as to be the norm, even if this means rejecting God's holy word.

It can happen so easily and I've seen it in the past where friends have subtly accepted what the world says and then they get their liquid paper out and blot out parts of scripture because it is too offensive.

So what do we do in these situations? Because we all know non-believers. We work with them each day. The parents of our children might be non-believers.

[8 : 46] And we even have family members who have fallen away and do not believe in Jesus. Jesus mixed with sinners. He walked with them and he asked us to do the same.

He asked us to be a witness, to be a light to them and to the situations we find ourselves in. But if sin comes, temptation, something which is against God's word, we are to be bold and to stand up and to claim that that is wrong and flee from evil.

Looking at the context of verse 4, David was right to separate himself from those who worshipped false gods. He even refuses to utter their names. This was a way of suggesting that he's not tolerating them because they are foolish, they are worthless.

He utterly detests them. So who are these people who are tempting David? They could be Israelites who have fallen away to pagan practices.

There are signs here of syncretism. Syncretism is where one tries to have a bet both ways. For example, the people could be saying to David, serve God, serve these idols, these foreign gods and things might get better for you because he was in a vulnerable situation.

[10 : 18] Things didn't seem working out by what the non-believer saw. But David stood firm. He knew that no good could come from anyone but God.

Those who are opposed to God and seek idols will not find peace but will find sorrow and hardship. We see this many times in the Old Testament. Just turn to the book of Kings where king after king, and there were some good kings, but the majority rebelled against God and the people chose to sort after foreign gods.

These people were punished. They didn't find satisfaction in following foreign gods but hardship and in the end they were scattered by the Babylonians in the 6th century.

The seeking after foreign gods and idols is a way of life that is completely inconsistent with our trust in a sovereign God. We live in a world that places its own standards on us and greatly pressures us to think and act as the fallen world does.

As Christians our lives are to be honouring to God. Like Israel we are called to be holy a people belonging to God. Idolatry is a burden.

[11 : 42] While we don't worship the statues of stone and wood other gods surround us and fill our lives and take our devotion away from God. For example when the football season comes along and I won't exclude cricket in this some fanatical supporters even in the church will become so engrossed in their team's success they will read all the newspapers be decked out in all the colours travelling from state to state so they can see a match.

They become so engrossed that they don't have time to pray they don't have time to read the Bible and they even fall away from the church. Football isn't bad in itself and as many of you know I'm a Geelong supporter and proud of it but when football becomes an idol it takes away our devotion to God and it distracts us from our loyalty and our devotion to him.

So are there any idols in your life that have become an idol to you that you need to repent of? Maybe a career an education money idolatry and sin affects our service to God and can multiply our sorrows.

Verse 5 expands on the theme of God's provision in verse 2 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup You hold my lot The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places I have a goodly heritage Here we have David drawing a line in the sand He makes it even more clearer He wants to state his position again He chooses God over any idol or person He cannot trust in man-made images or advice David has faith in God alone He has seen it in the past and he is very certain that he will see it in the future The expression my cup is better translated as inheritance David rejoices in the goodness that God has bestowed on him David is king over Israel It is a large kingdom it has been prosperous

He has his security and God has provided for him David says the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places I have a goodly inheritance Now David has got it pretty good and he is very happy with what God has given him and done for him but life has been life on a whole has been very good even with its ups and downs David is happy that God is in control looking after him His joy however is not in the material blessings that has been bestowed on him but it is in his relationship with God that real joy and satisfaction comes We are told that all wealth and enjoyment is found in God If we have confessed our sin and surrendered our lives to Christ we too can share in this goodly heritage I think we can all say that in our lives we do live comfortably

[15 : 05] God has provided us provided for us very nicely and cares for us Even with the little hiccups on the way God has been faithful even though we don't deserve it He has sent Jesus Christ to die for us Even though we suffer sometimes God continues continues to be our guide and continues to be overseeing us and providing for our needs In September the gasket in my car needed to be replaced I was stuck at the side of the road at 7 o'clock in the dark Dollar signs quickly came as I thought a head gasket cost probably \$2,500 where do I get the money from but as I waited for the RACV to come it made me to reflect on my income which isn't large but with this unexpected bill and the extension of my family with the blessing of children

I had peace God provides for us each day even with the unexpected things which come our way God will look after us and our family He will supply all our needs So I don't complain because if I did it would be like saying to God I don't trust in your foreknowledge or love for me because God does Even David's life was not smooth sailing His first son died He lost a son who even tried to kill him Yes he was caught a man after God's own hut but he did suffer and he did sin However he was comforted knowing that God was faithful to him and remained his refuge a place he could go in time of trouble and in a time of guidance He was confident that the cup or his inheritance consisted of good things If we take a moment to look back on our lives and look at the ups and downs we can see God through them all

God has been faithful to David and will also be faithful to us In this fallen world we live with the reality that most of us will at least have one thorn in our side just as Paul did but it is how we respond to that thorn that matters And so if you are living in a relationship with God take heart be reassured of God's faithfulness Praise him for the way he has ordered your life God remains faithful to those who call him Lord God is in control of our destiny He is sufficient to satisfy our every need both now and in the future Verse 7 and 8 David continues his assessment of his life It leads him to daily reconnect with God He says I bless the Lord who gives me counsel

In the night also my heart instructs me I keep the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved David's personal relationship with God was his greatest joy He was totally confident and trusted in God This joy is expressed in Verse 7 and 8 I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel In the night also my heart instructs me This joy and outburst of praise is the recognition of God's undeserved privileges to David and is also available to us Firstly he receives counsel from the Lord Both day and night we find David tapped into the fountain of wisdom we have already seen in Verse 2 and the previous two verses that the Lord was his treasure he needed nothing else except for God he prayed first before he acted usually believers and sometimes non-believers act first

I will do it my own way and then when they hit crisis times when things don't work out they come back to God and pray but David knew of the secret of prayer if he prayed to God listened to him God would make his way forth God would say yes go this way or no don't do that Secondly his heart instructs him and at times corrects him the Lord speaks to his conscience as he contemplates the word instruct carries with it the idea of discipline and correction God disciplines his children those children who he loves he disciplines them not to hurt us but because he loves us just like a parent correcting a child's behaviour so they don't hurt themselves God also corrects us to keep us on the right path as a person who accepts

[20 : 23] Christ as their Lord and Saviour they take on the journey of sanctification this is our desire is to become more and more like Christ we look at God's word we allow God to transform us and to remove things which are not of him this is only possible if we submit ourselves to God and to his grace and divide ourselves to prayer and through the reading of God's word when we spend time with the Lord we come to know the heart of God this is what David did our decisions will be honouring to him the special ingredient for wise living is to daily make time to meditate on God's word and to pray because wisdom only comes from God David acknowledges this and his experiences have shown him that God is faithful through the good times and the bad times through it all God is with him I keep the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand I shall not be moved David puts God first in his life and nothing will change this then in verse 9 and 10 we see the outcome of this covenantal relationship between David and God therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices my body also rest secure for you do not give me up to Sheol or let your holy one see decay therefore is a key in verse 9 it is because of the blessings that David has received from God in verse 1 to 8 of protection refuge and counsel that David can be glad and rejoice he enjoyed a personal relationship with God on earth and this will continue even after death his life was secure he did not fear death as some do he was confident that

God's salvation plan would come and that he would not be given up to Sheol the good news is that this doesn't end here with David these verses are extremely significant for the rest of the Bible we have a prophetic glimpse here of how the Messiah Jesus would defeat Sheol and change the course of history Peter and Paul use these verses as proof of the resurrection of Christ the fulfillment of God's salvation plan in the book of Samuel God had sworn an oath to David that one of his descendants would be raised up and live on his throne forever he was to be the promised Messiah who would come to earth as a man to conquer death and bring him the new covenant Christ would not stay in Sheol because he had no sin Sheol could not hold him down in

Acts 2 Peter quotes today's psalm in his Pentecost speech he said God did not abandon Jesus to the grave instead he raised him up in contrast humankind is sinful and we are destined to die and face judgment because that's what the law requires for the wages of sin is death however God through his mercy and grace has raised Jesus Christ up from the dead and broken the stronghold of sin Christ has become a door for those who believe in a door that connects us to have a relationship with God this will enable us to enjoy the pleasures the eternal pleasures of eternity both in this life and the life to come for David says in verse 11 you show me the path of life in your presence there is fullness of joy in your right hand our pleasures forever more

David acknowledges that God has shown him the path of life he walks with the Lord in complete confidence and joy he has thrown his lot with God he knows that if his trust in life is in God's hands there is no reason to fear the present or the future and that is encouragement for us as well today death death is certain just like taxes the time will come when we all will die our destiny whether we end up in heaven with our saviour in his presence or endure eternal separation from God and punishment in hell will be determined by the choices we make we can either accept Jesus Christ who is our refuge by confessing you are my lord my chosen portion we can therefore enjoy the pleasures that God has for us or we can reject his lordship and choose to live our lives our own way running after false gods and idols that will not satisfy

[25 : 34] Jesus shows us the path of life a life where there is fullness of joy if one receives Jesus the everlasting joy the believer has God's presence within him he can therefore be content with life's ups and downs because God is faithful God is always faithful so every day today in the future and when we die we can be rest assured of God's faithfulness true wisdom and joy only comes from having a relationship with Jesus Christ so friends life as a Christian has its ups and downs I've been a Christian for over 20 years and I can say without a doubt that through each year God has been with me guiding me even though there's been ups and downs he's been there he's been there through my schooling he's been there through my work through my marriage and my family

God has always been there so as we conclude I'd like to leave you with these questions which the psalmist discovered the answers to is is is Jesus your refuge do you say to him you are my lord can you say I have no good apart from him have you made God your chosen portion do you keep the lord always before you importantly is your rest in the saviour Jesus Christ let us thank God for his word heavenly father you created each one of us for relationship with you and you desire to be lord of our lives each day and every day as we have looked at the life of

David we admit that we have not always called you lord or sought your opinion in our lives but lord we know you are faithful and forgiving when we seek you we pray that as we have just started a new year that we would make it a priority to seek you with our whole heart each day and that we would live our lives with you at the centre of it till Christ returns Amen ■■■ o