

9/6/20 “The Path of Joy”
Psalm 16

Welcome...

A few weeks ago Paula and I hiked the Rose Knob Peak trail in Nevada that climbs to 10,000 feet and provides a beautiful, scenic view of Lake Tahoe. We started the trail just fine and were happily going along and talking with one another when I realized we had somehow lost the trail. You see, the path that we were on was really wide, it looked like vehicles had driven on it, and it was easy. And what really clued me in that we were on the wrong path was the fact that we were descending instead of ascending. Thankfully, we were able to double-back and find the correct trail, a narrow path that led us to the summit where we could enjoy an incredible view of Lake Tahoe.

I think getting on the wrong path spiritually happens to a lot of people. We start on the narrow path but before you know it you are on the wrong path that is easy and seem to provide happiness. Seeking fulfillment, satisfaction and pleasure we start to substitute other adventures and experiences and relationships for God. It happens subtly, but at the core is the thinking that true excitement, pleasure and joy happen outside of God.

But we fail to understand that our desire for pleasure and the experience of joy come directly from God’s hand. He made our taste buds, adrenaline, sex drives, and the nerve endings that convey pleasure to our brains. Likewise, our imaginations and our capacity for joy and exhilaration were made by the very God that is often accused of being boring and dull. Are we so arrogant as to imagine that human beings came up with the idea of having fun?

Many people think sin is exciting and righteousness is boring. Many fall for the devil’s lie. Satan’s most basic strategy, the same one he employed with Adam and Eve, is to make us believe that the wrong thing is a good thing. That somehow disobeying God will bring fulfillment. However, in reality, sin robs us of fulfillment. Sin doesn’t make life interesting; it makes life empty. Sin doesn’t create adventure; it blunts it. Sin doesn’t expand life; it shrinks it. Sin’s emptiness inevitably leads to boredom and unhappiness.

But when we see God as He truly is—an endless reservoir of fascination, happiness and eternal joy—boredom becomes impossible, and there is true fulfillment and purpose that causes us to praise God.

Don’t just take my word about it, instead believe what God’s Word says. In fact, let’s read Psalm 16 – a psalm that describes the happiness, joy and pleasure that comes from being in a relationship with God through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Let’s read Psalm 16...

In this psalm David focuses on all the blessings and benefits he has from God and says with a resounding confession, “I am satisfied in the Lord.” You are my refuge (v.1), you are my goodness (v.2), you are my inheritance and cup (v.5-6), you are my counsel (v.7), you are at my right hand (v.8), you are my hope (v.9), you are my guide (v.11), you are my fullness of joy (v.11), and you are pleasures forevermore (v.11). Yes! I am satisfied in the Lord.

David describes that in God’s presence we will enjoy happiness, joy and pleasures now and forever.

Psalm 16 begins with David’s petitions in verses 1-7, then moves to David’s praise in verses 8-11 and then we will see Christ’s pleasure in fulfilling parts of this messianic psalm. We know the last verses speak prophetically of Jesus, because Peter quoted them of Christ in Acts 2.

So, three main points in today:

- I. David's Petition in verses 1-7
- II. David's Praise in verses 8-11
- III. Christ's Pleasure in securing these promises thru His death and resurrection as seen in Acts 2:30-32...

My hope and prayer is that you will find your purpose, delight and satisfaction in God. That Christ is your supreme treasure, and you will be satisfied with happiness, joy and pleasures now and forever in Him. Let's begin with:

I. David's Petition in verses 1-8

And notice the connection between his declaration about what God is for him and his petition. You can see it in the relationship between verse 1a and verse 1b. "Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge." "Preserve me, because I take refuge in you." I declare that you are a refuge for me; therefore, preserve me!"

David is declaring what God is for him as the ground, or the reason, that he hopes that God will preserve him. The question for you this morning is this: Who is God to you? Thru his petitions and requests, David is going to describe who God is to him. So, we should ask, is this who I know God to be for me? Four questions to help answer that:

1. Is God your safest refuge?

Verse 1...

We don't know whether David wrote this at a time when his life was in imminent danger or if he was reflecting on the general course of his life. But the fact is, we all need a place of refuge and protection, both in time and for eternity.

Temporally, we instinctively try to protect ourselves from harm and danger. We avoid risks that could kill us. We wear seat belts when we drive. We try to eat healthy and get enough sleep. While these are prudent measures, the bottom line is that the eternal God, who spoke the universe into existence by His power, must be our protector physically and spiritually.

Is the Lord your safest refuge?

Verse 2...

2. Is God your supreme treasure?

David says God is his supreme treasure. His highest treasure. There is no good for him above God, or apart from God. You are my good. The personal pronouns are not insignificant or unimportant. Verse 2...

To look for goodness, true goodness, elsewhere would be foolish. It would be idolatrous. It would mean pursuing another god, a false god.

As Psalm 73:25 proclaims, "Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth."

C. S. Lewis said, "he who has God and everything else has no more than he who has God only"

Can you truly affirm that in your heart: “Lord, I have no other good besides You”? The only way you can truly affirm that is if you can affirm the first part of the verse: “I said to the Lord (Yahweh), ‘You are my Lord (Adonai).’” People throughout the Old Testament used the term Adonai when addressing humans who were master or lord over them. Of course any human Lord could be good, but not perfectly good.

When the Lord is your Lord, your Master, He is perfectly good and you have the joy of experiencing His goodness. In fact, you experience Him as your only good. Jesus explained this by two parables in Matthew 13:44-46:

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

Being a Christian, a follower of Jesus, means that the Spirit of God has opened your eyes to see Jesus as the most valuable treasure in the world. He is the pearl of great value, worth giving up everything that you have to gain Him. From joy over this discovery, you forsake all else in order to gain Christ.

Has the Holy Spirit opened your eyes to see Jesus as your treasure and supreme good, so that you bowed before Him as your Lord? It is the only path to pleasures forever.

Verse 3...

Making the Lord our only good (v. 2) does not imply separating from all people and becoming a monk in solitary confinement. Rather, it is to put God at the center of everything, including our relationships. David’s point in verse 3 is that his joy in God is actually enhanced because he has delighted himself in the company of God’s people, whom he refers to as “saints” and “majestic ones.”

The idea is that we should delight in the company of God’s saints, growing together in holiness and love as together we find joy in God.

Thus make the Lord your supreme treasure by making Him your refuge and Savior; by making Him your Lord and your supreme good; by making Him the basis of your friendships.

When we delight in the fellowship we enjoy with other Christians we do not take anything from God’s glory, because they are God’s good gift to us. You are God’s gift to me and I am God’s gift to you. We are God’s gift to one another. God uses us in each other’s lives for encouragement, comfort, accountability, instruction and correction.

When we remain isolated, we stumble and falter, grow cold and cynical, lose our passion and miss out on the blessings God provides in and through these excellent ones. Do you delight in the saints? Do you love and enjoy your brothers and sisters in Christ? We need to be around people who have been around God! Those who love the Lord will love the company of those who also love Him. Those who find their “good” in God will also find good in those who likewise seek Him.

Then, in verse 4 David underlines his radical preference for God by putting it negatively. Verse 4...

Unbelievers chasing after idols, false gods of the head and the heart, false gods of silver and gold, false gods of power and prestige, position and possessions, they multiply their sorrows.

What they believe will bring joy will bring sorrow.

What they believe will bring happiness will bring sadness.

What they believe will bring gladness will bring disappointment.

In other words: it is sheer folly to turn away from the all-satisfying God only to embrace gods that leave you sorrowful in the end. David says, “No, I will never do that. I won’t even put the names of the godless on my lips.”

Is God your refuge? Is He your treasure? Third:

3. Is God your sovereign Lord?

Verses 5...

David confesses Yahweh as his God, and the Lord as His portion and cup, a cup that Psalm 23:5 says “runs over.” What he needs for life is the Lord, not the things of the Lord, but the Lord. God is his drink and his food. The Lord is his nourishment. All he will ever need he finds in the Lord. Indeed, we will find more than we can take in.

Verse 6...

The Lord is also his inheritance, an inheritance he says 1) is maintained (“secured”) by the Lord and 2) one whose boundary lines have fallen in pleasant or delightful places. What David has he has from the Lord. God gave it, he did not earn it or work for it. It is a safe and secure inheritance because it is protected by his sovereign Lord.

Is God your refuge? Is He your treasure? Is He your sovereign Lord. Fourth:

4. Is God your trusted counselor?

Verse 7...

God is not only his refuge, and treasure, and sovereign, David states here that God is also his trusted counselor. This fact colors everything else — the way God is a refuge, the way He is a treasure, the way He is a sovereign.

For example, God is a refuge in part by the way He instructs, or guides, or counsels us from His Word to flee from sin and enter into His safety, a place of blessing. If we are in danger — of harm, or sin, folly — God counsels us how to escape. 1 Corinthians 10:13...

We treasure God for His teaching and wisdom and encouraging promises. Jeremiah declared in Jeremiah 15:16, “Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.”

And God is our sovereign not just in what happens to us, but what happens through us because we listen to His counsel.

So we see David’s petition in verses 1-7. Then, starting in verse 8 we read David’s praise:

II. David’s Praise

For seven verses, David has been exalting in what God is for him: refuge, treasure, sovereign, counselor. Now we see something striking in verse 8...

And then he spent seven verses exulting in what God is for him. God is his safest refuge, and his supreme treasure, and his sovereign Lord, and his trusted counselor. And the effect of all this declaration and exultation of what God is for him has transformed his petition in verse 1 to a confidence in verse 8.

In verse one he prayed, "Preserve me O God." And now in verse 8, he doesn't ask, he affirms, "God will preserve me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. I will not be moved. I will be kept. I will be guarded. I will be preserved."

David's petition has become his confidence and his praise. How did that happen? By declaring and rejoicing in what God is for him.

Verse 1, "You are my safest refuge. I hide in you."

Verse 2, "You are my supreme treasure. I have no good besides you."

Verse 6, "You are my sovereign Lord (Adonai). You hold my lot. The boundary lines of my life enclose me in the pleasures of your presence."

Verse 7: "You are my trusted counselor day and night. And I bless you. O how I treasure and bless you for your precious word!"

And because David has declared and exulted in what God is for him as refuge, sovereign, treasure, and counselor, his petition ("Preserve me, O God") has become his unshakable confidence: "I will not be shaken." I will be preserved.

In verse 9 this confidence that he will not be shaken, but will be preserved, leads to a great "therefore" of joy.

Verse 9, "Therefore, my heart is glad, and my glory (kabod – my worth, my whole being) rejoices."

Then comes a new statement of the foundation for this joy, which finally answers the question of what kind of preservation David has been talking about. Preserved from what? Unshaken in what?

It starts in the last part of verse 9 and goes through the first part of verse 11: "My flesh also will dwell securely (safe, unshaken, preserved). For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol (that is the grave, the place of the dead), nor will you allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You make known to me the path of life."

Death will not be the end of David's relationship with God. Death will not cancel out all that he has known and loved about his God. As Pastor Dan read in Psalm 73:24, "You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will receive me to glory."

But how can David be assured of this? What hope does he have of eternal life?

Well, something very important has been omitted. King David had been given a promise. The prophet Nathan came to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-13 and told him:

"When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever."

David knew from God's word that he would die and lie in the grave like his fathers, but that God would set one of his descendants on his throne. And this descendant would not be one of a succession of kings that goes on and on, but the King of Kings and with him all succession would stop. His kingdom would have no end; it would be an eternal kingdom.

In other words, David knew a king was coming that would be from his seed. And that in the line of David, would come to an end with him. This King of Kings would defeat death. He would not see corruption like David. That's the way his kingdom could be eternal. David's Petition and David's Praise is now secured by:

III. Christ's Pleasure

Verse 10 is a promise of something greater. In fact, Peter quotes it in his first great sermon in Acts 2:30-32, "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses."

Jesus, the Messiah — the long-hoped-for, final King of kings allowed death to swallow him for the sake of mortal sinners. But before death could digest him, and turn him to dust, Jesus conquered death. He killed death for Himself and for all who belong to Him — for all who trusted His promise in the Old Testament, and all who trust His person in our own day.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 says, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 8:10-11 says, "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

And what are the marks of the people today who have the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead? The marks today are essentially the same as they were for David in Psalm 16:

Do you look to God as your safest refuge?
Do you worship God as your supreme treasure?
Do you rest in God as your sovereign Lord?
Do you exult in God as your trusted counselor?

Infinite joy and pleasure are offered to us in Jesus Christ. Do you believe that?

C.S. Lewis wrote, "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the beach. We are far too easily pleased."

Psalm 16:11, "You will make known to me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy;
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

Fullness of joy and eternal pleasure cannot be improved. Nothing is fuller than full, and nothing is longer than forever. God alone is the source of full and lasting pleasure. He is a happy God and we who know Him as our Father should be the happiest people on the earth.

Let's pray...