



The Psalms (Part 4)—Creator and King

Trevor Joy – June 9, 2019

If you came in after the welcome, my name is Trevor Joy. I'm one of the pastors and elders here. I'm excited. We get to continue on this morning. This summer, we have been on our summer sermon series, which is a mouthful, in the Psalms. We started that in mid-May. We're several weeks in now. We're going to continue on that this morning.

We're going to be in Psalm 16, if you want to go ahead and grab your Bible. There is a Bible in front of you. We're going to be in Psalm 16 this morning, working through that. Before we get there, I just want to take a brief moment to give us an overview summary that we covered in our first week as we went into the Psalms, just as a refresher.

For those of you who have been tracking with us every week, this will be a refresher. For those of you who are just joining us, this will hopefully give at least a brief summary of our approach to the Psalms this summer. I'll read you the summary that I have here.

The Psalms are unique in that they teach us to pray by bringing every thought and emotion in the human experience into the context of God's story. Through the Psalms, our hearts whether broken or bursting, become aligned with God's heart. The Psalms help lead our thinking and our feeling godward. That wherever we are in our lives, whatever befalls us, whether pleasure or pain, the words that come from God become the steps by which we find God.

That's how we're approaching the Psalms. We're going to be in Psalm 16. What's so unique about Psalm 16... This has been for me personally and then people I've talked to this week. When I think of Psalm 16 and why I got so excited to preach this is, it's my favorite psalm. It is probably one of the most impactful psalms for me and chapters of Scripture for me in my life in several different seasons, which I'll talk about here in just a minute.

Also for several others whom I've talked to that said, "Man, Psalm 16 has just been so rich and meaningful for me." I love that, because the nickname for Psalm 16 is actually the *Golden Psalm* or the *Psalm of the Precious Secret*. It begins like it's going to be a psalm of lament, but it's actually a psalm of confidence.

What I mean by that is this psalm is confessional or it's declarative. It's meant to strengthen and empower. We need words like that in our lives. They help play the role of getting us unstuck from where we are. Have you ever had people in your life when they decide to speak life in you, encourage you, and challenge you, that they can make you feel invincible? Those people, maybe it was a coach, maybe it was a friend that when they charge your life, when they encourage you, they can make you feel like you can do anything.

That's the role that this psalm plays for us. It's going to breathe confidence into our lives in a way that jolts us forward. You'll see the approach we're going to take. We're going to walk through the psalm line by line this morning. You're going to see it has a gradual, building nature to it. Before we get there, before we break it down line by line, let's read it through all the way once together, and then we'll dive in. Psalm 16, starting in verse 1.

"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. 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 Sheol, 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."

So we talked about this psalm being really, really unique in the way it is and the role it's played in my life. There are two different situations as I was studying for this sermon that just kept coming to

the forefront. The first one, in the way that the Lord used this psalm to minister to me, was when I was about to leave college and go into ministry.

It seemed at the time like all the voices around me were trying to convince me not to do that. It seemed like the voices around me were saying, "Hey, you just got your degree. Why don't you use your degree in a job that maybe pays a little bit more, and you can serve in the church? You can still fulfill God's call on your life and serve as a lay member."

Over and over again it felt like these voices were just surrounding me. This season was so challenging because I quite literally felt alone in this decision. It didn't help that the first ministry job I actually did land out of college only paid me a couple hundred bucks a month and gave me a place to stay. Nevertheless, I was convicted and convinced that what God was calling me into.

I had to go. I had to be faithful. I had to ignore the crowd. I had to press on. I clung to these words in Psalm 16 in that season where he says, "**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.**" I needed those words in that season to help push me forward past those voices into faithfulness in what God called me.

Another time that really kept coming to the forefront was one that actually happened more recently. It was not too long ago, and I was really struggling with a bout of anxiety. If you've ever dealt with anxiety, it can be absolutely indiscriminate and unpredictable. It can create this deep rut in your life that's really, really hard to get out of.

One night, I was struggling pretty hard. I just couldn't shake it. I remember telling my wife, Rachel, "Hey, I've just really been battling all day and it feels like the weight is getting heavier tonight." She called one of my best friends. He called me and engaged with me and was faithful to speak life into me and encourage me.

I remember talking to him on the phone. I had one of those moments where it felt like the cloud was getting extra thick. I set the phone down (I had him on speaker) I pressed the mute button and I just wept and wept. I couldn't bear the weight of it. Then when we got done with the phone call, I set the phone aside. I opened up the Word and the Lord took me here to Psalm 16.

He ministered to my heart because he said, "**For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.**" The Lord used those words to speak hope into my heart by saying, "I know this hurts, but it's not going to crush you because I've got you." That was the push I needed to get out of the rut. It was the push I needed to get past where I was, to be able to jolt before Lord speaking that confidence into me. "I've got you. I'm not going to let you go."

This psalm is one of confidence. David is declaring some things about God and what it means for him. There are a number of themes that we could pull out of this psalm this morning. That's really honestly the same way for every psalm. We have a limited amount of time. Some of the psalms we've been covering so far have been relatively short. Even in those, there are a ton of themes and directions we could go.

There is one predominant theme that I want to put before us as we dive into this by way of a summary. I hope we collectively see in our time together here in Psalm 16. This is it. We're going to put it up on the screen for us to see and be able to hold onto together. *Christians are people of supernatural courage and joy that is produced when God is both our Yahweh and our Adonai who gets not only our worship as Creator but our allegiance as King.*

Let me read it once more before we move forward. *Christians are people of supernatural courage and joy that is produced when God is both our Yahweh and our Adonai who gets not only our worship as Creator but our allegiance as King.* With that in mind, let's dive in to verse 1 together. Psalm 16, verse 1.

We see in the beginning of the prayer. What does David say? He says, "**Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.**" You might be saying to yourself, "That doesn't seem like a declaration of confidence but more like a cry for help." How do all of our prayers begin? I don't know how yours do, but mine don't typically begin red-hot for God. They usually start something like, "Help. God, I need you."

The reality is all of us in our humanity come to God this exact same way every time. That's in need. David is no different here. He starts low. He is admitting his need. For a brief moment, it looks like the psalm is going to be a psalm of lament, but it's not. Right in verse 2, he pivots and he goes a different direction.

In verse 2, this is what he says. I want us to key in and hear this verse. This is going to be really, really foundational for the rest of the psalm. What does he say? He says, **"I say to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.'"** That sentence probably looks familiar, and it should.

It's the same way that Psalm 8 began last week. Many of the psalms actually begin this way. It's particularly important for us to understand because this statement right here is almost going to be like table legs or pillars that support the rest of what David is going to say. There are two words here I want us to look at in this verse.

He says, *LORD* and *Lord*. He says, **"I say to the LORD, 'You are my Lord...'"** You'll notice this first *LORD* is in all caps. Whenever it's like that, it's translated *Yahweh*. This word, this title is used over 6,800 times in the Bible. This is the God who is eternally existing. It's the eternal I AM, as he calls himself to Moses in Exodus 3. The God who is, the creator God.

David is saying, "I say to you, God, creator of all things." Then what does he say? He says, **"You are my Lord..."** It's lowercase *Lord*. The translation of that word, which incurs a lot less, about 300 times, is *Adonai*, which means sovereign or master. This is a title given to denote power and authority. David is saying, "God, you are my Yahweh and my Adonai. You're the God of the universe, which all life comes from, the covenant-making and the covenant-keeping God. And you are my master with absolute authority over my life. You're my Creator and my King."

This is going to be really important for us to understand as we move forward through the rest of what David is going to say. I love how Pastor Tony Evans talks about this, about the importance of understanding both Yahweh and Adonai. He says, "Since God is the absolute ruler and owner, our response to this name comes through the surrender of submission.

Submission is a powerful tool when coupled with an All-powerful Adonai God. Unfortunately, too many Christians today have settled for [Yahweh] without experiencing the full power of Adonai. This is because to experience all that God as ruler, master and owner over your life can do for you, you have to knowingly, willingly surrender before Him. That means He gets to call the shots."

Too many people want God to do what his Word says he can do without giving him the right to own them. Why is this so crucial for us to understand? Because the joy and courage we see flow out of David comes not just from his view of God as sovereign but from his view of God as *his* sovereign.

The key to getting all that David is about to say is that he isn't coming to God as his genie but his Adonai who is absolute rule and reign over all things, including him. That God doesn't just get his worship as Creator; he gets his allegiance as King. An allegiance is going to be important for us to get because there's going to need to be an embodied loyalty that comes as a result of a relationship with God as our King.

Why? Because our lives are not ours. They're his. The next two verses help support why this is important. David is going to describe two groups of people. Here is what he says. **"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."**

It says, **"...the saints in the land..."** which is describing those who have also chosen to follow Yahweh. He is saying, "These are the people in whom I delight, because we share the same allegiance. That's who I'm going to align myself with. That's my team. We're contending for the same cause, the glory of God.

I need to be around those who live lives in allegiance to the King, not just churchgoers, but radical people who lay their lives down because the King means everything to them. Because he has entered their lives. He has turned everything upside down. He has broken them free from the things of the world and their lives are now lived for him."

Do you know Christians like that? I think biblical community would be far more attractive if it was filled with these kinds of people, but the reality is it starts with *us* being the kind of people who embody this allegiance in our own lives. He didn't stop here. He contrasts those people who worship and follow Yahweh to this other group of people he says choose to run after other gods.

Here again, just like when we were in Psalm 1 if you were with us, the Bible is going to continue to paint a clear picture that there is no third option when it comes to our allegiance. We will worship something with our lives. It will either be the God of the Bible, which leads to life and joy or some other god, which is what makes this next verse one of the scariest sentences in the Bible to me.

It says those who choose to follow after another god their sorrows will surely multiply. That's scary because there could not be a more opposite picture for a path leading to life and joy than one whose

result it says will be misery multiplied. Those who choose to run after other gods, surely their misery will be multiplied. David says, "I want nothing to do with that path. I will not worship their gods. I will not say their name on my lips."

Then we go to verses 5 through 7. These contain a ton of rich description about what life is like in allegiance to this King. Starting in verse 5, David gives us three different metaphors to describe God. First, he compares God to an *inheritance*. Secondly, to a *cup*. Thirdly, to the *holder of my lot* or preserver of that inheritance.

Now the portion and the cup reflect God's fulfillment of his promise to Israel, not only in bringing them in to the land that was promised, but continuing to provide from the land which was promised. Then he says, "He holds my lot," or another way of saying is, "God has defended what he has provided."

I can summarize verse 5 in this way. David is saying that when God makes a promise, he always provides for that promise and he always preserves for what he has provided. Let me say that again, because I want us to get that. David is saying that when God makes a promise, he *always* provides for that promise and he *always* preserves for what he has provided.

This promise-keeping God is the foundation of David's confidence. It's the same confidence demonstrated in Paul in Philippians 1 where he says, "**And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.**" Or in 1 Thessalonians where he says, "**Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.**"

Same God. Same confidence. He *will* provide what he's promised. He *will* preserve what he has provided. Then we get to verse 6. Listen to this. "**The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.**" That first one can seem a little bit more ambiguous. Let me help you here.

The word *lines* here means boundaries. Then, the Hebrew word for *pleasant places* here is the same one we're going to see in verse 11 for *pleasures evermore*. Same word. *Lines* and *boundaries* here, they're not referring to geography. It's not by *lines* like the boundaries around a nation or around a city or around a county. Don't think of those kinds of geographic lines. Rather, to counsel, to

instruction. This is counsel that leads to what? Everlasting pleasure. Verse 7 is how we're going to see these things connected.

He says, "**I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.**" We know that by this verse, what helped connect the dots between God's sovereignty over us and us finding our joy in him is his counsel. Again, we talked about this in length in Psalm 1. That God's ways or his instruction, his counsel is good for us. It leads to our joy and our flourishing.

Contrasted to that, our ways do what? They lead to death and destruction. The best thing God does for me in his sovereignty is to draw lines or boundaries around my life through his instruction and push me toward the center where there is true joy and pleasures evermore. Then we get to verse 8. We're going to see verses 5 through 7 combine to form this foundation of confidence that creates this supernatural courage in David.

David says, "...**because** [I have kept my gaze fixed on this God], David says, "**...I shall not be shaken.**" That's really important to us because the pathway from how we got from declaring our need as he said in verse 1 where he was saying, "**Preserve me, O God...**" to this kind of courage where he is able to say, "**...I shall not be shaken.**"

The pathway from despair to confidence is declaring and demonstrating with our lives what is true about God, that I'm going to lean in to the truth and the foundation that he will surely provide for his promise, that through his counsel, he will preserve me in his promise. Standing on this foundation produces supernatural courage in life. Why?

Because no matter what befalls me, I will not be shaken. You can sense this psalm has had this building nature. We have gone from verse to verse. Then we get to verse 9. This is the crescendo of the psalm where everything kind of erupts. It erupts with this word *therefore*. Whenever we see the word *therefore*, things are about to go up a level.

This is what he says. "**Therefore my heart is glad...**" Listen to this. "**...my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.**" Right here in this verse we go from supernatural courage that we saw in verses 5 through 8 to supernatural joy. I've been trying to think of ways to describe this idea of the whole being rejoicing because it's so above and beyond anything that we can typically conceptualize.

Here is the closest I can get. Every time I do a wedding, at a rehearsal dinner I always try to end the same way if I can by exhorting both the family, the bride and groom, and those in the wedding party and around. This is how I usually describe it. I'll say, "Hey, tomorrow when we get into the wedding ceremony, everybody is going to be looking at the same person. Who is that person?" You can answer me, 12:30. It's the bride, right? Yes, it's the bride.

She is the star of the show. When she walks down the aisle, everybody stands up, turns in, and looks to the bride. Why? Because she's beautiful. She comes down the aisle and is being presented. I always try and encourage the families. "There is one face you don't want to miss. Yes, see the bride. Take one quarter turn, look back the other direction, see the face of the groom.

Because in that moment you will get to see what it looks like for all the capacities of the mind and the heart of a human being brought into the fullest expression of happiness in that moment." When I share this usually I'll say, "Why it's so beautifully powerful is that's how God sees us. We just get to get a bit of a glimpse."

Isn't it true? When you see that groom and you see the look on his face? He either has this gigantic smile or he is crying. However it works out in him, what you are seeing is the fullest, all the mind and heart's capacity coming to full expression of human happiness in this one person in this moment. There's not another time in his life when he has been this happy.

That's been true for me every time. I haven't had a groom who's run out yet, who's freaked out. Every time so far this has been true. That what you see on his face is as close as we're going to get to this concept of your whole being rejoicing. Even then, it's really just tipping the iceberg. That's the closest we're going to get. Why is it so important?

How did we start this Psalm? What was David afraid of in verse 1? Death. He didn't want to die. At the crescendo of this prayer, David goes from deep despair to the fullest expression of human happiness possible. Supernatural joy. How did he get there? These next couple of verses are going to shed light on how he got there.

He says, "**For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, 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.**" To understand fully what David is saying here, we're going to need to go to Acts, chapter 2. Turn there with me if you can.

Peter, in Acts, chapter 2 is going to tell us why this is important for us to understand what's happening here. If you don't know this, the New Testament is the key to unlocking the deeper meaning in the Old Testament. Acts, chapter 2, here for us is going to allow us to unlock that door, swing it open wide, and see the beautiful deep riches in Psalm 16.

In Acts, chapter 2, it's Peter's sermon at Pentecost. He's going to unlock for us the deeper meaning behind what David is saying. As God would have it in providence here on Pentecost Sunday, Peter can preach once again to us about Psalm 16. Starting in verse 21, this is what Peter says.

"And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Men of Israel, hear these words: 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, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it." Then what does Peter say? "For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand..." He is quoting Psalm 16. "...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." Peter is quoting David. Then he explains it right here in the next paragraph. He says, **"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 therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he [David] 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.

Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit..." Here on Pentecost. "...he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." Peter calls Psalm 16 a prophecy from the mouth of David, who foresaw

and spoke about the resurrection of Christ. What is the foundation of our courage? Peter tells us. It's the resurrection of Christ. That's what David is pointing to.

I love this. Joe Rigney, a pastor and theologian, describes Peter's sermon this way. He says, "Jesus receives the fullness of his Father's delight, and the first thing he does is to turn around and pour it out on his people. Jesus receives the fullness of joy from God, and then he gives it to us. Or more precisely, Jesus gives him to us.

For that's what the Holy Spirit is: the personal, eternal joy and delight of the living God. Pentecost marks the day that Jesus shares Psalm 16:11 with us. That's why it makes perfect sense for Peter to move from the death of Jesus, to the resurrection of Jesus, to the pouring out of the Spirit in his Pentecost sermon." Matthew Bates says, "The gospel is the power-releasing story of Jesus' life, death for sins, resurrection, and installation of King."

The day of Pentecost represents a time to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, marking not only God dwelling in and empowering his people, but also the birth of the church and the establishment of God's kingdom over all creation as King. It's a time to remember our mission, make disciples of Jesus, and know that as we go, God is with us.

The courage we gain from Psalm 16 is that we who are in Christ because of the resurrection no longer have a death problem. I love the way Robert Coleman in *The Master Plan of Evangelism...* If you haven't read that book; it's a yearly read for me. Very small, packs a ton of punch, is incredible. I commend it to you, please.

He says about it this way. He says, "Following Jesus seemed easy enough at first, but that was because they had not followed him very far. It soon became apparent that being a disciple of Christ involved far more than a joyful acceptance of the Messianic promise: it meant the surrender of one's whole life to the Master in absolute submission to his sovereignty. [...] There could be no compromise. Perfection of love was now the only standard of conduct...and this love was to manifest itself in obedience to Christ...expressed in devotion to those he died to save..."

I love how he describes it here. "There was a cross in it." What is the outworking of supernatural joy and courage from a people who had a death problem? It means the same spirit who raised Christ from the dead fills us, empowers us, and sends us. It means your life is no longer your own. There's

a cross in it. If there's one rut that I've been praying the Spirit would jolt me out of and jolt us out of it's this rut of comfortable apathetic religiosity that fills your schedule and starves your soul.

The reality is there's only one cure for this apathetic life. It isn't just to adjust it. You have to lose it. The life that he's called us to isn't this booster club way we play church where we get involved so our kids have a place to play. Jesus didn't die...hear me...to be an addition to your schedule. He died to give you life. He's called us to come and lay it all down. So what? So that we might truly live.

I've said it before, and I'll continue to say it as often as I can get in front of you. The reason why I believe so many Christians are frustrated, bored, and stuck is that we settle for a very small, comfortable view of Christianity that requires very little courage and gives us a very poor substitute for joy. But followers of Christ are a people of supernatural courage and joy that is produced when God is both our Yahweh and our Adonai who gets not only our worship as our Creator but our allegiance as King. Let's pray.

Father in heaven, I confess coming in here in my own heart feeling stuck. I want so much for all of the power, confidence, courage, and joy that's infusing David as he declares a psalm to infuse in my own life. I want to see you as God. I want to worship you as God, the Creator of all things. I want to live for you as King. Because you deserve it. You're worth it.

You're worthy of all of our lives. You're worthy of all our discomfort. You're worthy of all of our pain. You're worthy of whatever sacrifice and anything we lay down. Because what you promise is that the path ahead of us doesn't lead to destruction but to eternal pleasure. Father, wherever we are this morning, you know the realities of each one of us this morning. You know the ruts we're in.

You know if they're deeply personal and painful. You know if they're relational. You know what they are. You know if they're just external, where we just keep giving you lip service but really don't do anything with our lives. You know all of that. You know wherever the ruts are. Father, wherever we are, I pray that you'd meet us at the confidence in this psalm that can jolt us out of the place we are to the place where you would have us be.

We would gladly lay down our lives in joyful submission to the King, because that path is one of eternal joy, pleasure, and life. We believe it. Where we can't believe it today, that this by the power of your Spirit, this psalm would breathe that confidence in us today. We don't want to be a people

who just keep confessing, "Yes, you're God." We want to be a people who live lives of allegiance to the King. Would you accomplish that? Would you do that in Christ's name for his sake? Amen.

© 2019 The Village Church