

Real Security in a Passing World

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[0 : 00] Well, good afternoon everyone. Welcome to our Wednesday lunchtime talk. It's very good indeed to see you. And if it's your first time with us this afternoon, you're very welcome indeed. My name is Paul Brennan. I'm one of the associate ministers here at the church.

And we're beginning a little series through September in the book of Psalms. So today we're in Psalm 16. So if you'd like to turn with me to page 453, I think it is, if you're using one of the Vista Bibles, page 453 to Psalm 16.

And as you're turning that up, I'm going to pray for us. So let's pray. Our Father God, thank you that we can pause in the middle of this day, in the middle of this week, and listen to your words to us. Thank you that your word, the Bible, is living and active. And that these words we're about to hear are just what you would have us hear today.

So help us, not just to hear, but to respond to your word this afternoon, that we would know real safety and security in this passing world.

[1 : 16] So help us now, for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. So Psalm 16, let me read from verse 1 there. A mictam 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 lines 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.

[2 : 28] I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to shale 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 forevermore.

Amen. Now this is a joyful, confident psalm. And yet, the subject at its core is about as serious as it gets.

It's a subject that perhaps you and I wish wasn't on the agenda this afternoon. And it's death. Or more precisely, it's confidence in joyful life beyond the grave.

[3 : 46] The founder of Apple, the biggest, most valuable company in the world, Steve Jobs, he once said this. No one wants to die.

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to have to die in order to get there. And yet, death is the fate we all share.

Now you and I really don't like thinking about it, do we? But we know that it can't be avoided. It's always there. And even though it's something that happens at the end of our lives, whenever that might be, the reality is that death casts its long shadow on every area of our lives.

It's always there. We know it's coming. And sometimes, we are forced to face and look at reality square in the face.

Perhaps it's an accident. Perhaps your health takes a serious turn for the worse. Maybe a close relative dies. We're faced with the reality that no matter how many precautions we might take, no matter how many diets we go on, no matter how many early morning jogs we go on, we must face up to our mortality.

[5 : 06] Questions arise. Will I be okay? Am I really secure? What hope is there for us in the face of trials and difficulties and ultimately death?

What hope? What security? Well, here's one answer. And it's a poem by Mary Fry. You've probably heard it at a funeral.

She writes this. Do not stand at my grave and weep. I am not there. I do not sleep. I am a thousand winds that blow. I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain. I am the gentle autumn rain. When you awaken in the morning's hush. I am the swift, uplifting rush of quiet birds in circle flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night. Do not stand at my grave and cry. I am not there. I did not die. Does that give you hope?

[6 : 08] I hope not. That is just wishful thinking. Plain denial of reality. It's foolishness. There is no hope in that poem. What hope is there then for us in the face of trials and difficulties and ultimately death?

Well, this psalm contains the answer. King David is here and he is contemplating his mortality. Look at verse 1. Preserve me, O God.

The NIV has, keep me safe, my God. Guard me. Keep me. Protect me. He is thinking about his own mortality.

But there is great confidence that in the Lord he has refuge and safety. Look at his utter confidence there in verse 10. Look on to verse 11.

It finishes the psalm with words of abundant, eternal, full life. How is David, God's anointed king, how is he able to say such things with such confidence?

[7 : 15] How can he be so sure of his eternal security? And how can you and I be certain of real security in this passing world?

Well, the psalm sets out the answer. We see here that a true believer can be sure of eternal security as they express decisive loyalty to God.

And as we shall see, this psalm is, according to the New Testament, perfectly fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's through him that the provisions of this psalm are assured to people like you and me.

So two points then. First in verses 1 to 8, a true believer expresses decisive loyalty. And then verse 8 to the end, a true believer will enjoy definite life.

Decisive loyalty and definite life. Decisive loyalty leads to definite life. You can't have definite life without decisive loyalty.

[8 : 23] So first then, verses 1 to 8, a true believer expresses decisive loyalty. It's really quite striking as you read through the psalm. The single-minded loyalty that David has here towards the Lord God.

Just notice all the I's and my's throughout the psalm. It's intensely personal. And he, David, is expressing his clear, single-minded, decisive loyalty.

What David wants more than anything else is the Lord. And that is the mark of all true believers all through the ages. True believers are decisively loyal to God.

Not meaning that they are perfectly obedient. No, that's not what loyalty is. But there is a clear loyalty, a decisive allegiance to the Lord that we see here in the psalm.

Just look down, verse 1. July 2. Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge Verse 2. You are my Lord.

[9 : 29] I have no good apart from you Verse 5. The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup Verse 7. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel Verse 8.

I have set the Lord always before me In every area of life, David has thrown his lot in with the Lord. In all these areas of life, David demonstrates his single-minded loyalty.

I align myself with the Lord, he says. The Lord and the Lord alone is all I need. It's crystal clear, decisive loyalty.

Let's just think of a few of the areas he's loyal in. First, his security, verse 1. David is thinking about his life, and he knows that he needs refuge, security.

He needs preservation, and he seeks it from the Lord. It is in him that David seeks refuge. No hedging bets, no backup, no cozying up to other kings in case the Lord doesn't pull through.

[10 : 39] No, only the Lord. In him alone does David seek refuge. And the true believer seeks refuge in God alone.

No one else. Look on to verse 2. His welfare. David's welfare. Quite a stunning thing to say, isn't it? I have no good apart from you.

All the good things that David enjoys in life. Everything good is found in the Lord. The Lord is the source of all the good things that David enjoys. So too for the true believer.

Look on to verses 3 and 4. And we see here David's associations. You see, loyalty to God is not just expressed in the vertical relationship between David and the Lord.

It bears out on the horizontal plane. Notice how David speaks about how he relates to two different groups of people. So look at verse 3.

[11 : 41] As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones in whom I delight. That's one group of people, the saints. Look on to verse 4. David is clear that he delights in God's people.

But for those who run after other gods, he won't even take their names on his lips. Loyalty to God is demonstrated in our associations with people. It's not just pious utterances.

It has actual implications in day-to-day life. For David and for every true believer. There is no other people like the Lord's people, are there? For all their faults. We belong one to another.

As well as to the Lord. And we matter to each other. The Apostle Paul mentions it in passing, doesn't he? In his letter to the Colossian church. He thanks the Lord for the Colossian church. Having heard of their faith in Christ Jesus. And their love for the saints. Their love for each other. Loyalty to God.

[13 : 03] It will mean a real love and affection for the people that you sit next to at church. The people you rub shoulders with here on a Wednesday. Is that how you see your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?

Do you delight in them as David does here? Or do you complain about them? And to them? Are you happy to be seen with them? To spend time with them?

To enjoy them? If not. Then perhaps you need to ask yourself some searching questions about yourself. You see, loyalty to God.

It will show up in our loyalty and affection for each other. You can't separate the two. Now we could say more. But don't miss the key thing in the first half of this psalm.

David is, the true believer is, single-minded in his affection. That is what we see so clearly in the first half of this psalm. The real loyalty of God, to God, of the real believer.

[14 : 08] And it is because of David's settled determination to be loyal to the Lord, to throw his lot in with him, to stand with him, that he's assured of his security.

Notice the link there in verse 8 between loyalty and safety. Look at verse 8. I have set the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. For David, loyalty led to safety. That's the logic of the psalm.

For the true believer, loyalty leads to safety. God has all of his affections and loyalties. And therefore, because David is locked tight to the Lord, he knows that he's secure.

He knows safety because he sided with him. He's thrown his lot in with the Lord, with the almighty God of all creation. And he knows he's safe. So, a true believer expresses decisive loyalty.

[15 : 17] His allegiances are clear. He's thrown his lot in with the Lord. It's true for him. It's true today. But second, we see verses 8 to the end. A true believer will enjoy definite life.

David sets out the reality of life with God. A life he is confident in because of his loyalty to God. Verses 8 to 11 are simply overflowing with abundant life, aren't they?

Just have a look at them again. Verse 8, he shall not be shaken. Verse 9, my flesh also dwells secure. Verse 10, you will not abandon my soul to shale.

It's fullness of life, isn't there? There's promise of resurrection. Verse 10, you will not abandon my soul to shale. That is, the place of the dead. Or let your holy one see corruption.

Literally, my body won't rot in the ground. But how? It's all very well to read the psalm, isn't it?

[16 : 23] To see that David says that loyalty to God leads to security in life. But it doesn't seem to add up, does it? David died, didn't he? There's no record of his resurrection.

How can this psalm be true? How can verse 10, where he talks about not seeing corruption, a soul not being abandoned to shale, how can that be true?

Well, we need to remember who David was. He was God's anointed king. And he points us forward to another king.

A king who was ultimately loyal. And whose body did not see corruption. Now, you don't have to take my word for it. Listen to the apostle Peter.

As he applies this very psalm to the Lord Jesus Christ. You can read about it in Acts chapter 2. And Peter is there addressing the people of God. Listen to what he says. Men of Israel, hear these words.

[17 : 31] Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus of Nazareth. God raised him up. 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 was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. You crucified and killed him by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up. Loosing the pangs of death. Because it was not possible for him to be held by it. And then the apostle Peter quotes this very psalm.

For David says concerning him, concerning Jesus, 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 ones see corruption. You have made known to me the path of life. You will make me full of gladness with your presence.

[18 : 35] And the apostle Peter goes on. Brothers, 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 there for 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.

So according to Peter, David was here in Psalm 16 speaking about Jesus Christ.

A greater David, the promised king. One who was perfectly loyal to God and his body did not see corruption. He was raised from the dead.

[19 : 35] Jesus Christ was raised and he now lives and he's reigning at this very moment at the right hand of God. God. And because of the decisive loyalty of Christ.

And because of his definite life. We too can be sure of these things as we seek refuge in our king. And that is wonderful news.

All that is true of King Jesus here is true of you who are his. It is true of all who take refuge in him. If you do not take refuge in Christ.

And you are here this afternoon. And none of these promises. None of these promises of security. Of refuge. Of life. Of pleasures forevermore are yours.

None of them. So how do you take refuge? How do you know this definite life that we read about here?

[20 : 36] Well it's just as we've read in the first half of the psalm. We express decisive loyalty to God. We seek our security in him alone.

We seek our refuge in him. And that means seeking refuge in God from the greatest threat we face in this life. Our certain and unavoidable mortality.

Followed by the great and final judgments before the throne of God. Where our eternal destinies will be made known to all. There is a simple choice to be made.

Are you with the king of the universe? Or against him? There is no alternative. There is no other place in which the sort of safety David speaks about here.

Eternal safety can be found. There is no other place where death. The penalty for our sins is fully dealt with. So will you seek refuge in Christ?

[21 : 42] He was perfectly loyal. And because of his resurrection, he enjoys definite life. And all who trust in him, who seek refuge in him, who profess loyalty to him, will likewise enjoy definite, eternal resurrection life.

Definite life beyond our certain deaths. It comes only through decisive loyalty. So have you thrown your lot in with the Lord?

Have you repented, confessed your sins and sought forgiveness in the Lord Jesus Christ? That is our only security in this passing world. That is your certain hope.

My certain hope as we face death. So don't. Don't hedge your bets. Don't fall for the pluralistic lies of our culture.

There aren't many ways to God. There's only one. Loyalty to the Lord God alone. Single-minded devotion and loyalty to him. And him alone.

[22 : 50] There is no hope beyond death outside of Jesus. Jesus. So seek refuge in him. Be loyal to him.

And look at what comforts we can look forward to. Verse 11. You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness. Fullness of joy.

At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. These are wonderful promises. And they're rock solid.

Because Jesus has gone before us and proved it. He is the only one who has risen from the dead. And because he's done it. All who trust him will know it too.

What a future. And what comfort we have. Well let's pray. And then we'll sing. Father God we thank you for the great comfort this psalm brings us.

[23 : 57] The great certainty of life everlasting. And so would you help us to be true believers. Those who throw their lot in with you.

And that as we are loyal to you we will know life. So help us. For we ask it in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.