



praying AT HOME

santa barbara community church

CELEBRATING THE JOY THAT COMES FROM SECURITY IN GOD!

Psalm 16 (ESV)

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. 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.

Psalm 16 begins with a prayer for security (1), and ends with a celebration of the joy that comes from such security (9-11). It includes some of the tenderest expressions in the Bible of what Jonathan Edwards called, "sweet delight in God." In between, David details all the ways God makes him secure and therefore joyful.

This is a great psalm! The Apostle Peter preached from Psalm 16 on the Day of Pentecost, hailing it as a prophetic vision of Jesus's resurrection.

We will pray this delightful psalm back to God and into our lives, the church and the world, one section at a time, using the 4 R's.

- REFLECT on the passage.
- REJOICE over the truth you see in it. Give thanks and praise.
- REPENT of any sin in your life that is revealed by what you read.
- REQUEST that God do what the passage says he wants to.

THE SECURITY AND JOY OF GOD HIMSELF

Read verses 1,2,5,6 aloud in your group. Reflect, Rejoice, Repent and Request that their truth be true in you, the church and the world. If possible, the leader, or someone in the group should embellish the words of the Psalm with the references in parentheses.

“I have no good apart from you.” All good comes from God (James 1:17), and God is the only good (Ps 73:5). Even the gifts that God gives are good only because they are a little bit like the God who gave them. Paul would say that even the best, compared to Jesus, is rubbish (Phil 3:8). To have everything but God is to be a pauper, and to have God minus everything is to be “rich to all the intents of bliss” (Alexander Maclaren).

“The Lord is my chosen portion.” In the Old Testament, the Levites, unlike the other tribes of Israel, owned no land. God was their portion. David speaks like a Levite. What portion of land, or any possession, could possibly compare to God?

Think of all the people and things you love, and say to God of each, “everything good that I love is because of you!”

THE SECURITY AND JOY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Read verses 3,4 aloud in your group. Reflect, Rejoice, Repent and Request that their truth be true in you, the church and the world.

He says God's people are those, “In whom is all my delight.” If God is your greatest joy, then his people will be too. In the Bible it is never just, “Jesus and me.” It is also “Jesus and we.” We can say truthfully, God is all we need, as long as we know that he means to meet our needs in the community of faith he calls his people. Pray thankfully for his church.

THE SECURITY AND JOY OF GOD'S COUNSEL

Read verse 7 aloud in your group. Reflect, Rejoice, Repent and Request that its truth be true in you, the church and the world.

Note that God counsels, he doesn't coerce. He doesn't want mere compliance, he wants you. In Psalm 32, he urges us not to be like a horse or mule who need a bit and bridle to obey (Ps 32:8,9). It is better to be an obedient child of God than a domestic animal!

THE SECURITY AND JOY OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IN LIFE AND DEATH

Read verses 8-11 aloud in your group. Reflect, Rejoice, Repent and Request that their truth be true in you, the church and the world.

So David, and David's greater Son Jesus, sets the Lord always before him, and “shall not be shaken.” Because God is before him, nothing can get to him without first passing through God. Everything that comes his way must first pass through God's heart. God works in all things for the good of those who love him (Rom 8:28). Imagine Jesus facing the cross and praying this psalm, as he undoubtedly did. What he suffered on the cross he suffered for the sake of joy, confident that God would not abandon him to the grave (Heb 12:1,2).