

A joyful and everlasting Relationship

Psalm 16

The apostle Peter quotes from this psalm during his discourse on the day of Pentecost, affirming that David wrote it (Acts 2:25). It was probably written during one of those periods in his life when he was in serious danger. His opening cry is “Keep me safe, O God!” This beautiful and hope inspiring song may be divided into three sections:

1. David’s relationship with God: v.1-4

In this first section we may see four ways in which David showed that he delighted in walking with God:

(a) **David trusted God** - v.1: To whom do you run when stressed, confused or in danger? David turned instinctively to God, “in you I take refuge.” We can also turn this conscious choice into a good habit.

(b) **David enjoyed God** - v.2: What makes you happy? What is your greatest treasure? David said to the LORD, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing”. Everything that he considered ‘good’ was in some way connected with God.

(c) **David delighted in God’s people** - v.3: What joins you to other people? David found all his delight in “the saints who are in the land”. It was not that David’s heart was divided between God and God’s people. What David most enjoyed in his friends was what he saw of God in them. Who are your friends? What interests or passions unite you to them?

(d) **David worshiped God exclusively** – v.4: People, good projects and material things compete for our devotion. David gave God the supreme and exclusive place in his heart. He knew that “the sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods.” Is that also one of your convictions?

2. God’s relationship with David: v.5-8

In this second section we may see four ways in which God showed His love towards David.

(a) **God as David’s ‘cup’** – v.5: “LORD, you have assigned me [or ‘you are’] my portion and my cup.” The words ‘portion’ and ‘cup’ are drink and food images. God offers Himself to David as the One who can truly nourish, sustain and satisfy David. What is nourishing, sustaining and satisfying your soul?

(b) **God determined his ‘lot’** – v.5,6: Our tomorrow is always unknown and uncertain. People speak of ‘luck’ and of random outcomes. But God is Sovereign and interferes in the affairs of men. David

believed and proclaimed, “you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.” The reference to boundary lines could refer to the boundaries of allotted land. David accepted, embraced and delighted in what God had chosen for him – be it land or something else. Your family, body, gender and talents are given to you. Have you learnt to accept, embrace and delight in what God has chosen to give you?

(c) **God counsels and directs** – v.7: God’s sovereignty did not reduce David to a robot with predetermined outcomes. God wished to speak and counsel David so that he could make good life choices. “I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.”

(d) **God’s encouraging presence** – v.8: God blessed David, as He does us, with His presence. “I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.” David consciously seeks and enters into God’s presence. We are also invited to “draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22). He also desires to encourage you with His presence.

3. Full and everlasting joy: v.9-11

As we have seen, this psalm begins with a cry for help, “Keep me safe, O God!” Then David turns his thoughts away from the danger and his problems and considers the relationship he enjoys with God.

What does this change of focus do to David’s fear? By beginning with a ‘therefore’, this final section points to an important change: “Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure” (v.9). Light invaded his darkness!

David knew that his life on earth would come to an end. That he would die and his body would decompose. But he also knew and rejoiced in his future bodily resurrection, “you will not abandon me to the grave”. Close to a millennium later, the apostle Peter quotes this psalm as a prophetic pointer to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, where David says that God would not “let your Holy One see decay.”

The relationship with God that David enjoyed on earth, would continue after death: “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” We know that the Lord Jesus longs for this reunion, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you **to be with me** that you also may be where I am” (John 14:3). It is His presence and our warm relationship with Him that makes heaven a fantastic place!