

21. The Book of Psalms 16:1-4

In God We Trust-Part 1

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(10-5-25)

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Psalms 16 was written by David expressing his trust in the Lord both now and forever—which is why I'm calling this message, "In God We Trust."

I. We Trust God in the Present—verses 1-8

II. We Trust God for the Future—verses 9-11

So let's start on our first point...

I. We Trust God in the Present—verses 1-8

Psalm 16:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. ² *O my soul*, you have said to the Lord, "You *are* my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You."

David liked to talk to himself when he needed to remind himself of God's goodness, or simply to reassure himself of God's promises, His provision and protection—

Psalm 42:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

As I have said in the past, it's okay to talk to yourself (that's normal)—but if you start arguing with yourself—that's a problem!

The statement, "**My goodness is nothing apart from You**" seems to be a continuation of what David said in Psalm 14 (which Paul quoted in Romans 3)—

Psalm 14:2-3 (NKJV)

² The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. ³ They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; *There is none* who does good, No, not one.

Apart from Jesus all of our so-called 'good' works are like filthy rags in God's sight. (Elaborate)

Psalm 16:3 (NKJV)

³ As for the saints who *are* on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."

Growing up in the Roman Catholic Church, we were taught that only very special people (those who devoted their lives to helping the poor, who lived a very holy life and even worked miracles) had bestowed upon them the title of **'saint.'**

But in the Bible the word **'saint'** is used of all true believers in Jesus Christ:

Ephesians 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, **To the saints who are in Ephesus...**

Here Paul is writing to the *saints* in Ephesus—*"That's not me,"* you say. ***"I'm no saint!"*** Actually, if you're a true believer in Jesus then—**yes, you are!**

We often think of *saints* in the terms of canonization—the procedure where a group of cardinals or bishops analyze a person's life to determine if it meets the requirement for beatification, or sainthood—but that's not what the word **"saint"** means in the Bible.

The word **"saint"** simply means *"a set apart one"*—the Bible teaches that when we put our faith in Jesus—God set us apart from the world and placed us into the Body of Christ.

At that moment we became His *'holy ones'*—His saints (same Greek word is used for *'holy one'* and *'saint'*—*hagios*)—those He has separated from the world to be His own special people:

1 Peter 2:9 (NLT)

⁹ ...for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

Psalms 16:3 (NKJV)

³ **As for the saints who are on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."**

Here David is quoting the Lord and how He feels about His saints. This is opposite of those who worship false gods—

Psalms 16:4 (NKJV)

⁴ **Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, nor take up their names on my lips.**

So here David is coming against idolatry, however, many in our modern culture would deny that they are serving other gods (idols)—or any 'god' for that matter.

At this point we need to look at Joshua 24.

Joshua 24:14-15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ "Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! ¹⁵ And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

I want you to notice that Joshua didn't say *"choose for yourselves this day if you will serve some god..."*—it's not a question of whether or not you *will* serve some god. The question Joshua challenges the people of Israel with is—*"Will they choose to serve the one and only true and living God (the God of the Bible)?"*

You see not everyone serves the Lord God Almighty—
but everyone serves some god.

Joshua didn't say, *"Choose this day if you will serve"* he said, *"Choose this day whom you will serve"*—because he recognized that we all serve some God. Joshua declared where he stood in relation to that all-important question of life when he said to them—*"Choose this day whom you will serve...as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."*

- There are many who would say at this point, *"I don't believe in God, I only believe in me!"*
- Well then you worship and serve *yourself* as 'god'—the religion of humanism.
- Whenever a person says, *"I am an atheist"* they are not saying that they don't have a god—what they're saying is that they don't believe in the God of the Bible. And because of it, they think that they don't serve God, but every man serves some kind of god—even if that god is himself.

Your god is the *'master-passion'* that controls your life.

Let's look at some of the 'gods' that are worshipped by people in our culture.

The god of Money

Many people are controlled by money; money is their god—they live for it; it's what motivates and drives their lives, it's pretty much all they think about. They often work 12 to 15 hours a day (sometimes more) devoting themselves to their god to gain more and more money.

In the Old Testament that man was called a worshiper of Mammon, the god of money. Just because they don't call it Mammon worship—doesn't mean they aren't worshipping the god of money.

The god of Pleasure

There are many people today who worship pleasure—their whole life is devoted to the pursuit of pleasure. That's all they care about, it's all they're interested in. They only work because they have to have money to buy the things or do the things that will bring them pleasure.

They spend their whole five-day work week planning the weekend with some activity that will bring them pleasure. And so, every Sunday, you'll find them on the golf course or out on their boat or camping somewhere—whether they know it or not pleasure is their god.

In the Old Testament if you worshiped pleasure they would say—*"He worships Molech, the god of pleasure"*.

Just because they don't call it *'Molech worship'* or consider that they're practicing idolatry—doesn't make them any less an idolator, worshipping pleasure as your god.

The god of Intellect

There are those who worship their intellect; where their whole life is devoted to the expanding of their knowledge and achieving the recognition that comes from having '*letters*' after their name.

- They worship in the halls of academia by devoting their lives to study and the development of their intellect.
- They love the recognition that comes from others calling them—"*professor*" and an "*intellectual*" (much like the Pharisees in Jesus' day).
- They believe that education is the savior of mankind; they believe that if we educate people they will stop being violent, selfish, lawbreakers—and the world will become a utopia of love and mutual respect and peace—"*education is the key!*"

What they fail to understand is that man's problem is not his intellect—it's his evil fallen heart, a heart that's been defiled by sin. And as such, no educational system in the world can educate sin out of a person's heart.

**If you educate a sinner—
all you wind up with is a more educated sinner!**

But it doesn't affect a person's nature which is where the problem of sin resides—in the fallen nature of mankind.

The only way for a person to receive a new nature is ***through the new birth***.

The ancient Egyptians, in whose land the children of Israel spent quite a few years in slavery, worshiped the god of learning and wisdom called *Thoth*.

The Greeks worshiped *Koios* who was the Titan-God of intellect.

Just because people today don't call it *Thoth* or *Koios* worship—doesn't make the worship of the intellect any less an act of idolatry than it was for the Egyptians and Greeks.

The god of Sex

There are many people today who absolutely worship the concept of *sexual* pleasure. It's all they think about, it's all they live for. It dominates everything they watch on TV, look at on the internet or read about in magazines and books.

It's something that absolutely consumes them—which you can tell because they make it the topic of every conversation. Sexual pleasure is their god whether they realize it or not! In the Old Testament it would have been said that they worship Ashtoreth, the goddess of sexual pleasure—and in the first century, Venus.

The god of Power

There are many today who worship Zeus—the god of power. We see many people in society who absolutely worship the concept of power—they are consumed with a desire for power.

It takes different forms—whether it be power in the *corporate* world, the *political* world or even the *underworld*—they are obsessed with a desire for power. It's what they live for, it's what they worship—it's their god.

The god of Partying

There are many today who worship the god Bacchus—the god of drunken partying.

These are those who live to party, to get drunk and have a good old time—they live for the weekend so they can go partying! All week long they're trying to find out who's having a party this weekend—it's always on their mind; it is what consumes them.

Whether they know it or not their god is Bacchus.

The god of Vanity

Then there are those who worship Narcissus—the god of vanity.

We talk about people today being 'narcissistic' which means they have a love for themselves—they are totally consumed with their appearance. They are in love with their reflection in the mirror.

John the Apostle ended his first epistle by saying "*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*"

When most Christians read that—they smile because it sounds like something that would be said to the superstitious, spiritually ignorant, and unenlightened pagan people of the first century Greco-Roman world.

You know—those who bowed down and worshiped carved idols, but it certainly wouldn't apply to us in the 21st century—we belong to a civilized, educated, enlightened culture—we don't bow down and worship idols anymore.

Well let me tell you something—not only is idolatry alive and well in America but those ignorant superstitious 1st century pagans were far more honest and up front about their idolatry than many of the so-called sophisticated, educated and enlightened people of today.

At least they were honest about it—they admitted to being idol worshippers. Whereas most people in America are idol-worshippers—and yet are so blind and self-deceived to it so as to laugh at the notion that they are in any way idolaters.

You see, all idolatry starts in the heart with an idea, a desire, an ambition or some other drive that becomes the '*master-passion*' of your life. This passion is what drives you, it's what you live for, it's what gets you up in the morning and out the door—it is your god whether you know it or not.

Now back in ancient times people would take it a step farther and fashion out for themselves an idol to represent this concept or desire. But listen, you don't have to carve out an idol to represent this master-passion—you can still worship the concept in your heart and with your life.

The ancient pagans took it to the next level and carved out of wood or stone, or molded an image out of silver or gold to represent their god to then physically bow down and worship—but it isn't necessary to take it that far to be guilty of idolatry.

As we've already said, people worship the same things today that people did in Joshua or John's day.

So, Joshua's challenge to choose whom you will serve—either the true and living God or the gods of this world is as relevant today as it was back then.

He is saying, "*Stop sitting on the fence, stop playing games!*" In other words, stop being a hypocrite and just be honest with yourself about who or what it is that you really love and worship—and then go for it!

But remember what Paul the apostle said with regard to this—

Galatians 6:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Of course, when Joshua challenged the people of his day to choose who they were going to serve; we read in verse 16—

Joshua 24:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods..."

We read that and say, "*Praise God, they made the right choice!*" However, Joshua knew better—he knew they were pledging with their lips but not really with their hearts and lives to love and worship the true and living God above all else.

You see by this time they had already turned to other gods in the privacy of their homes and hearts (verse 23). That's why Joshua said to them in verse 19—

Joshua 24:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for He *is* a holy God. He *is* a jealous God..."

In other words, Joshua is saying to them, "*You can't serve the Lord like this—half-hearted, trying to serve Him and the gods of this world too! You have to choose one or the other but you can't serve two masters!*"

How did the people respond?—

Joshua 24:21-26 (NKJV)

²¹ And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the Lord!" ²² So Joshua said to the people, "You *are* witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves, to serve Him." And they said, "We *are* witnesses!" ²³ "Now therefore," *he said*, "put away the foreign gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel." ²⁴ And the people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!" ²⁵ So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. ²⁶ Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God.

Unfortunately, we don't have to look far to see that the nation didn't follow through on their promise to serve and obey the Lord—all we have to do is turn the page to the book of Judges to see that.

Paul said, "*These things were written for our learning...*" (Romans 15:4)

Hopefully we'll learn from their mistakes and make better choices when confronted with choosing between the true God or the gods of this world to serve.

1 John 2:15–17 (NLT)

¹⁵ Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. ¹⁶ For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. ¹⁷ And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

When Joshua said, *“Choose this day whom you will serve and obey”* the Hebrew is, *“Choose constantly...whom you are going to serve and obey.”* (Comment)

Jesus said, *“If you love Me keep My commandments”*.

John 10:27–30 (NLT)

²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, ²⁹ for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father’s hand. ³⁰ The Father and I are one.”

Psalms 16:4 (NKJV)

⁴ **Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten *after* another god; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips.**

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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