

The Preservation of a Godly Man

Psalm 16 (KJV)

1 Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. **2** O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; **3** But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. **4** Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. **5** The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. **6** The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. **7** I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. **8** I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. **9** Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. **10** For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. **11** Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

A Michtam of David

This psalm falls into the category of a michtam. There are six psalms of this nature out of the whole 150 psalms. Psalm 16 followed by Psalms 56-60 are all the michtams of David.

A michtam has various meanings:

- To cover
- To reveal a great mystery
- To have a hidden meaning
- A golden passage
- A covered (whispered) prayer
- A silent prayer

This psalm is prophetic, because it points to the resurrection of the Lord. We can find Peter making this connection in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost and in Acts 13 when Paul was preaching in Antioch. Both connected Psalm 16 with the resurrection of the Lord.

We often forget that there were times that the Lord moved on David and he filled the role of a prophet. It was done without fanfare, but nevertheless the Lord used him in this manner.

This psalm is also one that we can see the confidence of faith pouring out of it. No matter what may face a child of God, we may put our confidence in the Lord and see Him work out.

Psalms 16 is divided up into six “strophes” or divisions. The first division in v. 1-2 considers the well-being of a saint on the earth and the sixth division in v. 11 celebrates eternal and spiritual happiness.

The Preservation of a Godly Man

I am borrowing an outline from John Phillips. His commentary, *“Exploring the Psalms—Volume 1,”* is where it comes from. He called this psalm the preservation of a godly man.

Increasingly, the desire of all saints of the Lord is to be a godly person which will require time and effort on our part. To be a godly man or a godly woman will mean some things:

That you are filled with the Spirit—Ephesians 5:18

That you are filled with the Word—Colossians 3:16

That you walk in the Spirit—Romans 8:1-3

That you know how to pray—Ephesians 6:18

That you know how to live a consistent life—1 Timothy 2:2

That you know how to help and disciple others—Matthew 28:19; 1 Timothy 4:12

There must be a constant prayer in our heart to see this fulfilled in our own walk with the Lord.

The Practice of a Godly Man

Psalm 16:1-4 (KJV)

1 Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. **2** O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; **3** But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. **4** Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

Living in the Lord's Presence

The first cry out of David's mouth is that of a prayer. Preserve me, O God! We do not know exactly at what point David is crying out this prayer, but it is under great duress and he seems to think that he is literally in the presence of death.

The word "preserve" is one where that David is crying out for the Lord to put a hedge around him. That is exactly what took place with Job. He had a hedge about him so that the devil could not attack him. We often are led into the thinking that the devil can just step over into our lives at his own will and desire. Nothing could be further from the truth!

A child of God has been hedged in so that nothing that comes in his direction is allowed inside of that hedge unless God allows it to be so. That was the whole force of what David was saying to the Lord... Preserve me... My trust is already in You... But let me feel the strength of the hedge.

Our health is hedged in.
Our families are hedged in.
Our marriages are hedged in.
Our jobs are hedged in.
Our needs are hedged in.
Our future is hedged in.
Our salvation is hedged in.

When you live in the presence of the Lord, there are preservations that come to us that often go unrecognized. With every preservation that the Lord brings to us, there is a corresponding blessing that ought to pour out of our mouth for what the Lord has done for us.

Preserve me, O God... is a prayer that is based on faith. It is fulfilled in Psalm 16:10. David has hope that he will not be lost in the grave... you will not leave my soul in hell... you will not let a holy one see corruption... This is a reference to the Lord, but it holds just as true for us! The grave has no hold on us!

Some are unconvinced of this and seem to think that matters in their life are always moving in the wrong direction. We can walk out of the hedge that the Lord has built up for us and it generally is in those moments when we are not being led by the Spirit or the wisdom that is from above that we get in trouble.

James 3:13-16 (KJV)

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. **14** But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. **15** This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. **16** For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

Contrast that with what James would write elsewhere:

James 1:5-6 (KJV)

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. **6** But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Walk the way of wisdom!

But there is something else that is at play here... He is in the presence of death, but he is not without confidence that God will deliver him in the right time. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell!

The preservations of the Lord, the blessings of the Lord, and the goodness of the Lord are all linked together and we are not offering the Lord honor when we fail to remember this! While this psalm is written by a man who is facing death and is showing confidence that the Lord will work it out in his behalf, we must have the same attitude toward every obstacle that faces us in our personal lives and as a church body.

Thou hast said... Thou art my Lord! There are times when a saint must talk to himself. This is especially true when we are looking at our dedication to the Lord:

It is useful in the hour of temptation... thou art my Lord... It arms a saint against sin.

It is useful in the hour of spiritual work... thou art my Lord... It arms a saint with the yoke of diligence.

It is useful in the hour of discouragement... thou art my Lord... It arms a saint with a consistency in his duty.

It is useful in the hour of distress... thou art my Lord... It arms a saint with great relief in distress.

Living for the Lord's People

“David knew that his goodness extended not unto God, but this made him reach it forth to his brethren. Indeed, God has left His poor saints to receive the rents we owe unto Him for His mercies.” – William Gurnall

Our world needs the saints. We ought to love the church deeply. There are old saints whom you can look to in the past, some of them have gone on to their reward, and they have shaped our lives deeply. The responsibility continues even in their absence that we still practice those lessons they taught us.

But there are saints among us who are diligent in their service to the Lord in the present tense. They are forgotten often among the mass of distractions that we must contend with on every hand.

1 Peter 2:17 (KJV) Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Before you can love the brotherhood, you must be a brother. It is only those new creatures who have the capacity to experience this.

We are brothers in our mission... to spread the Gospel.

We are brothers in our fellowship... this is a church that must be moving in the same direction at once.

Partners in doing the will of the Lord. David noted that there was a need to live for the Lord's people as well as we would live for God.

Living by The Lord's Precepts

If you are going to live in the Lord's presence among His people, then surely there is a need to follow his precepts. David offers one to us in v. 4. As much as he loves the excellent saints in the earth, he abhors, detests, despises, and loathes the apostates and their idols.

That is a new thought for much of the American church. While we have a mandate to evangelize the lost, we should never love the ways of this world. There ought to be a constant action of separation to get away from their influence, their thinking, and their idols.

David warns... Sorrows are multiplied when they take up other gods...

"They that multiply griefs to themselves for whoseever thinks one god (little g) too little, will find two too many, and yet hundreds not enough." – Matthew Henry

David loves the saints of the Lord, but he refuses to offer the drink offerings of blood that they offer. He treats their names like poison for he says he doesn't even want their names on his lips. If a man allows poison on his lips, it won't be too long before it has affected us.

When an idol is overthrown it must be ground to powder. Moses ground the golden calf to powder and then made Israel drink it. Their cherished idol became a bitter portion for them to ingest.

If the church, if a saint of the Lord, will make a connection to the Lord, it must break the bonds of sinful habits and practices that causes so much carnality. The carnality pollutes our service to the Lord. We do God and the church great disservice when we have so much association with worldly things!

The Portion of A Godly Man

Psalm 16:5-6 (KJV)

5 The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. **6** The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

In the Lord

A godly man's portion always comes to him in the Lord. The Lord is my portion and he is my cup.

In the Bible, the reference to "cup" is a symbol of a man's destiny:

It represents what our life contains. It represents the strength that is in a life. It represents the element of blessing... My cup runs over... Psalm 23:5

For the wicked, it means something altogether different:

It is a picture of coming judgment. It is a cup of staggering. It is a cup filled with fire and brimstone.

In the Land

The lines are fallen unto me pleasant places... David is expressing the fact that the boundaries the Lord has placed around him have enclosed him in places of blessing.

With the vacation season beginning to be on us, I am sure that all of us have visited places where we have sort of wished we could have moved to those places for a while. We felt the energy that recreation brought to us and we felt the blessing that a retreat moved us to. For several years in a row, our family would visit St. Simon's Island off the coast of Georgia and some of the places we stayed had those boundaries where we felt sealed off from all the world's pressures and calamities. While it only lasted for a few days, our memories still drift back to those times.

David has the same feeling for the place the Lord has put boundaries about him. The portion of the Lord comes to a godly man not just from the Lord, but also from the land. Those feelings we have in moments like that are just merely scratching the surface of what Heaven will be for a faithful saint of the Lord.

The Prospects of a Godly Man

Psalm 16:7-11 (KJV)

7 I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. **8** I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. **9** Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. **10** For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. **11** Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

In This Life Now

The projections of a godly man can be experienced in this life now as certainly as in the life to come.

In this life, a godly man can be guided by God. He is guided when there is blessing that comes from his heart and his mouth.

Matt Redman wrote a song called 10,000 Reasons that expresses the need to bless the Lord:

"10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord)"

[Chorus]

Bless the Lord, O my soul

O my soul

Worship His holy name

Sing like never before

O my soul

I'll worship Your holy name

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes

[Chorus]

Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name

You're rich in love, and You're slow to anger
Your name is great, and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore

Jesus, I'll worship Your holy name
Lord, I'll worship Your holy name

Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name
Jesus, I'll worship Your holy name
I'll worship Your holy name

That is worship! That is blessing the Lord with all that you do! We bless the Lord
no matter what may come or go in life.

David uses another word here that is a bit unfamiliar to us. He uses the word
“reins” which other translations render in a different way. The NASB uses “mind.”

The ESV uses “heart.” The NIV uses “heart.” Basically, what David is saying is the presence of the Lord fills his mind.

The reins of a man are the inner man, his affections, and his feelings.

“Great generals fight their battles in their own mind long before the trumpet sounds, and so did our Lord win our battle on his knees before he gained it on the cross. It is a gracious habit after taking counsel from above to take counsel within. Wise men see more with their eyes shut by night than fools can see by day with their eyes open.” – Charles Spurgeon

The night seasons are what all who are faithful will experience. Night seasons are the times when a terrible darkness seems to make its way into the soul.

Moments of uncertainty. Moments of doubt. Moments of grief. Moments of disappointment and failure. Moments when we are literally overwhelmed by life.

But we are never alone in our night seasons. Despite the night seasons, the counsel of the Lord is still in his mind.

Proverbs 3:24-26 (KJV)

24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. **25** Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. **26** For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

There is also the aspect where a godly man is guarded by God also... The Lord is always before me and I have been set at his right hand and nothing will be able to move me.

In the ancient days of warfare soldiers would fight with swords. A soldier defending another would be on his right side and that soldier would be in the fight and only have to worry about the enemy to his left. David could see the Lord standing on his right defending him from the foes that pursued him.

There is a security that comes from our service to the Lord even when we are in a spiritual battle.

In That Life to Come

There is also the aspect of the resurrection that comes to the godly man. The Old Testament believers did not have a lot of insight into what takes place after death. It wasn't until the resurrection of the Lord and then the writers of the New Testament explaining the theology of the resurrection that we are in a greater understanding of the concept.

The grave is not the end for a saint of God... For those of us who are experiencing the pressure of the end times, we are to be ready for the Rapture because that is our hope of the life to come!

Summing It All Up

As I put this together, one commentary (The Commentary on the Psalms, Volume 1 [1-41]; Allen P. Ross; p. 399) summed up Psalm 16 in this manner:

It is essential for believers to keep uppermost in their minds the goodness of God, not only as it pertains to this life, but to the next as well. This is important because there are difficult times when believers otherwise might question the Lord's integrity and doubt his goodness, and consequently lose confidence in his word.

Without firm conviction of the goodness of God, guilty fears take over, insecurities run away with people, prayer becomes hoping against hope, and praise, if it exists at all, has a hollow ring to it. What is needed is a constant awareness of the goodness and grace of God—he is not capricious (unpredictable; impulsive; unreliable; changeable); he is not going to give up on his people because they are struggling to do his will; and neither is he going to guide his people through this life only to abandon them when they die. No, he loves the saints with an everlasting love, and it pleases him to do things for them.

That is a picture of the preservation of a godly man!