

We are in the middle of a series in the Messianic Psalms, and so it is appropriate that this Resurrection Sunday we should look at the psalm most connected to the resurrection of Jesus, Psalm 16. We know that this psalm is prophetically looking to Jesus because both Peter and Paul quote it as referring to His resurrection. (Acts 2:25-28; 13:35) Peter explained to the crowd at Pentecost that God broke the pain of death for it was not possible for it to hold Jesus. He told them that the appearance of the resurrected Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of the last four verses of this psalm.

The psalm is entitled a Miktam of David. There are six psalms that have this title. They all refer to the time of David's rejection. There are several explanations of the term *mitsam*. Some say it is derived from a verb "to engrave." The Septuagint, in its inscription to the psalm, says: "To be inscribed and hung up on a pillar to commemorate victory." Others translate the title "golden." It has been called "David's golden jewel."¹

The first part of the psalm (1-7) is about the man who is dependent upon God. ¹ *Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.* Psalm 16:1 (ESV) It begins with a request to be preserved or kept. In the psalms we find that this word is used in regard to remaining in the ways of God, keeping His ordinances, and His truth. (Psalm 19:11) Jesus was the only man who took refuge in God the Father at all times and remained in the ways of God throughout His earthly life. (2Corinthians 5:21) When He had decisions to make, or was challenged, even when His last hours drew near, He did not lean to His own inclinations, but took refuge in God.

What a difference it would make in our lives if we could learn such dependency upon God! We, too, should look to God to keep us in His ways, His guidance, and truth. We can't keep ourselves. We need the refuge God provides.

Even as I prepared to write this, the urgent things that had to be done that hour seemed impossible. I cried out to the Lord in my frustration, ran to Him as my refuge. The phone began to ring and one phone call after another came in that resolved each need within minutes. Even when it doesn't seem to come together, we take refuge in His sovereignty over all the details of life and trust Him for the outcome as we rely upon God to keep us in His ways. That means to maintain a godly attitude of trust and faith as we look to Him. (Psalm 62:8)

² *I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."* Psalm 16:2 (ESV) God is good. The goodness of Christ is the goodness of God. Any goodness in us is the goodness of God. Apart from Him we have no goodness of our own. (Psalms 53:3) Some people are confused about Jesus telling the rich young ruler that there is

Commented [notes1]: Acts 2:25-28 (ESV)

²⁵ For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope.

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

Commented [notes2]: Acts 13:35 (ESV)

³⁵ Therefore he says also in another psalm, "You will not let your Holy One see corruption.'

Commented [notes3]: 16, 57,58,59,60

Commented [notes4]: T. Ernest Willson, The Messianic Psalms

Commented [notes5]: Psalm 19:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

Commented [notes6]: 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Commented [notes7]: Psalm 62:8 (ESV)

⁸ Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. *Selah*

Commented [notes8]: Psalm 53:3 (ESV)

³ They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

none good but God. (Mark 10:18) Jesus realized that as a man all goodness in Him as a man is the goodness of God. They are one. We should realize that although we are not so uniquely one with God, any goodness in us is God at work.

I feel so awkward when someone compliments me on a sermon or a devotional, because I know who I am. I can say with the psalmist, "I have no good apart from You, Lord!" (Romans 7:18) Any good in me is Jesus who is completely filled with God's goodness.

In this short psalm, God is referred to 16 times. That shows us the intense focus upon God in it. In this verse, two different words are used for God, *YHWH*, the eternal God of Israel, and *Adonai*, meaning Master. Substituting those meanings we would read it, "I said to the eternal God of Israel, You are my Master." It reinforces the idea of dependency we saw in the first verse. God is the One from Whom Jesus took His orders. His will was surrendered to the Father. Jesus never acted independently from God. (John 5:19) Independence from God is the essence of sin. That was Eve in the Garden acting without Adam, her head, in deciding to act independently from God, our ultimate authority. She did what looked good to her with disregard to God's ways and commands. (Genesis 3:6)

This was the main issue in the temptation. Satan was attempting to have Jesus act independently from His Father, short cuts to what appeared to be good without the pain and suffering involved in doing things God's way. (Luke 4:5-8) Satan is a liar. (John 8:44) His way ends in more pain and suffering and without the good fruit that comes from obedience. Jesus would have none of it. His dependency on God was complete because His attitude was that God is His Master. Is that your attitude? That is where all goodness is found. (Psalm 73:28)

³ As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. Psalm 16:3 (ESV) This is Jesus attitude toward the saints. Saints are those who place their faith in Him. As the bride of Christ, you are His delight. I know; it is hard to comprehend, but remember that He can see the finished product. (Isaiah 61:10) We should too! If Jesus delights in believers, even impetuous Peter and doubting Thomas, what should our attitude be to other believers? (Galatians 6:10) This is where our independent and self-centered culture invades the body of Christ and weakens us. Unless we build bonds of love and concern for one another, we are missing not only the command of Jesus to love one another (John 15:12), we are refusing to walk as He walked. (1John 2:6)

Jesus delighted in the excellent ones. They were the ones that loved the Word and tried to follow but also realized they were dependent upon the grace of God. They are the ones that stumble but get up and keep moving toward greater faith. They are the ones

Commented [notes9]: Mark 10:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

Commented [notes10]: Romans 7:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

Commented [notes11]: John 5:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

Commented [notes12]: Genesis 3:6 (ESV)

⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Commented [notes13]: Luke 4:5-8 (ESV)

⁵ And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,
⁶ and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.
⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." ⁸ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, '-You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'"

Commented [notes14]: John 8:44 (ESV)

⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Commented [notes15]: Psalm 73:28 (ESV)

²⁸ But for me it is good to be near God; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.

Commented [notes16]: Isaiah 61:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Commented [notes17]: Galatians 6:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Commented [notes18]: John 15:12 (ESV)

¹² "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Commented [notes19]: 1 John 2:6 (ESV)

⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

that, like Jesus, plead with God to preserve them and be their refuge. They are His delight because they are works in progress becoming His bride. He delights in their continual transformation. He delights in their increasing love for Him and for one another. (1Peter 1:22)

If you are not following Jesus by delighting in your fellow believers, you are missing one of the main tools He uses to shape and mature us. It is in conflicts and humiliation that we are conformed to His image. We can hole up and stay entertained and reasonably happy, but we'll be missing what God had planned for us. As you grow closer to Christ you will find your delight is in His saints. We should share His attitude toward our fellow believers. The least of them are Christ to us. (Matthew 25:40)

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. Psalm 16:4 (ESV) The world is full of alternative gods: money, food, sex, entertainment, prestige, and on and on. The result of chasing them is not the pleasure that each promises. It is increased sorrows! While Canaanites, Greeks, and Romans poured out blood sacrifices to their gods for prosperity and success, the only thing they would reap is increased sorrow. The psalmist and Jesus won't even mention their names.

⁵ The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. Psalm 16:5 (ESV) The eternal God of Israel is the inheritance of the writer. In the Levitical Law, the tribe of Levi did not have a territory because the Lord was their inheritance. (Deuteronomy 18:1-2) As our great High Priest, Jesus wanted nothing in this life, no property or home, and no assigned portion of food or drink. (Matthew 8:20) YHWH was all He wanted. YHWH is the One who secures His heavenly inheritance.

All of Jesus' desire was toward the LORD. As is stated in another psalm, *"There is none that I desire but Thee."* (Psalm 73:25) In this case we could say there is nothing Jesus desires but the Father and His will. This could not truly be said of David, even though David was a man after God's heart. He failed to keep the LORD as His only desire. This makes Jesus the ultimate fulfillment of this psalm. **What do you desire?** How would your life change if the pursuit of God was your all-consuming passion?

"Portion and cup" can also be what a prince receives at the table of the king. It is interesting to note that H. A. Ironside sees this psalm as Christ, the meal offering. (Leviticus 9:1-2) According to the Law, the people were supposed to offer occasional meal offerings of fine flour, salt, oil, and frankincense. The fine flour was the result of breaking the grain and grinding or crushing it. It represents the hardship of life. The salt represents an enduring covenant. The oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit. The frankincense pictures prayer. While the psalm does depict Jesus surrendered in all these ways to God for our sake, this verse turns it around and says that He in turn is

Commented [notes20]: 1 Peter 1:22 (ESV)

²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

Commented [notes21]: Matthew 25:40 (ESV)

⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

Commented [notes22]: Deuteronomy 18:1-2 (ESV)

¹ "The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the LORD's food offerings as their inheritance. ² They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them.

Commented [notes23]: Matthew 8:20 (ESV)

²⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

Commented [notes24]: Psalm 73:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

Commented [notes25]: Leviticus 2:1-2 (ESV)

¹ "When anyone brings a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. He shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it ² and bring it to Aaron's sons the priests. And he shall take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil, with all of its frankincense, and the priest shall burn this as its memorial portion on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

nourished by His communion with God. The picture is carried into the New Testament when Jesus stands at the door and knocks to come in and dine with us. (Revelation 3:20) The feast is the unleavened bread of the meal offering and the wine of His perfect blood poured out for a sin offering. That is the essence of communion. He is our meal offering which pictures fellowship with God, made possible because of the sin offering of His own life.

⁶ The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. Psalm 16:6 (ESV) What is the lot or inheritance that Jesus will receive from God's hand? What is so pleasant and beautiful? It is the LORD, but is it not also the bride, the wife of the Lamb, the completely transformed people of God descending as New Jerusalem? (Revelation 21:2) Is it possible that Jesus could truly desire us to that extent and be so content with us? It wouldn't be much of a marriage if that were not true, though all the goodness in us is the LORD.

Believers certainly can claim this verse as well. Look at your inheritance, the LORD Himself! Could you have a more beautiful one? In His presence is the most pleasant place of all. (Matthew 25:21)

⁷ I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. Psalm 16:7 (ESV) Bless the LORD for His good counsel. Those special times in sleepless hours of the night can be our most precious times with Him. Apparently they were with Jesus. Don't complain about them. Bless the LORD for them.

Now we get into the portion quoted by Peter, the attitude of the Messiah toward the will of God. *⁸ I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.* Psalm 16:8 (ESV) Jesus continually had the LORD before Him. He always considered the LORD there at His side. That is why He had no fear. He was never shaken because of circumstances. Can we follow this example? I believe we are meant to do so. If in the midst of chaos, fear or being overwhelmed, we would just stop and see the LORD going before us and there at our side, we can face anything. If you know He is there, all-powerful, all-knowing, and in covenant with you, there is no need be shaken by any calamity. He will see you through. Yes, easier said than done, but let us follow the One that exemplified it!

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. Psalm 16:9 (ESV) Why is His heart glad. It's because the LORD is always before Him and at His right hand. His whole being, soul and body can rejoice. If God is for us, who can be against us! (Romans 8:31) What if they kill the body? God can raise it! God has no problem keeping track of fundamental elements of my being. This should be the joy of every believer. Our whole being can rejoice when the LORD is always set before us and at our right hand. It is when we stray and get our eyes on other things to see us

Commented [notes26]: Revelation 3:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Commented [notes27]: Revelation 21:2 (ESV)

² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Commented [notes28]: Matthew 25:21 (ESV)

²¹ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

Commented [notes29]: Romans 8:31 (ESV)

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

through the difficulties of life that we better worry. That worry should drive us back to the only secure thing in life, the LORD! He's the only One that can handle everything.

¹⁰ *For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.* Psalm 16:10 (ESV) There is debate about exactly what is Sheol and where Christ went at the moment of death. The NIV translated it as the grave. The important thing is that even though God had to turn His back on Jesus on the cross, He did not abandon Him in death. He raised Him to power and glory proving that His sacrifice was accepted and sufficient. (Acts 2:32) The work was accomplished and the price was paid. David could not call himself "your holy one". The Holy One is Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God. Three days in the grave and no decomposition!

Commented [notes30]: Acts 2:32 (ESV)

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

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.* Psalm 16:11 (ESV) This is one of my favorite verses. The prayer in verse one is answered. God kept Jesus in the path of life. He kept Him from seeking some other way. He helped Him delight in the saints. He made Himself Jesus' portion and desire and constant companion. This is the path of life. God can help you walk in it as well. Now ascended to the right hand of God, the God who was in this life at Jesus' right hand is now fullness of joy to Him. He provides eternal pleasure to the faithful Son of God.

All through this psalm we have applied the verses to our own lives. We can also apply this last verse. Our path of life is the life of the Righteous One who exchanges His righteousness for our sins. He called Himself the Way. (John 14:6) This gives us the promise of our bodies resting secure while our souls are in His presence, in fullness of joy.

Commented [notes31]: John 14:6 (ESV)

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

About a month ago we saw the discipline of joy that comes when we focus on Jesus and His faithfulness to us. We saw that it came from obedience to the commands that were given us for our good. That is where Jesus found it, and He wanted us to experience it as well. He said, *"I have told you these things so my joy may be in you and that your joy might be complete."* (John 15:11 NIV) Here is complete joy, eternity in God's presence, with pleasures forever more. That is what awaits us in heaven. We know it is real for Christ has conquered death. His resurrection shows us that we will rise too, if we have placed our trust in Him. (1Corinthians 15:12-14)

Commented [notes32]: John 15:11 (ESV)

¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Questions

- 1 Why is this a Messianic psalm?
- 2 What are the first seven verses about?
- 3 How is the first word used in Psalms?
- 4 What is the source of all goodness?
- 5 What is the essence of sin?
- 6 What is Jesus' delight?

Commented [notes33]: 1 Corinthians 15:12-14 (ESV)

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?
¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.
¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

- 7 What is Jesus' portion? Inheritance?
- 8 How is Jesus the meal offering?
- 9 Why is Jesus' heart glad and His body rest secure?
- 10 Why should we be joyful?
- 11 To what do we look forward?