

Easter Sunday

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[0 : 00] Psalm 16, a mictum of David. 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 Lord 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. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel.

In the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me because He is at my right hand. I shall not be shaken.

[1 : 14] Therefore, my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to shield or let your holy ones see corruption.

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 is God's holy and authoritative word. God's holy and authoritative word.

We want to be protected from threats of diseases. So we exercise, eat healthy and get vaccinated. We want to be protected from the threat of intruders.

So we get security systems and cameras. We seek physical security. We also want social security. Not the government benefits, but security in our relationships, in society.

[2 : 41] So we fastidiously avoid undesirable social situations. We try to ward off potential embarrassment. We seek significant others who can grant us social security.

But it's not security alone that we seek. We also seek happiness. We earn and save money so that we can buy things that make us happy.

We cultivate relationships with people that we enjoy. We eat and drink tasty things. We seek pleasure and happiness in the shows we watch, the places we travel to, in the activities that we do. But the human desire for security and happiness always face an insurmountable roadblock called death.

It doesn't matter how successful you are. It doesn't matter how rich you are, how beloved you are, how famous you are, how respected you are, how happy you are.

[3 : 49] Death brings an end to it all. Life insurance might provide for your loved ones, but there is no thing that actually ensures your life.

And this is what human beings fear most of all. They want security from death itself. But do they dread it and hide from it?

Death comes knocking on every single person's door all the same. Psalm 16 is attributed to David. No one knows what a migtom is, but we know that David had many close brushes with death. He was familiar with this threat.

And in this psalm, David is grappling with that fear of death, that primal fear. But he concludes in the end that there is only one place where we can obtain true security.

[5 : 08] A life that will never be cut short by death. That there is only one way to experience unfiltered and uninterrupted happiness, and that is in the presence of God.

The giver of life. The source of all good. And that's the main point of this psalm, is that those who make the Lord their chosen portion will have eternal life and fullness of joy in His presence.

In the first eight verses, we'll look at choosing the Lord as our portion, what that looks like. And then in the last three verses, we'll look at the resurrection life and fullness of joy that God promises to those who choose the Lord as their portion.

David begins by addressing God directly in prayer in verse 1. This is a simple, desperate prayer. We know from verses 10 to 11 that David wants God to preserve him from death. Preserve me, O God. Because if you don't, I'm going to die.

[6 : 26] Especially nowadays, people who used to avoid thinking about death studiously have been forced to confront this issue head on.

And so we cry out to God, Preserve me, O God. Protect me. Spare me. Rescue me. Why? For in you I take refuge.

This is the reason that David gives to God for why God should preserve him. For in you I take refuge.

It's similar to when people say to each other, Please help me. I'm counting on you. Please help me. I have no one else to turn to.

When a person says that, He's saying that he's putting all his legs, eggs into that one basket. He's going all in.

[7 : 27] He's not saying, Preserve me, O God. But it's okay if you forget. I have a few other refugees lined up that I can turn to. He's not saying, Preserve me, O God.

But don't stress too much about it. You're my backup option number three. You're my backup option number three. No, David says, Preserve me, O God.

For in you I take refuge. I have not taken refuge anywhere else. In you I take refuge. I have nowhere else to turn.

I'm counting on you. I have no hope beside you. I'm desperate.

Please, O God, preserve me. If you want security from death itself, if you want eternal life and fullness of joy, you must make the Lord your chosen portion.

[8 : 32] And what does it mean to make the Lord your chosen portion? You need to make Him and no one else your refuge. When you are afraid of getting sick and dying.

When you're afraid of getting old and dying. When you're afraid of getting into an accident and dying. To whom do you turn? To a doctor?

To a therapist? To an insurance salesman? Do you medicate yourself with alcohol? To an insurance salesman? Do you binge watch shows to find fleeting escape from the harsh realities of life?

There's only one hope for eternal life. And that is in the Lord God Himself. When you feel alone. When you are worried. When you are afraid. To whom do you turn? To your spouse? To your counselor? To your friend?

[9 : 36] To your parent? There is no better husband than Jesus Christ. Who is the bridegroom of the church.

And there is no better friend than Jesus. Who laid down His life for His friends. There is no better counselor than the Holy Spirit. Our comforter. And there is no better parent than our Heavenly Father.

Who loves us. So will you turn to God as your refuge? That's the Christian's impulse. The Christian's first recourse in every situation is preserve me, O God.

For in you I take refuge. After addressing God directly in verse 1, David then turns to his fellow worshipers around him.

Psalms are songs that the Israelites used in corporate worship. And so David now addresses the congregation in verse 2. I say to the Lord, You are my Lord.

[10 : 46] I have no good apart from you. The first word, Lord, in all caps, is a stand-in for the proper name of God.

Yehovah, or Yahweh, some people say. The second word, Lord, however, is not in all caps.

And that's a word that many of you have heard. It's the Hebrew word Adonai, which means Lord, or Master. David is saying, I say to Yehovah, You are my master.

I have no good apart from you. I have not pledged allegiance to other gods. I have not worshipped any other gods. I say to you, Yehovah, you alone, you are my master, and I am your servant.

To make the Lord our chosen portion is to pledge allegiance to Him as our master. To submit our purposes to His, to align our priorities with His, to subject our desires to His.

[12 : 00] It means to say with the psalmist, I have no good apart from you. To put it another way, all that is good that I cherish is within you.

I desire nothing besides you. All that makes my life worth living I have found in you. To use the words of Psalm 73, 25 to 26, Whom have I in heaven but you?

And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 16, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

[13 : 14] To take up one's cross and follow Jesus is to die to oneself, to subject oneself completely to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ, to make Him your only portion.

That's what Psalm 16, verse 2 means. I have no good apart from you. You're all the good I seek. My deepest desires, my loftiest hopes, my greatest dreams are all found in you, Lord. I forsake all else to follow you.

That's what it means to make the Lord your chosen portion, to pledge allegiance to Him as your master. And as David's addressing the congregation, he can't help but express his affection for them as well.

He says in verse 3, As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight. The word saints is literally holy ones.

[14 : 22] It's a word that parallels the word translated holy one in verse 10. It means consecrated people. Those who are specially set apart for God.

When you make the Lord your portion, you can't help but delight in the Lord's people. They are the excellent ones, says David.

The word excellent means magnificent, glorious, or prominent. It's used to describe a mighty towering cedar tree in Ezekiel 17, 23.

The same word is used to describe God's majesty and might, which it compares to the mighty crashing sea. He says the Lord's might is mightier than that.

Psalm 93, verse 4. That same word is also used to describe nobility. The rulers, the noble ones among men. In Jeremiah 14, verse 3.

[15 : 31] To the Christian, the excellent ones of the earth are not the rich and the powerful. They are not the people with verified Twitter accounts.

They are not the people with doctorates from the most esteemed institutions. No, the saints in the land.

They are the excellent ones. In whom is all my delight. Why?

Because they are my adopted brothers and sisters in the family of God. Because they are my fellow citizens and comrades in the kingdom of God.

Because they love the God I love. Because they serve the God I serve. Because their hearts beat for the same things that my heart beats for.

[16 : 45] Because they their tears fall for the same things that my tears fall for. Because they have tasted what I have tasted. Because they have seen what I have seen.

That the Lord is good. They are the excellent ones. They are the noble ones.

John Calvin says this in his commentary on this psalm. he says this passage therefore teaches us that there is no sacrifice more acceptable to God than when we sincerely and heartily connect ourselves with the society of the righteous.

And being knit together by the sacred bond of godliness cultivate and maintain with them brotherly goodwill. In this sorry we ought to therefore highly to value and esteem the true and devoted servants of God and to regard nothing as of greater importance than to connect ourselves with their society.

do you aspire and strive sincerely and heartily to connect yourself with the society of the saints?

[18 : 15] this resurrection Sunday and every Sunday there is nowhere else I would rather be than to celebrate the Lord Jesus Christ with you all.

truly the saints of the land the consecrated ones the set apart people all of you who know the Lord you are the excellent ones the noble ones in whom is all my delight there is no society in all the world that I would rather be a part of that I am more proud to be a part of there is no company in all the world that I prefer to this the company of the saints sinners saved by the grace of God but what

about those who do not belong to God those who do not worship God verse 4 sets up the contrast it says 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 those who make the Lord their chosen portion will have eternal life and fullness of joy in God's presence but those who run after another God shall multiply sorrows sorrows the word sorrow can also be translated pains or troubles an idol is anything that we replace God with as our chosen portion what is your supreme treasure in life what can't you bear to lose what preoccupies your mind and occupies your heart more than God some people in the world worship gods that they have fashioned with their own minds or with their own hands they rely on them as their refuge instead of relying on the true Lord but this is not the only kind of idolatry in the world many people give their hearts to the idols of beauty sex wealth comfort control substances social prestige power many people set themselves up as gods they bow to no one but to their own selfish desires there is payoff to all of these idolatries by the way they do something for you that's why people turn to them however fleeting it may be but eventually the bill that they can't pay comes due sooner or later because running after another god multiplies sorrows we were all once like this some of you may still be running after other gods and I implore you because you will surely be disappointed you will surely become enslaved to these idols it will surely end in death you will not find the security and happiness that you are looking for but it doesn't have to be that way you can turn to the lord and experience eternal life and fullness of joy and so

David distances himself from those who run after other gods he says their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out I will not take their names on my lips only name I will have on my lips is the name of the Lord the only people that I will delight in are the saints in the land so David continues in verses 5 to 6 the Lord is my chosen and my cup you hold my lot the lions have fallen for me in pleasant places indeed I have a beautiful inheritance when the Israelites first conquered the promised land that the Lord had given them they divided up the land by lot it's the account you can find in Joshua 13 to 21 the Lord himself chose what each tribe's portion would be that's why it was decided by lot and in the ancient world in an agrarian society land was everything it was your very livelihood and even more importantly because the promised land was connected to the covenant promises of [24 : 03] God to be inherited from the land to be cut off from the land was to be cut off from the covenant community itself so each tribe of Israel had its chosen portion or an allotted portion and David belonged to the tribe of Judah which had its allotted territory but David was also familiar with the bitter experience of being disinherited of being excluded from the land of Israel and being alienated from the people of God in 1 Samuel 26 18 to 19 David is chased by King Saul who because of his envy of David tries to kill him and David says this to Saul why does my Lord pursue after his servant for what have I done what evil is on my hands now therefore let my Lord the king hear the words of his servant if it is the

Lord who has stirred you up against me may he accept an offering but if it is men may they be cursed before the Lord for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord saying go serve other gods David knew from personal experience the bitterness of being driven out from the promised land he knew the feeling of being told you have no share with us go and serve other gods but David learned from that lonely painful experience how to claim the Lord alone as his chosen portion and cup you might remember that there was one tribe in Israel that actually never received any land it says in numbers 18 20 and the Lord said to Aaron you shall have no inheritance in their land neither shall you have any portion among them I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel the tribe of Levi the priestly tribe that Aaron belonged to received no inheritance or portion because God said to them I am your portion you have no land to farm but I will provide for you you have no portion but I will be your portion instead of working the land you will serve me in my temple I myself will be your inheritance and David is grabbing a hold of that language that promise here in verses 5 to 6 when he says the Lord 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 David is using the language of land allotment figuratively not literally the word translated pleasant places in verse 6 is the same word that translated pleasures in verse 11 to refer to the eternal pleasures that you find in the presence of God alone so David is not saying that God has given him a generous bountiful portion of physical land he's saying that the Lord himself is his allotted portion and cup as was the case for the Levites because those pleasures forevermore are found in God alone if David were referring to literal land

here this verse would only apply to rich and prosperous Christians who can look around themselves at the poor and less fortunate people around them and say smugly oh the lions have fallen for me in pleasant places indeed I have a beautiful inheritance but that's not what this verse means at all instead it means that if you make the Lord your chosen portion if you make the Lord your inheritance you will be satisfied in him do you think the

Levites felt snubbed when they were omitted from the land allotment do you think they felt short changed well actually God that's nice of you to offer yourself as our portion inheritance but I'd really like that real estate over there instead you see that one over there with the grass and the well on it no way not a chance but isn't that what we do brothers and sisters so often God has offered up himself to us he has given us his very heart he has given his only son Jesus for us he has poured out his very spirit into our hearts and then we say well

[29 : 33] I really like that house I really like that job I really like that promotion I really like that internship I really like that man I really like that woman I really like that vacation God I think I feel like I have the lines that fall for me in pleasant places if you get that thing for me but God says to us I am your portion David says to God you hold my lot meaning God is the one who chooses the allotment God is the one who holds David's fate his destiny his lot in life in his hands David is completely entrusted to him totally disposed to the will of

God you hold my lot you direct my steps you are my chosen portion and my cup and therefore the lines have fallen for me in pleasant places and I have a beautiful inheritance whether I am rich or poor healthy or sick married or single respected or despised you are my portion and that's a pleasant boundary indeed what good is it for a man to gain the whole world yet forfeit his soul what good is it for a man to own the whole world yet not know God as his portion David didn't have an easy life by any stretch of the imagination of course some good things happened to him he caught a few breaks here and there like all of us but after his father-in-law became envious of him he chased him tried to kill him for two years during that time his wife was given away to another man he had his family and children kidnapped one time by marauders and the man who followed him tried to kill him because of it he lost one of his children in infancy another one of his sons was murdered by another one of his sons and one of his sons rebelled against him staged a coup tried to overthrow him and nearly succeeded because of his sin

David his sin the plague broke out in the nation of Israel and he had to bear that guilt on his shoulders David was familiar with exile and betrayal he had many gray hairs on his head he had shed many hot tears in his life and yet when he looks back on his head with him every step of the way how the Lord had been his confidant how he had been his faithful companion how the Lord had been his refuge his counselor his advocate he exclaims the lines have fallen from me in pleasant places indeed I have a beautiful inheritance I know your life is not easy my life isn't easy either but I can tell you that my lines have fallen for me in pleasant places the Lord has never let me down David David continues to explain what it means to make the Lord his portion in verses seven to eight I bless the Lord who gives me counsel in the night also my heart instructs me I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand I shall not be shaken most of us know what it's like to be kept up at night worrying about something maybe a hard conversation you had earlier that day or a painful experience or some difficult decision you have to make and you find yourself tossing and turning on your bed into the wee hours of the night in those times

David says it's the Lord who gives me counsel in the night also my heart instructs me the word night is actually plural in the original Hebrew some of you know what it's like to have many restless nights in in your nights wracked by anxiety in your sleepless nights in your forlorn and lonely nights God is there to give you counsel David says I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand I shall not be shaken similar to the way we use the expression right hand man the right side which is most people's dominant side is a metaphor for where help and deliverance usually comes from back in those times in court the witness for the defendant stood on the right side the [35 : 49] Lord is at your right hand to defend you to advocate for you to counsel you he has your back he is your strong supporter your tireless advocate he will come to your aid he will come to your defense so set him always before you and when the Lord is set before us we shall not be shaken verses 9 to 11 tell us that when we make the Lord our chosen portion we will have resurrection life and fullness of joy he says in verse 9 therefore my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices my flesh also dwells secure here it is security and happiness that we all long for can only be found in the

Lord when we claim the Lord as our chosen portion our hearts will be full of gladness our whole beings will rejoice and even our flesh our body will dwell secure why here's the reason for David's confidence in verses 10 to 11 for you will not abandon my soul to shield or let your holy one see corruption you make known to me the path of life in your presence there is fullness of joy at your right hand are pleasures forever more shield is a metaphor for the grave sometimes translated the pit the realm of the dead David has faith that God will not let him a holy one one of the consecrated people of God the saints in the land mentioned in verse 3 he believes that

God will not let him a holy one perish and rot in the grave God you've been with me all the days of my life you've delivered me time and time again you have been by my side at my right hand through all the ups and downs of life and will you now abandon me to the grave David thinks not you make known to me the path of life John 5 26 says that God has life in himself meaning he's the original source of life all other living beings have life that's derived from God's life but God has life in himself Job 33 verse 4 says the spirit of God has made me and the breath of the almighty gives me life Lord I've taken refuge in you David is saying the giver of life you are my allotted portion my inheritance how can then I perish in death when you're the giver of life how can I experience anything other than lions fallen in pleasant places so David has full confidence you will not abandon my soul to shield or let your holy one see corruption but David's hope was not fully realized at that time he later died in old age because he was speaking prophetically of Jesus Christ the messianic king who will rise up from the descendants of David to be the new and better David who fulfills that everything David could not he's the one who fulfills this psalm and brings this resurrection eternal life and fullness of joy to fruition among

God's people if you have your Bibles please turn to Acts chapter 2 verses 22 to 32 with me I preached on this a few weeks ago it says in Acts 2 22 to 32 men of Israel hear these words Jesus of Nazareth this is Peter preaching a man 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 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 losing the pangs of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it for David says concerning him and then 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 also will dwell in hope for you will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your holy one see corruption you have made known to me the paths of life you will make me full of gladness with your presence brothers this is

[41 : 27] Peter explaining this psalm I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day being therefore a prophet and knowing that God has sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ that he was not abandoned to Hades nor did his flesh see corruption this Jesus God raised up and of that we all are witnesses every human being dies because every human being has sinned with the exception of Jesus the son of God and son of man Romans 6 23 says that the wages of sin is death that is the inevitable consequence of sin but that same verse also says the free gift but the free gift of

God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord Jesus the only human being that should not have died died a gruesome death on the cross 2000 years ago because he was God's chosen one our representative our king and he died the death that we should have died he bore the punishment that we deserved for our sins and on the third day which we celebrate today on resurrection Sunday he was raised from the dead and of that the apostles bore witness and of that church the church of every generation since and we today bear witness Jesus says I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me though he die yet shall he live do you believe this it's normal for us mortal beings to fear death it's okay to be afraid to acknowledge it to face it but don't stay there speak to yourself this truth the

Lord will not abandon your soul to shield or let his holy one see corruption those who make God their chosen portion will not be abandoned to the grave when Christ returns he will raise up our body so that we can enjoy eternal resurrection life in God's presence and then this confidence that David had with two will be rewarded and we will dwell together where there's pleasures forevermore isn't that a wonderful phrase sometimes Christians mistakenly think that heaven will be a boring drab place where none of us will have much to do when in reality there is fullness of joy and pleasures forever more in God's presence every good gift and every perfect gift is from above from

God James 117 says

God is good and he does good all that is good he's the source of all that is good in your life everything that is truly good in your life is of God the warmth of love you feel in the embrace of your spouse the care and kindness you feel when you stare into your child's twinkling eyes the strength you feel in the support of a loyal friend the delectable bitter sweetness of chocolate the savory and cleansing healing unami of chicken noodle soup the smell of roasting coffee beans or freshly baked bread the glistening sunlight over the ocean the full moon and stars on a clear night sky the elegance of a math or a physics equation the entrancing beauty of music the grandeur of the alps all that is good in this life that you can think of has its origin in

God himself and in the presence of God there is fullness of joy I can't imagine it but I want it so badly I long for that fullness of joy pleasures forever more and that's the portion and inheritance that God promised to those who belong to Jesus the cheap thrills and fleeting pleasures that this world the flesh and the devil tempt us with our pale anemic imitations of the real thing so will you make the Lord your chosen portion today