

Refuge in the Lord

Introduction. When things happen in your life, to whom do you turn? A parent or child, brother or sister, aunt or uncle, or a good friend? More than likely, we're all blessed with lots of choices, but today we want to emphasize the best choice.

Psalms 16 is identified in its heading as a Michtam of David. Michtams are characterized by personal prayers for protection, trust in God during fear, and a focus on spiritual deliverance. The term always appears in the superscription of Davidic psalms occasioned by great danger. The definition of "Michtam" is uncertain, but most believe it means "precious" or "golden;" therefore, Psalm 16 is David's "golden psalm." Ainsworth calls it "David's jewel." The confession of confidence in God exemplifies a deep trust in the Lord, but the way the psalm ends cements its significance in biblical literature and gives hope to all of us. Let's examine the psalm and then discover how we can be closer to the Lord.

I. A Song of Trust and the Victory of the Messiah

A. Our trust in God (vv. 1-7).

1. Verse 1.

- a) This psalm opens with words of trust in God, who alone is able to give shelter (7:1; 11:1; 17:7; Job 7:20). We know that we can turn to God in all hours of trouble with the confidence because He who heard the tears of our faithful High Priest, is both able and willing to help us (Hebrews 5:7).
- b) David didn't seek deliverance from any special trouble, but prayed that the Lord would continue His mercy towards him. Some trust in friends, rely on pleasure, and put their confidence in money. David prays to God to save him and he knew that God would save him.

2. Verse 2.

- a) He further describes his relationship to God as the source of all his blessings. God is "my goodness," i.e. the reason for his existence and joy (73:25). David acknowledged the Lord, but he didn't see Him as being afar off, but drawing near to Him.
- b) It's a greater glory to us that we're allowed to serve God than it is to Him that we offer Him that service. He can do without earthly servants, but we can't do without a heavenly Father.

3. Verse 3.

- a) Delight in God also finds expression in a joyful acceptance of "the saints." The "saints who are in the land" are those consecrated to the Lord (Exodus 19:6). The "saints" are also known as "the excellent ones," as the Lord Himself bestows glory and majesty on His own.
- b) When a man places his trust for preservation in the hands of Jesus, he should and will find courage in association with those of "like precious faith" (2 Peter 1:1). This is fellowship, one of the most beautiful words in our language — it's a sharing of spiritual fraternity.

4. Verse 4.
 - a) The psalmist strongly states his hatred of idolatry (cp. Hebrews 1:9). Paganism is inconsistent with trust in God. The psalmist makes no mention of their idols in keeping with his declaration that he won't "take up their names" (Hosea 2:17).
 - b) The same loving heart which opens toward His chosen people is closed against those who rebel against Him. Christians are often slow towards the true Lord, but sinners "hasten after another god." Let their zeal rebuke our tardiness.
5. Verse 5.
 - a) Having demonstrated his abhorrence of idolatry, and using language reminiscent of the conquest of Canaan, David now recognizes how good the Lord is to His own (Numbers 18:20; Deuteronomy 10:9; 18:1).
 - b) The greatness of God is evident in the nature of the gift. God gives abundantly to His creation. But He wouldn't give His Son except in an abundance of love (John 3:16).
6. Verse 6.
 - a) The nature of God's benefits are described as "pleasant" and "delightful." Even as God gave His people a pleasant land as an inheritance, so David rejoices in the generosity of God's goodness to him.
 - b) Despite all His sorrows, Jesus exclaimed a desire to be obedient (Hebrews 10:7). While no other man was ever so thoroughly acquainted with grief, no other man ever experienced so much joy and delight in service, for no other served so faithfully and with such great results (Isaiah 53:10-11; Hebrews 12:1-2).
7. Verse 7.
 - a) By day he can say that the Lord gives him counsel, which aids him to live wisely (Psalm 73:24).
 - b) At night God "instructs" him through the meditation with his inner self, enabling him to grow in understanding (Psalm 77:6).
 - c) David speaks of the deepest, most secret operation and desires of the heart. We need to be developing that contemplative region of our hearts by not mindlessly activating it all day long with distractions. Literally, we need to take time to be holy.
- B. The prophecy of the Holy One (vv. 8-11).
 1. This final section was quoted in apostolic preaching, both by Peter (Acts 2:25-28, 31) and Paul (Acts 13:35-37) as proof of the resurrection of our Lord. The resurrection of Christ is the basis for confidence of all Christians since they too won't suffer corruption (1 Corinthians 15:42-50).
 2. Jesus is the firstborn of every creature (Revelation 1:5; Colossians 1:15). He opened up the way through His own flesh (Hebrews 10:20), and then traveled it as the forerunner of the redeemed (Hebrews 6:20).
 - a) Christ, being raised from the dead, ascended into glory to sit at the right hand God, where joy finds its fulness (Hebrews 1:3).

- b) Jesus was there with all His dignity and honor after such a dishonorable arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Being at God's right hand produces joy and eternal pleasures.
- c) Our goal is to be at God's right hand. "The path of life" leads to spiritual life (Proverbs 5:6; 6:23; 10:17; 15:24). The way to glory and exaltation is only through Jesus (John 10:9; 14:6).

II. How to Grow Your Trust in God

- A. Hope is the saint's covering, and that hope is grounded in God's promises (Hebrews 6:13). We're told to "submit" and "draw near" to God and He will draw near to us (James 4:7-8). This establishes us in the faith and helps us press on in anticipation of our own resurrection (John 5:28-29)
- B. In order to do this, we need to start small and make trust a daily practice, not just a feeling. Here's a simple 7-day plan you can repeatedly use to get stronger in your relationship with God:
 - 1. Day 1: Pray one honest sentence to God.
 - 2. Day 2: Memorize Proverbs 3:5-6 and really live it.
 - 3. Day 3: Write down three times God has provided for you.
 - 4. Day 4: Share one struggle with a trusted godly friend.
 - 5. Day 5: Thank God for five specific things.
 - 6. Day 6: Do one act of service for someone.
 - 7. Day 7: Evaluate if anything has changed in your heart.
- C. Don't forget that trust grows. David grew closer to God when he leaned fully on Him, surrendering his will to God's will, and lived with the peace that steadied his heart and strengthened his spirit.

Conclusion. The confession of confidence in God exemplifies a deep trust in Him. Now you have a little more appreciation as to why it's David's "golden psalm." For some of us, the time of labor is drawing to a close, and the time of rest is coming (Revelation 14:13). This promise is guaranteed by the resurrection of the Savior! Be glad that you've chosen your refuge in God! But if you haven't chosen that refuge, it isn't impossible for you to change and follow the will of God.