



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH
FAIR OAKS RANCH

Day 29: I Have Set the Lord Before Me

Psalm 16:8, 11 *I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken... You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.* (ESV)

DEVOTIONAL

In this beloved Psalm, David gives us the practical secret for abiding in the Lord, the actual mechanism of how a person lives in God's presence through all the ordinary days of life. "I have set the Lord always before me." This is a deliberate act. The Hebrew verb *shavah* means to place, to put, to position something intentionally. David didn't wait for a feeling of God's nearness to come upon him; he chose to keep the Lord in view, continually, as a continual and settled practice of his mind and heart.

The most important word "always" (Hebrew *tamid*, continually) is the whole point. Abiding isn't a spiritual state of occasionally coming into worship. It is a discipline of constant conscious awareness that we cultivate all day long. The practice of turning the eyes of the heart repeatedly toward God in the middle of work, errands, parenting, conversations, and interruptions. Brother Lawrence (a monk) learned to practice the presence of God while washing dishes in a monastery kitchen, treating the most ordinary task as a place of communion with the Lord, who was always right there. He discovered that the presence of God is not confined to the chapel; it fills the kitchen, the office, the commute, the classroom, every mundane and insane moment of life.

Note what this steady practice produces: "I shall not be shaken." The person who keeps God continually in view has an inner stability that changing circumstances cannot cause instability, because his eyes are on the One who is as close as your own right hand, not on the shifting ground beneath his feet. Consider the reward David names at the end: "in your presence there is fullness of joy." This is the great secret that sin hides in the fine print: that the deepest, most lasting pleasure in all the universe is found not in indulgence but in the presence of God. "At your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Here, in the abiding presence of the Lord, holiness is made joyful. We often imagine the 'pure' life as a pleasure-less, duty-filled, dull life, a boring subtraction of everything fun. David says the exact opposite. The presence of God is where the real pleasures are found; full, deep, and unending, while every counterfeit the world offers is a thin imitation. Keep the Lord continually before your thoughts today, and you'll find your joy in the one place where it can never run dry.

TAKE AWAY

Abiding is a discipline of focused attention, deliberately keeping the Lord in view through the ordinary day. And His presence is the only place where real, lasting joy can actually be found.

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Lord to help you set Him before you all day today, turning your heart back to Him again and again in the middle of all the ordinary things.