

Pursuing the Path of Life Together

Culture of Grace: Practices & Habits of GracePoint Church / Psalm 16 / June 15, 2025

Introduction:

Before we pick back up to the book of Acts next week, I want to consider another habit we want to build into the culture of our church. This habit, found in our vision statement, is the pursuit of God as our greatest treasure. Each week, we share our vision at GracePoint to be a people who pursue knowing, loving, and sharing the glory of God in Christ. The glory of God is the summation of all His attributes and personhood, all His worth, beauty, goodness, holiness, and perfection on display. So, when we say we are pursuing the glory of God, we mean we are pursuing all of whom God is for us. Why is this an important habit to build into our church culture? To answer this, I want to look at Psalm 16 together. I love the Psalms because they uniquely relay the heart of God's people through prayers and songs while being breathed out by God through His Spirit for our benefit. This means, as we read the Psalms, they are teaching us through prayers and worship God has set in the hearts of His people. Psalm 16 reveals, what I believe are two vital truths in the Christian life. First, God desires for us to pursue joy. Notice how Psalm 16 concludes in verse 11, "You make known to me the path of life;" where "there is fullness of joy;" and "pleasures forevermore." We all want joy and happiness, don't we? Most of the decisions we make are in pursuit of that. This teaches us God has made known the way to find full joy and wants us to pursue that path. However, there is a second truth in this verse. Look again at verse 11, "in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forever more." Unapologetically, the Bible consistently tells us God, Himself, is the source of true joy. His presence and glory is the one thing that will satisfy our heart longings for joy and satisfaction. What I want to unpack this morning is how Psalm 16, through the heart of David, shows what this path of life entails, brings, and hinges on. First, we see,

The Path of Life Entails Sincere Devotion

Follow David's movement between requests and proclamations. Look at verses 1-2, "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.'" David uses several terms to speak of God in this Psalm, three come in these first two lines. The first term is 'el, which means mighty one or the almighty. His opening desires The Almighty God to preserve him or keep watch over him, to hem him in on every side, because God is his safe haven. What exactly does he want to be kept/preserved for or from? As we look at this Psalm, we will see it is ultimately to be preserved in life within God's presence. Note the parallel line in verse 2. He moves to a declaration of what he says about God and uses two more terms to speak of God; Yahweh, which is the name God gave to Moses in the Exodus, and Adonai, which means master. He is decisively focused on every aspect of who God is. Look closely at this statement. "I say to Yahweh, 'You are my master, I have no good apart from you.'" Do you see what David is doing? David is making his request because he clings to the God of Israel as the only thing that is truly pleasurable in life. Another psalmist says it this way in Psalm 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you." Oh family, this should be our heartbeat. Once "we taste and see that the Lord is good," our hearts should be filled with desires for more of Him, waking up each day and saying, "Lord, I need you, Oh I need you! Keep me close. Without your help I will stray. Only You will bring me joy. Only you will satisfy." Those who know God, and themselves, pray this way because they know God is a sweet haven of joy and rest. This leads David to consider those around him in verses 3-4, "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." If God is the source of all of David's good, then the saints on the earth, the holy ones, are excellent and bring him delight. Why? Saints are those who are set apart by God, not only in character, but in affections. They are excellent and bring him delight because they are running after God with him. Note how he compares them to those who pursue idols. He recognizes that sorrows only multiply for those who pursue idols, so he refuses to chase after them.

He won't pretend they will satisfy by participating in their activities, and he won't even take the time of saying their name. Whenever I read this verse, I always examine my life and ask whether my affections line up with this. Church, is this what our devotion to the Lord looks like? Do we delight in the company of those who pursue God? Or those who pursue everything other than God? Do we focus our pursuits on the things of God, or entertain the idols of our hearts? I am not suggesting we don't spend time with people who don't know Christ or deny everything that is secular like work and leisure activities. The question is who and what delights our hearts the most. David's heart was so captured by the glory of God that it effected his view of relationships and practices. Look at how he continues in verses 5-6, "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." Verses 5 and 6 build on each other through geographical language connecting to land allotments in the promised land. The opening phrase communicates the main point. God as his "chosen portion" alludes to the inheritance of the Levites in Numbers 18:20 and his "cup" carries the idea of the choice wine reserved for the king. Listen to Numbers 18:20, "And the LORD said to Aaron, 'You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.'" We might be tempted to think the Levites got the short end of the stick with no inheritance in the land, but what they received was far better. They received God as their portion and inheritance. As David understood the value of this, he chose Yahweh as His portion and describes God as sweetest of all the wine. Note how David moves back to speaking to God, saying, "you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance." Lot denotes a decision made by casting lots and lines refers to boundaries of land. David is able to look at his life and say, "my position is good because it is fully determined by God, and my inheritance is beautiful because it is the Lord." David shows us the path of life entails a sincere devotion to the Lord because He is our portion. Let his devotion challenge yours as you pursue the path of life. Second, we see,

The Path of Life Brings Lasting Rewards

Notice how David moves next to praise for what God has done and will do for him. Look at verse 7, "I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me." In the psalms, nights represent times spent alone with God in prayer and meditation, often speaking of moments when the psalmist's heart is troubled. As he turns to the Lord, he receives counsel to calm his heart and instruct his way. Notice how he continues in verse 8, "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken." This is a conscious effort to make the Lord his closest companion and with God as his right hand, which is imagery of support in court and battle, he is confident will not be moved when challenges arise in any sphere of life. Now, pay attention to the result of this in verse 9, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure." Three things come from his devotion and the Lord's support; his heart was made glad, his whole being leaps for joy, and his life resides in security. Family, these are the precious and lasting rewards that come pursuing the path of life; counsel when needed, gladness of heart that leads to rejoicing, and true security. Hold them in your heart to lead you to pursue the path of life. Finally, we see,

The Path of Life Hinges on Jesus Christ

Verse 10 gives the primary reason for these rewards while opening the door to seeing there is more going on in this psalm than first meets the eye. Look at verse 10, "For" or because, "you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption." Being abandoned to Sheol and seeing corruption speak of death, decay, and separation from the Lord. Does this mean David believed he would not experience death? Not exactly. In Acts 2:25-31, Peter tells us David says concerning Jesus, quotes Psalm 16:8-11, and "Being...a prophet," David, "foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." This tells us Psalm 16 is a messianic psalm, meaning it is ultimately the prophetic voice of the Christ and primarily the heart of Jesus.

He perfectly longed to be preserved by God, knew God was His only good, delights in the saints, refused to chase idols, made God His portion, received counsel, set God before Him always, was not abandoned, and did not see corruption. However, Christ as our victor did make David's heart glad, caused his whole being to rejoice, and ensured him that his flesh dwelt secure. Why? Because he trusted, through the Spirit, it would mean the path of life was open to him. Look at how the apostle Paul uses Psalm 16:10 in Acts 13:32–38, saying, “we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’ And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, ‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’ Therefore he says also in another psalm, ‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.” Paul quotes Psalm 16:10 to confirm Jesus' resurrection fulfilled God's promise in Isaiah 55:1-3 to give the sure blessings of David to all who would come to Him and listen to Him, blessings that include the forgiveness of sin and freedom from its bondage. Jesus Christ, crucified on a Roman cross over 2000 years ago, was raised from the dead and did not see corruption to confirm His work on the cross made atonement for sin. Through Him, God's promise is fulfilled, forgiveness is proclaimed, and freedom comes to all who believe. Now, look at how Psalm 16:11 begins in light of this, “You have made known to me the path of life.” David was shown the path of life leading to full joy and pleasures forever more in God's presence, would come through his descendent, Jesus Christ. Through Him, the way to God would be opened. As 1 Peter 3:18 says, “Christ... suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit.” James Luther Mays comments, “In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the last limitation on the connection between the LORD and life was transcended. Now it is possible to say the psalm in the midst of life and in the face of inevitable death with a trust that matches the language of the prayer. The LORD has made known the path of life” (James Luther Mays, Psalms, p. 89). This is what gave David security and made his whole being leap for joy. And family, this is why we call the gospel good news. As William Tyndale rightly says, “Evangelion, that we call the gospel, is a Greek word, and it signifies good, merry, glad, joyful tidings that make a man's heart glad, make him sing, dance, leap for joy!” (William Tyndale, Pathway into the Holy Scripture). Does your heart leap for joy at the sound of the gospel? God has made a way for your sins to be forgiven, to be reconciled to Him, and to be brought into His presence where there is fullness of joy and pleasures forever.

Conclusion:

As the worship team is coming to lead us in a time of reflection and response, listen again to refrains of God's presence and pleasure to let them sing to your heart, “in you I take refuge.... I have no good apart from you.... The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;... The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.... I have set the LORD always before me;... Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices.... in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” The heart those who know the path of life cry out, “God is my good! His people are my delight. He holds my lot. My inheritance is the presence of God, so I set Him before me always. Therefore, my heart is full of gladness, and I have reasons to rejoice because his presence brings joy and pleasures forever.” If you want true rewards, set the glory of God as the treasure of your heart. Now, we must understand, Psalm 16 isn't promising us that if we have a sincere devotion to God, we will never have times of trouble and sorrow. We dwell in a broken and fallen world. There are times when life is difficult, and Jesus even promised we will face tribulations. There are pains in this life that bring us to the depths of sorrow. Moments when we feel like happiness and joy are the furthest thing from our feelings. Yet, inside of our sorrow, we can remember that God has promised us abundant joy in Himself, and, therefore, we can fight to find joy in Him.

So, if you are in a season of sorrow, ask the Lord to give you joy in Him. Persuade your heart He is where true joy is found and study His Word to find that joy. Cling to His promises and who He is. Meditate on them and pray through them to find joy. Fathers, lead your family in modeling this pursuit. Show your wife and kids what it looks like to pursue the path of life. If there is anyone here who are just now hearing about the path of life and has not trusted in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, see Him for who He is and run to Him. Hear your creator revealing to you this morning what brings true joy. Confess your sins. Turn from chasing idols. Trust in Christ's blood shed on the cross to purchase your forgiveness and bring you to God. And delight yourself in Him. Don't delay. Today is the day of salvation and the day to find the path of life. As always, you are welcome to sit and reflect or stand and sing. You can also come and kneel before the Lord as you make your requests known to Him or ask our prayer team, worshipping on the front rows with lanyards on, to pray for you. Would you pray with me as we seek the glory of the Lord together?