

## Confidence in Deadly Times

### Psalm 16

\***Welcome** to all of you **who have converted your homes into sanctuaries of the Living God.**

\***Last Sunday, 1321** unique locations watched live from **29 states, Canada, Costa, Mex, & UK.**

*"Dear Pastor Craig. Thank you for continuing to have service from a distance...I feel that God has locked us down ALL OVER THE WORLD to give us time so we can get to know our families better, PRAY and READ the BIBLE together, but MOST importantly to get to KNOW him deeper...and draw closer to him! Let us not miss this opportunity [to see] his wonderful PLAN at WORK!" (Jane; London, England)*

\*Although we'd love to be together **face to face**, I pray today will always be remembered as the **Easter Sunday the Church of Jesus Christ was as EMPTY AS JESUS' TOMB.**

\*The first **Easter** began with death & sorrow. Nothing was **"Good" about the first Good Friday**

\*But Sunday morning, the disciples were greeted with the most important announcement in history: **"He is not here; He is risen!"**

\*After 3 days in a borrowed grave, Jesus reversed decay, conquered death, was raised up bodily, and for 40 days gave **"many convincing proofs he was alive."**

\***And anyone who raises from the dead has credibility.**

\*Even though the **Tomb was on total lockdown**, nothing could stop the power of resurrection.

***Testimony:** "This lockdown has provided opportunities and openness that weren't there before. God's Word is not on lockdown - He is unstoppable!" (Testimony, NH Woman)*

\***This is why we rejoice:** Even though we have in lockdown, God's word is on the move.

\***This is the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday that** fear of disease has interfered with public gatherings.

\*Many people are so **paralyzed by fear**, that the **"fear of dying" has made people "stop living."**

\*The news of **bodily resurrection** (Jesus' and ours) has never been more relevant than now.

\*It breaks into our world with hope: **"Death is not final. There is Victory beyond the Virus."**

\*Resurrection hope should also fill us with confidence that we can **choose faith over fear.**

\*We need to remember that it is far better to **"Die Living" than to "Fear Dying."**

\*How are you living? Are you paralyzed by **Fear of Dying...or confident in the Joy of Living?**

\***Psalm 16** – gives **confidence in deadly times.**

\*It **promises that God** will not abandon his people to decay, but will raise them up in triumph.

\*It is **quoted by Peter** in the NT, who rejoiced that God had **raised Jesus from the dead** because it was impossible for the grave to defeat him.

\*It **affirms that we are people of** resurrection; Yes, **Church may be empty, but so is the Tomb.**

\*North MI, Ps. 16 calls us to walk the path of life with **confidence in deadly times**.

\*God will be faithful. It is impossible for the grave to hold us down. We shall be raised.

## 1. The “path of life” begins with a choice, (v.1-4)

\***David’s worldview** is simple: We all stand at a **fork in the road** and have to make a critical decision

- **To follow the Lord...** (v.1-3)
- **...or not.** (v.4)

\*As our President considers reopening the country he says: ***“I’m going to have to make a decision...I would say without question it’s the biggest decision I’ve ever had to make.”***

\*N.H., that may be a big decision that **affects our economy**...but the biggest decision that **affects your eternity** is choosing deciding to walk **With/Without the Lord**.

\***WITH the Lord** = a path of **safety**. *“Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.”* (v.1)

\***WITHOUT the Lord** = a path of **sorrow**. *“The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply...”* (v.4)

\**What path have you decided to walk? **With/Without the Lord?***

\***Our choice is a worldview issue on the biggest questions: Origin, Meaning, Morality, Destiny.**

\*I asked **one friend** what he thought about where we are headed. He wrote:

*“As a human race, we are headed to nearly total destruction. Few pockets will survive, and they will live in extreme discomfort for many centuries, fighting to possibility of total extinction. I don’t believe we have a soul that can go to a “better” place. We have a consciousness that developed through the early years of our life. And it dies with us with our last breath.”*

\*That **path, chosen by many, is one of multiplied sorrow and leads to death.**

\*Can I offer you an alternative path? David chose to walk a **path of life** with God as Lord:

v.2 *“I say to the Lord, “**You are MY Lord**; I have no good apart from you.”*

**“My Lord!”** This is the **first and most basic belief of starting the Christian life.**

\*The **entry ramp** to the path of life begins by **declaring** with our mouth: **“Jesus is MY Lord”** and **believing** in our heart that he is raised from the dead.

\**“What must we do to be saved?”* “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”

\***The Duck Commander Phil Robertson said he chose the path “With the Lord” 44 years ago:**

*“Until I was 28 I didn’t have any faith...I was under the control of the evil one...I found Jesus in the mid-70’s. I have been **self quarantined from the world** ever since.....The world and its desires pass away but the man who does the will of God lives forever...I am totally **at peace** in my life in the quarantine.”*

\*If you choose the path of life...the good news is **we don't walk it in alone or in quarantine.**

v.3 "As for **the saints** in the land, they are **the excellent ones**, in whom is all **my delight.**"

\***What a great verse of encouragement this Easter** when **saints in the land** are **social distancing**

\*We may not be **assembled under ONE ROOF**, but we still **worship ONE LORD.**

\*We may not be **shaking hands**, but **together we are shaking the gates of hell.**

\*We may be **isolated in different homes**, but we **stand united in a common faith.**

\*I agree with David. Believers in America are "**the excellent ones**" of **Northern MI.**

\*As your **pastor**, I also share his **delight in the saints.** My great delight is the **people of God**

2. ...and we walk with confidence, (v.5-8)

*5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. 6 The lines have fallen for me in **pleasant places**; indeed, I have a **beautiful inheritance.** 7 I **bless the Lord** who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. 8 I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, **I shall not be shaken.***

\*Notice how much **joy and confidence** David has on the path of life:

\*v.5: He looks at the **portion size God has put on his plate**, and is **completely satisfied.** (Wow!)

\*v.6: He looks at the **inheritance** God has blessed him with, and considers it beautiful.

\*As he does a "**Boundary survey**" of his life, measuring where the **boundaries of blessings have fallen**, he simply can't believe how gracious God has been.

\*He says the lines (the **boundaries of blessings**) "*have fallen for me in pleasant places.*"

\***Pleasant Place. Is that how you'd describe your home even during quarantine?**

**ISOLATION QUARANTINE DIARY**

Day 1 – I Can Do This!! I bought enough food and wine to last a month!

Day 2 – I'm bored.

Day 5 – It's 8:00pm. Removed my Day Pajamas and put on my Night Pajamas.

Day 8 – I now realize why dogs get so excited when something moves outside.

Day 12 – I put wine bottles in every room. Tonight, I'm dressing up and going bar hopping

Day 15 – I get to take the Garbage out. I'm so excited, I can't decide what to wear.

\*N.H. - Even though we many feel **bored in the confines of our home**, have you stopped to thank God for how the **boundary lines have fallen in pleasant places?**

\***Ladies from N.H. have been listing things on social media: "Thankful 3!"**

\*Today before you eat **Easter dinner**, let me encourage you to do: "**Thankful 3.**"

\*In light of all God's blessings, David is able to say with confidence:

**v. 8: "I shall not be shaken!"**

\*Even though the **path of life may get rough at times**, David is confident that he has received a **“kingdom that cannot be shaken.”** (Heb. 12:28)

\*This is why we must continually **fight to choose faith over fear b/c of our sovereign God.**

*“[Sunday’s] music and message was just what I needed. I have been fighting to keep the sadness down, but then I remembered I have **SO much to be grateful for!**...I am looking forward to seeing what the Lord has promised to do and thank Him in advance! I am **thankful** for our Pastors, **thankful** for a Sovereign God, and **thankful** for a life that is more devoted to God...You are right, **He has this!**”* (Testimony, N.H. woman)

### **3. ...knowing the Lord will raise us up! (v.9-11)**

*9 Therefore my heart is **glad**, and my whole being **rejoices**; my flesh also **dwells secure**. 10 For you will **not abandon** my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. 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**.*

\*Notice how much **confidence and joy** David has as he walks the “path of life.”

\*He is **glad**; his whole being **rejoices**; feels **secure**; He has **hope** God will **not abandon** him; **fullness of joy**; and his eternal destination will give **pleasures forevermore!**

\***Like the Duck Commander, David is joyful in quarantine b/c he is on the path of life.**

\*He is **secure** knowing that God will never **abandon him or leave him, but raise Him.**

\*He is **confident** that the path of life does **not end in death**, but with **resurrection.**

\*He is **joyful knowing** that death cannot and will not have the final word.

\*After Jesus was **raised from the dead, Peter preached the first sermon of the early church:**

*“But **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**. David said about him [Psalm 16]... ‘you will **not abandon me** to the grave, nor will you **let your Holy One see decay.**”* (Acts 2:24-27, NIV)

\*IOW: Peter points to Ps. 16 and proclaims that we have resurrection hope. He says:

*“**See! Death does not have the final word! It was impossible for death to hold Jesus down! God did not abandon Him to the grave...nor will He abandon us.**”*

**Decay will be reversed. Death will be conquered. The Saints will Triumph.**

**The Grave will be one day be as empty as church on this Easter Sunday.**

\*Psalm 16 gives **confidence in deadly times.**

\*The path of life **begins with a choice (with God/without him).**

\*We walk with **confidence (knowing that the boundaries of blessings are in pleasant places)**

\*And we know **the Lord will raise us up!** (Christ is risen, and we too shall be raised!)

**Action Steps:**

- **Choose your Path.** With God/Without God. Origin? Meaning? Morality? Destiny?
- **Thankful Three.** Consider the portion God has blessed you with, and give thanks for it.
- **Fight for Faith.** Don't be paralyzed by the fear of dying. Walk with unshakeable confidence.
- **Resurrection Hope.** The Lord will not abandon us to decay. Christ is risen, and so shall we.