

Psalm 16 – The resurrected man

Big Idea: Being joined to Christ in resurrection means we can find unchanging contentment in God.

Structure

v1. Seeking refuge

v2-4 Yahweh is the psalmist's sole source of contentment

v5-8 Reiteration of Yahweh as provider, instructor, and defender

v9-11 Joyful declaration of Yahweh's faithfulness in the face of death

A miktam

We don't know for sure what the superscription *miktam* means, however it appears in psalms David sings when in peril (e.g. Ps 56-60). Since he is seeking refuge (v1), it seems reasonable to assume that David is praying this psalm amid circumstances of trouble. In his trouble, he reminds himself that God is sufficient, even though he may have lost material security (his allotted "portion" of property).

Perhaps David prayed this psalm when fleeing Saul, as recorded in 1 Sam 26. There he says 'They have driven me today from my share in the Lord's inheritance and have said, "Go, serve other gods"' (v19). This alludes to the allocation of land to each of Israel's tribes when they entered the Promised Land (Joshua 13-19).

The LORD is my portion

It is therefore striking that David is delighted by how the *boundary lines* (between allocated portions of land) have fallen: in verse 5, regardless of his material wellbeing, he is content to say that *The LORD is my portion*. Yahweh is the one in whom he finds unchanging contentment. (This has precedent: the Levites and priests were not given an allotment of land, but were told by the LORD *I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel*. Num 18:20; Deut 10:9).

David is so convinced that God is sufficient for him, that he essentially reiterates verses 2-4 in verses 5-7, reaffirming how the LORD is the source of prosperity. We are therefore pointed to the true riches that are to be enjoyed by God's people: God himself.

You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead

In circumstances of trouble, we are often tempted to question God's love, his purposes, or even his existence. Furthermore, we seek refuge from trouble in things other than God – things that ultimately do not provide the contentment of the LORD. David was told 'worship other gods' (1 Sam 26:19). We are all responsible for having taken the names of other gods "on our lips" (i.e. the act of worshipping, and calling out to; see Ex 23:13, what does this most commonly involve for you? Where would the people

around you say you have looked for contentment during the past four months?) and the punishment facing us is destruction:

If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed – Deut 8:19

Only Jesus can truly say the words of verse 4. Because he was truly faithful to worshipping God and found his entire, unchanging contentment in him, the resurrection vindicated Jesus from the punishment of a death which he did not deserve. Because he can truly sing this psalm, God did not abandon him to the realm of the dead – his body did not see decay.

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Peter (Acts 2:25-28) and Paul (Acts 13:34-39) understood David to be speaking prophetically of the risen Jesus.

24But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25David said about him:

*“I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.*

*26Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest in hope,*

*27because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.*

*28You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.”*

29‘Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. 33Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

The apostles quote the last verses of Psalm 16 to show that Jesus is the resurrected man and to highlight that the resurrection has massive consequences for how their listeners ought to respond to Jesus.

1. Jesus is the promised Messiah, from God (2:31)
2. Jesus was definitely raised by God from the dead (2:32; 13:30)
3. Only through him is there forgiveness of sins and justification (13:38-39)
4. Now the resurrected Jesus is Lord and Christ (2:36)

Peter may be linking the idea of the blood which the psalmist refuses to pour out on the altars of other gods, with the Holy Spirit which Peter proclaims Jesus has received post-resurrection, and which he now pours out on believers. What a cause for joy among believers! If David was content in knowing the LORD's presence, we can definitely delight because God is present in us by the Holy Spirit!

The quoting of this psalm also points forward to blessings in Jesus that are yet to come. We are now in union with Christ, but one day we can be assured that though our earthly bodies will perish, we will be resurrected to a new life like his. And at the last times, we too shall have new bodies like Jesus' physical body! But the ultimate blessing, lest we get caught up with the many blessings of dwelling in the New Creation, is that we will be fully in God's presence (Rev 21:3).

1. The psalmist seems to face trouble: what strikes you about the focus of the psalm despite his desperate situation? Further prompt questions:
 - a. What reasons does David give for praising God?
 - b. To what extent do you experience unchanging contentment in God? What helps/gets in the way?

2. The one delighting in God is delighted when she or he sees others delighting in him and living his way. These are God's Holy Ones (Deut 33:3; Rom 1:7). Their mutual devotion to God is delightful, because they are not in competition but are already content in Him. How does unchanging contentment in God enable you to delight in other Christians? How can you grow in delighting in God's work in other Christians?
 - a. How you encourage?
 - b. How you serve? (no need for recognition, your identity isn't in your service)
 - c. How you pray for Christians? (e.g. Col 1:9-14)

3. How do we see Jesus fulfilling this psalm?

4. Jesus has been raised, and those who believe in him have been raised with him: we can sing vv9-11! How might the resurrection change how you view your current circumstance (of trouble/joy/frustration/opportunity)?
 - a. Presence of God now?
 - b. How do you think about death?
 - c. Whole being will be resurrected – Ps 16:9: renewal