

Christianity in America in Biblical Perspective
“A Call to Celebration–Confession–Consecration”
Psalm 16

July 5, 2020 • Sunday Evening

In light of the pandemic we are currently going through we are still maintaining our Christianity in America celebration of God’s providence and there is one passage that came to my mind that I want to share with you, along with some thoughts around it in this brief devotional. It is Psalm 16, a Psalm of David that was written to be sung in thanksgiving to God and I plan to focus on verses 5 and 6 but here is the Psalm.

Psalm 16:1–11 says *[1] Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. [2] I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” [3] As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. [4] 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.*

[5] The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot (that is my place in life). [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.

[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.

What an interesting passage of Scripture. Of course, we are not David and we’re not living in the covenant nation of Israel. We are in a non-covenanted nation, yet we’re in a nation where God’s covenant people have been very active in its founding and its development therefore by implication and application in what David said in the context of a covenanted nation with God, we can say in light of the blessings of God in this nation through His covenant people.

Abraham was instructed by the Lord in His covenant that he would have a seed and that seed would bless all the nations. Then the Lord said ‘I will bless the nations that bless you’ that is your seed, ultimately Christ and those who belong to Christ. I have a theory that I feel very confident about and that is, one of the reasons we are able to celebrate God’s good providences in this nation, is because this nation by constitution called the Bill of Rights to the Constitution with the first right/liberty being the free practice of religion, while not coercing people to become Christians and not legislating Christianity upon its citizens, therefore has freely welcomed God’s covenant people and has protected their right to serve the Lord to fulfill the Great Commission as we live the Great Commandment with a great commitment –that we want to give our all to the Lord who gave us all that we are and all that we have.

I also believe if God’s people are not welcomed here—targeted or restrained, note the rising persecution throughout all the world, note the targeting in some cases amidst the cultural revolution of Christians, so this is no empty statement on my part, then the very thing that God has blessed that is a nation that blesses His people, becomes an occasion for the hand of God’s discipline. So we need to pray that God's people will be salt and light. We need to pray that this nation will fulfill its constitutional commitments that we have celebrated the establishment of.

I praise the Lord because the Lord holds the lot of my life and in God’s ordained, sovereign grace I was born in this nation. It is an interesting nation that is held together by an

ideal, not by an ethnic identity but the ethnicity of the nation is built around 'E pluribus Unum' which means 'out of the many come one.' What is it that unites? What is it that makes us a melting pot of many, instead of a smorgasbord of a gathering? It is something that everyone united around. But what is it that brings the heat to the melting pot?

I believe it is the Gospel heat of the Gospel lives and ministry of God's people as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. God's good providences we have celebrated. We have noted, and rightly so, that our Constitution affirms unalienable God-given rights—that is those things you might try to repress or deny but you cannot remove them. So instead of trying to repress them or manipulate them, the government is supposed to protect them—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Life where it does not matter about ethnicity, social standing or economic standing and that all life is to be enjoined with the liberties God gives and protected in order to pursue happiness. We would want to define that happiness for people as to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

We see the hand of God's providence in many ways. One of the reasons we take the time to highlight those who have actually served this nation in the military and give particular attention to 'those who laid down everything, including their life to the last full measure' (A quote from Abraham Lincoln from the Gettysburg Address) so that a nation could be reborn in liberty and the pursuit of happiness, a nation of the people, by the people and for the people, is that these God-given rights/liberties have been upheld with a government designed to protect it even from the onslaught of those who would repress them with tyrannical movements from around the world. That has happened time and time again. We have also seen the inequities in our nation so that we have matured in this and maintained it. Hopefully we will mature it that much more as we face some fractures politically, socially and ethnically in the nation today.

The answer is the glorious work of the Gospel. Yet I start by thanking God that the lines of life have fallen to me in a pleasant place because of God's providence and also because of God's providence many have sacrificed for public service, in the military and even their own lives. As one person said, freedom is not free. God assigns and grants our liberties but many have given the last full measure that we can enjoy them. So we give thanks to the Lord today. We give thanks and encouragement to the families of the individuals and we rightly do so. We also praise God for it. We ask God to do a great and glorious work so we not only reflect to rejoice in the goodly inheritance but for those He has used.

Note the phrase goodly inheritance. It is not something we have earned or deserve. A person asked me what I thought of God's work of grace, in redeeming grace and common grace. One of the things I shared with them is that anything that you experience in this life is always mixed with God's grace and mercy. Anything short of hell you have tasted God's grace and mercy and it calls you to trust in the finished work of Christ and make Him your life so that you can have life evermore. There is one place that has no mixture of mercy and grace. It's a place we're born directed to because of our sins, but it's a place you don't have to go because there is One who came from heaven that you could go to be with Him.

In fact, He has gone away now, having died for our sins on the cross, risen, ascended and coming again when the Gospel has been preached to all the nations and when all His people have been brought to Himself. Jesus has instructed us in John 14:3, *[3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.* So when I give thanks to God from this Psalmist, I have a good inheritance and He has placed me in pleasant places. I thank God for all that was done for the blessings I have in His sovereign providence. Then I also ask God to do a great thing again for His glory but the most important

thing is thing is that the Lord is my life. Proverbs 16:5 says [5] *The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.* The Lord is my cup. The Lord is my Lord. He holds my lot. He has my life. So my question to you is, does He have your life?

You are blessed by the evidences and consequences of God's good graces that you have inherited at a glorious and privileged place—the lines of life have fallen to you in a good place. The Lord has given you a good inheritance, but there is a much more important inheritance. It's not one time but the one for eternity. What must I do to inherit the Kingdom of God? The first thing you must do is confess you're a sinner and that there is no hope within you. You are in bondage and the slavery of sin. The judgment of God is rightly before you and upon you.

I have Good News for there is the Captain of the Lord of Hosts who has come into the valley to do battle with our enemies—Satan, sin, death, hell, the grave—and that is Jesus. The Son of God who did not need me, wanted me. I, the one who need Him, but did not want Him. He came for me. While we were yet sinners, not friends, He died for us. Oh we thank God for those who give their life. The Bible says in John 15:13, [13] *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.* Jesus died for His enemies. So I want to ask you, do you know Jesus?

Romans 5:8 says [8] *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Christ died for us when we were helpless and ungodly that when you come to Him by faith and repentance for Him to be your Lord and Savior, you inherit, not earned, from Him eternal life. Your enemies are defeated by Him. Romans 8:31 says [31] *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?* Thankfully many have laid down their lives that we can enjoy these freedoms—unalienable rights—but thank God for His glorious gift of His Son who gave His life, not a martyr's death, in an atoning death, defeated all our enemies and if you come to Him you become more than conquerors. Here is His promise to you.

Romans 8:31–39 says [31] *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."*

[37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I thank God for His blessings to our nation. I thank God for the goodly inheritance that I have here but here is not forever. I also thank God that I can invite you, call you to this Savior who gave Himself because He loves you. His relentless, unmerited, undeserving love is undeniable. If you come to Him you can have everlasting life. When you come to Him, now you have a life. When you have a life that's in Christ and for Christ and Christ is your life, now we'll see that salt and light come back to this nation.

I will confess to you that I have a heart for this nation. I am committed to take the Gospel to all the nations. I'm grateful for the church I serve that has an undeniable commitment to send the Gospel around the entire world for the glory of God, but I see my own nation. I don't

want to be a donut, with everything going out there but with a hole in the middle. God, would You do something here in this nation, do something here in my life, do something here in our church, in our city—in our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost part of the world?

It's not wrong to have that kind of Gospel-saturated patriot love. We saw in this study the Apostle Paul had it—I wished myself accursed for the sake of my countrymen that they would simply know Christ. The Reformers had it—Calvin, Knox, Latimer, Ridley—as I mentioned and used as illustrations of this earlier in this study. There were others I didn't have time to mention who had it. We can have that same kind of Gospel-saturated patriot love for this country, as we do for the world. O God, win the world, but start here, with us and start with me coming to Christ with an eternal inheritance in a new heavens and a new earth. Now I'm set free to be a witness for Christ in this nation to bring others with me to that new heavens and that new earth. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for time we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus. We pray O God that You will receive our thanks for all of Your good gifts. We rejoice in what You have done. We confess our sins in what we have left undone. We ask that You by Your Spirit would renew within us a Gospel witness and we would see the Gospel message reconciling men and women to Christ and then to one another. Father, a church that would desire to see a nation that is 'E pluribus Unum'—out of many one—that the church would manifest that same glorious Gospel truth. Many have come from many ethnicities, many backgrounds, many demographics but now are one in Christ—one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father who is over all and who is in all. We come O God to You thanking You for our goodly inheritance here, praying for Your visitation with power upon us here and asking You God that each and every one reading this today has heard the Good News—for when there was no way, God made a way and that way is His Son, Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. I pray that they today would come to Him for the eternal inheritance of everlasting life, for I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.