

If you're anything like me, you probably have a couple of specific Psalms that you run to over and over again for reassurance, peace, and comfort. Psalm 16 is one of my go-to Psalms when I just need to be reminded of my place in this world, or to see that God is worthy of my trust and hope. I have found this Psalm to be a great encouragement to me in most circumstances of life and my heart was drawn again to this particular Psalm when it came time to develop a devotion to share with the women of Redemption Church. So bear with me as I just share some tidbits of hope and truth I see verse by verse.

Verse 1: "Preserve me O god, for in you I take refuge." God is our refuge - He shelters us from danger, pursuit or trouble. By resting in Him, we are preserved and safe. This psalm was written by David, who was literally being pursued physically by his enemies. We may not be in physical danger, but our hearts and our souls are constantly at war. By choosing to take refuge in God, we can provide our souls and hearts and minds with the ultimate rescue from the evil of this world that tries to captivate us and give our allegiance to something other than the Lord.

Verse 2: "I say to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.'" When I read this, I think of myself TELLING myself to say this to the Lord. We need to remind ourselves of our standing before God. He is the LORD of all. In the bible, we see the first "Lord" is capitalized- because the distinction of talking to the actual God of the universe versus the general meaning of "lord" when not in all caps. He is the one to whom we give our devotion and commitment as lower-case "lord." He is still named LORD regardless of how we actually respond to that truth in our day to day lives. The truth remains that he is LORD and we must revere him as "lord." Does that make sense?

We have no good apart from Him. This means that all good things in our lives are direct results of the Lord's outpouring of love and grace in our lives. Any "good" thing in our lives that is not truly found through His grace and love, won't be an ultimate good. This is an instance where we have to redefine terms in light of God's Word. If it is something that is directly opposed to scripture or the truth of God's word, or otherwise not approved by the Holy Spirit, it is not actually a good thing in our lives. Only those things that come from God or are filtered through His word and Spirit are eternally good things in our lives. The last truth that I see in this verse, is that we like to take credit for the good when He alone is the giver of all good gifts.

Verse 3: "As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." This verse reminds me of the sweetness of community among believers. We can cling to that community dearly, as a gift from God, for true joy and delight. What are the saints except those that are also seeing God as Holy, worthy, and trustworthy? We further glorify God by experiencing and celebrating His goodness with others. This verse clearly contrasts with those who are not saints in the following verse.

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." Saints in verse 3 are our delight, while deep community with idolaters, is to be avoided according to verse 4. Obviously if you're familiar with the new testament teachings of Jesus, this does not mean that we ought not associate at ALL with unbelievers, otherwise we would be disobedient to the call and command

to share the gospel with the lost of the world. This reminds me that my truest and deepest community is to be with the saints because we are seeking after the same goals-glorifying the one true God.

Verse 5: “The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.” There are several routes you can take to explore the “cup” metaphor and historical context of the word and concept. For now, we will just rest in the fact that this verse tells us God is sovereign in our lives. He holds our lives and this verse is more well explained in conjunction with verse 6.

Verse 6: “The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed I have a beautiful inheritance.” This language was very relevant to the audience in terms of having an “inheritance.” It’s something that we are promised to obtain in the future. Inheritances are also rarely based on any type of merit, they’re usually promised based solely on identity. The same goes for our inheritance from God. We’ve done nothing to deserve it, but simply by our identity (having the righteousness of Christ before God) we are given the right to this beautiful inheritance. Our inheritance is an eternity with God secured by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is beautiful and God is so, so good for sovereignly giving it to us. We can rest in contentment in our present circumstances, looking forward to the promises of this inheritance in eternity. We don’t control how the lines fall during this life, but we can trust God as He creates a path for us to follow until we reach Him in heaven.

Verse 7: “I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.” This verse further details how we obtain that inheritance: trusting the Lord to give us counsel. We are to be seeking after His wisdom day and night. If the inheritance from God is the “what,” then the Lord giving us counsel (guiding us, leading us, etc.) is the “how.”

Verse 8: “I have set the LORD always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.” If we put God in front of our faces, we can be strengthened by His presence. Our strength is derived from intentional pursuit of the Lord. When we fix our gaze on the Lord, we can be as secure as verse 9 promises us.

Verse 9: “Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.” This is the promise of following God’s counsel and always putting Him in front of everything as a filter. We can be firmly rooted in truth and have true joy. We can align our hearts and our bodies to a place of contentment and peace as a result of earnestly seeking the Lord. We are promised this peace when we truly commit our lives to following the Lordship of Jesus.

Verse 10: “For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.” David further reminds himself and his audience that God is sovereign. What He has started, He will see to completion. Once our souls are secured by Christ, we won’t lose our salvation. We can trust that God has sovereignly chosen us for salvation and will sustain us to the end. These are all still promises that come from trusting God, putting Him before us and “at our right hand,” and seeking the Lord’s counsel.

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.” This verse perfectly bookends the Psalm. If nothing else, this verse can serve as an overall summary of Psalm 16. You (God) do the work of

opening our hearts and giving us the path to true eternal life. Being in God's presence (by trusting His counsel, always setting Him before us, seeking His will earnestly), we can experience the utmost joy there is to have. God wants our ultimate joy and that joy is found in Him alone. He guides us to the pleasures that are everlasting- that pleasure is in and of Himself. Being in right community with God will give us the eternal joy that our hearts so desperately seek after.

He is trustworthy. He desires your joy and good, believer. We have a future hope and grace to which we can cling. Keep the Lord before your face and at your right hand as the One you reach for impulsively and quickly in all circumstances. He will sustain you and carry you to joy everlasting, through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

-Autumn Pearson