

# Psalm 16

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[ 0 : 00 ] I wonder how secure do you feel this afternoon? How secure are your relationships, your employment, finances, your health, your future?

! Are you absolutely sure that you're going to be okay this time next year or even this time next week?! If the answer to those questions is not the answer you'd like it to be, if you're honest, then Psalm 16 is definitely for you.

Psalm 16. For David, who wrote the psalm, all of life around him feels insecure and he feels vulnerable.

Just look at what he says in verse 1. Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. You see, David, he is a believer, isn't he? He is a believer in God and he knows that God is his refuge.

But at the same time he still feels insecure. He feels threatened, doesn't he, by something in life. He feels weak and vulnerable.

[ 1 : 20 ] You know, actually, in the title, just before verse 1 there, it says, a miktam of David, doesn't it? It's a strange word. That word there, it's a musical term.

That word there, it's a musical term. And a lot of folks think that it comes from the Hebrew word to cover up, to be silent about something.

So Psalm 16 could well be words spoken in silence. It's a prayer or a song said when feelings fail. When words just aren't enough. When words are too difficult. And David's been there. When something in life makes him silently cry, Preserve me, O God.

But the question is, in this psalm, is it possible to feel insecure and yet be full of rejoicing and happiness? And David says confidently the answer to that is yes.

[ 2 : 26 ] That's possible. Somehow, even though David feels this way, This psalm is full of positive emotions, isn't it? With words like delight.

My heart is glad. Verse 9. Fullness of joy. Verse 11. Pleasures forevermore. Verse 11.

So something changes during the course of this psalm for David when you compare that inner conflict of insecurity and trust in verse 1 with verse 9, for example, if you look there.

My whole being rejoices. He's feeling insecure and yet his whole being rejoices. So how on earth does he get to that point?

Well, I want to suggest three things from this psalm this afternoon. Firstly, David decides. He decides in verses 1 to 4.

[ 3 : 28 ] Now the first thing that he decides is to change something in his thinking. He stops thinking that security and enjoyment and good things in life come from anywhere apart from God himself.

That God is his only good in life. So just look at verse 2. I say to the Lord, You are my Lord. I have no good apart from you.

So he thinks to himself, doesn't he, What would life be like without God if there was no God? What would my life be like if the atheists were right?

And the answer he decides is that life would be awful. Life would be unbearable without God. The only source of good at all in life is God, he decides.

And it really is as black and white as that. Unless God is there, life is no good whatsoever. There really is no point. He's so definite about it, isn't it?

[ 4 : 44 ] You, God, he says, are in control of my life. And if that weren't the case, I would have nothing. He decides.

The rich, wise and successful King Solomon in the Bible says this in the book of Ecclesiastes. I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous for me, for all is pointless and mere striving after wind.

Life without God, under the sun, was no good at all. Solomon admits that in those moments living without God, however brilliant it all looked, I hated life.

So he decides. He decides to change his thinking. But then there's a second decision he makes. He decides about his actions too.

Just look at verse 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 : 54 ] Now that sounds pretty gruesome, doesn't it? But what pouring out drink offerings of blood means? It just means to give those gods the offerings that they demand.

And taking their names on their lips just means to pray to those gods. So he decides that he won't do any of those things for other gods apart from the Lord.

We're in Psalm 16, page 544. He decides he's not going to go the way of the world. He won't look for security and fulfilment anywhere else.

Because he knows that in the long run that just won't work. Boris Becker, I don't know what you make of him as a Wimbledon commentator.

He always sort of speaks during the points, doesn't he? But Boris Becker, in an interview on Parkinson a couple of years ago, before Wimbledon was aired, was quite candid about himself and he said this.

[ 7 : 03 ] I've won Wimbledon twice before, once as the youngest player. I was rich and had all the material possessions I needed. But it's the old song of movie stars and pop stars who commit suicide.

They have everything and yet they have nothing. I had no inner peace. I had nothing that I wanted. without you God, there is nothing good.

David says. So he decides, he states quite clearly to God, you are the only good that I have and I will not go anywhere else.

He decides. And what does he do when he's tempted to forget that? Well, just have a look at verse 3 there. As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones in whom is my delight.

So his feelings start to improve, don't they? He gets delight as he spends time with these people called the saints. The saints or the excellent ones.

[ 8 : 13 ] Now, whoever they are, they sound pretty arrogant, don't they? The excellent ones. But actually, if you look at the Hebrew translation, I'm told, the translation is a bit more like the heavenly beings or the holy ones.

Sounds even worse, doesn't it? But these beings, these creatures are not angels. No, because David says that they are the saints or the holy ones in the land.

No, they're earthly beings, aren't they? They're natural beings, people who live on earth. I think what David is talking about here is real Christians, believers.

Now, at this point, I realise that the idea of church, for many of you in this room, has different associations. Some of those associations are bad and some of them are good.

But church, David says, is the place where his feelings of delight are aroused again. Spending real time with other Christians should do that.

[ 9 : 30 ] Now, as Steve mentioned, we've got a Christianity Explored course at our church. If you don't go to a church, that's alright for the time being, but we'd love you to join us in our church in West Ealing this Sunday.

And it's our prayer that Sunday is the best day of the week. That it's a delight to spend time with the saints in the land with other Christians.

David decides that he needs to spend time with other Christians to feel the delight again. So what has all this got to do with feeling secure and security?

Well, might it be that the decisions we make are connected to how secure we feel? Could it be that we don't feel secure and happy because actually we've made the wrong decisions?

We've decided to think that good things can be found apart from God. We've decided that we will trust in the world's gods and give them the offerings that they demand.

[ 10 : 42 ] And we've not decided to spend time with God's people. Perhaps then we've decided in our need for security to rely on things that actually in the end can't keep us safe.

they cannot keep us secure and happy. Perhaps those things fail us. As one person said, if we are made for God then no matter what we have if we do not have him then we cannot be truly fulfilled.

So he decides. God But secondly deciding is not just a kind of stoic nose to the grindstone sort of religious performance.

Because secondly David delights he delights in God in verses five to the end. So just have a look at verse five for a second. 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. Now again none of that might make sense to you unless you think back to the earlier parts of the Bible where the great hope is that God will fulfil his promise to deliver his people from slavery to a beautiful land of safety and security.

[ 12 : 15 ] A land of plenty. And finally eventually God does that if you read the book of Joshua. He brings them to that land and each tribe in God's people is given a lot or a part of that land.

Everything is split up fairly as an inheritance. All their hopes for security are met by God. They are fulfilled there.

So David in these verses he is saying thank you God because I know that you're giving me the life and the future that I've been most hoping for.

The life that I long for is what I get from you. The secure life. Literally the beautiful life. And I delight in that.

So if you look from verse 7 there's guidance isn't there? The Lord who gives me counsel. Security verse 8 I shall not be shaken. There's even the guarantee of security in death in verse 9.

[ 13 : 23 ] My flesh dwells secure. There's eternal bliss there isn't there? Pleasures forevermore in verse 11. All of these things given to him by God.

So he delights in God. Now at this point I just want to say I don't like ranting about Bible translations different English translations.

It's not helpful usually because I don't want you to lose confidence in whatever English translation you've got at home whether it's the NIV or the King James or the ESV.

and you may also know that I'm not a very good Hebrew scholar but I think there are a few words here where the ESV version is a lot more helpful than the NIV if you've got an NIV at home.

So for verse 5 the NIV reads Lord you have assigned me my portion Lord you have assigned me my portion whereas the ESV which we've got here says the Lord is my chosen portion there's a difference and that is actually a lot more accurate so David is not just saying Lord I delight in you because you've given me everything I need no he's saying Lord I delight in you because you are everything I need David knows the best and most delightful thing God can give him is God it's himself as one writer says when we live as if God is the most satisfying thing we will find that he is he delights in him so I wonder how would you end that sentence the best thing that God can give me is whatever you see

[ 15 : 24 ] David he delights in God for himself for who God is not just what he gets from him and he begins to feel secure again he decides you are my God and I will trust in you he delights in him you are the one that I've been most hoping for but there's a third D in this psalm there's a third D before we finish in a moment because I think if you read this in the eyes of David there are serious doubts about whether this psalm can be true legitimate doubts you may be sitting here and listening to David saying all of these great things and thinking well it's just all a bit too good to be true there are serious doubts about whether this is really true aren't there after all was David's flesh really secure didn't

God abandon him to corruption it's well documented isn't it that David did die did God really show him the path of life and is God really worth delighting in well as we close I'd love it if you could just turn with me to Acts chapter 2 Acts chapter 2 and verse 25 it's on page 1097 1097 Acts chapter 2 and verse 25 and this is Peter isn't it preaching in Jerusalem just after Jesus' death and resurrection and in verse 25 of Acts 2 he says for David says concerning him and then in that section there following he quotes Psalm 16 doesn't he I saw I saw the Lord always before me he is at my right hand that

I might not be shaken therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced my flesh also will dwell in hope for you will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your holy one see corruption you've made known to me the path of life you will make me full of gladness with your presence that is doesn't he concerning somebody in verse 25 but who is this psalm really all about Peter well here is the shocker it is not David in the end no Peter has doubts about that doesn't he have a look at verse 29 brothers I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day do see Peter says if you read psalm 16 purely from

David's point of view then you're going to have your doubts aren't you because David did eventually die so let's read on verse 30 no being therefore a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ that he was not abandoned to Hades nor did his flesh see corruption this Jesus God raised up and of that we are all witnesses!

See Psalm 16 is only true and it can only be true in the light of Jesus it is Jesus who David is talking about really it was Jesus who felt insecure but who decided to trust in God anyway he went to the cross he delighted in God and God rescued him from death raised him up and gave him an inheritance Jesus flesh actually did dwell secure as he came back to life so Peter says listen to David but if you doubt that it's true look at Jesus God's ability to keep us safe even in the face of death well we will doubt that if we read Psalm 16 purely from David's point of view until we look at [ 20 : 04 ] Jesus Paul the apostle says in Corinthians chapter 15 in fact Christ being raised from the dead he is the first of those who have fallen asleep and in Christ all shall be made alive so it's true it's not too good to be true we are all including David able to be secure even in death if we read Psalm 16 in the light of Jesus so he decides I will trust in God he delights you are all that I need Lord and his doubts lead us to Jesus let's pray as we finish together God Thank you.