

Part 8 The Psalms An Unshakable Refuge

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TALKING WALKINGPOINTS

Leaders' Guide



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- Read Psalm 16 aloud. What "overall feel" do you get from this psalm? Mark the following graph:



- 1 Which verses lead you to **that** conclusion? Discuss it with those who came to a different conclusion.

- 2 If you marked the "confidence" end of the graph, how do you reconcile **that** with v. 1?
If you marked the "terror" end of the graph, how do you reconcile **that** with v. 8-11?
What do you think is going on? What explains this mixture of emotions?
- 3 When **you** ask God to preserve you from harm (as in v. 1), what do **you** typically feel—and **why**?
- 4 In v. 3-4 (see section "2" of Psalm 16, as laid-out on the following page), David the King reveals the integrity he has displayed as the leader of the nation of Israel: rejoicing in those who live righteously and refusing to have anything to do with those who reject Yahweh. How do you think that factors into the confidence displayed in v. 5-11, even though he is in a distressful situation at the moment (v. 1)?
- 5 Tell about the most valuable or precious thing you have inherited (or expect to) from your parents.
- 6 King David says that Yahweh—**the person of God himself**—is his "inheritance and cup" (see v. 5). **Concretely and specifically**, what do you think it **means** to make God your "inheritance and cup"?
- 7 David was an extremely wealthy king (his net worth easily exceeded \$200 billion! 1 Chronicles 22:14), yet in v. 2 he told God: "*I have **no** good besides you.*" How do you explain that?
- 8 What kinds of inheritance are you laying up to leave to **your** kids? **How** will it advantage them?
- 9 Look at section "3" of Psalm 16 (as laid-out on the following page). **King David** **clearly** is the speaker. But in v. 10, David **must** be talking about someone else—someone greater—for **that one** (Yahweh's "Holy One") won't be abandoned to the place of the dead or rot in the grave! **Who** could that One be?
What light does Acts 2:22-36 and 13:26-39 shed on this mystery?
- 10 Is Jesus **your** "only good" (v. 2)?

Need to experience God as your refuge?

Write to:

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- 1 **Don't** point anything out—simply read the psalm aloud and ask folks individually to mark the graph according to their sense of the “overall feel” of this psalm. Each person is to make one mark only!
[FYI— v. 1 sounds terrified and weak, while the rest of the psalm is confident and triumphant.]
After everyone has marked his graph, ask them to explain where they marked it and what verses led them to that conclusion. **Finally**, have a discussion between those who marked toward divergent ends.
- 2 Now, help your group wrestle with the fact that two very different emotions are expressed in this psalm. **How** does each reconcile his “overall feel” with the contrary emotion? How can this be explained?
- 3 Now it's time to “put ourselves in the psalmist's sandals”! The Bible isn't **only** an ancient book, so...
What do folks feel when **they** desperately ask for protection/preservation? **Why** do they feel that way?
- 4 King David has been living consistently according to God's kingdom values, so **why shouldn't he** feel confident that God will hear and answer his prayers?
There is a close connection between obedience and answered prayer: Psalm 37:4; 119:11 & 14-15; James 5:16.
- 5 This question is is not meant to be nosy, it is a segue to questions 6 , 7 and 8 .
You may need to “prime the pump” with your own answer.
- 6 This question requires some careful thought, so you likely will need to “prime the pump”.
Be prepared with your own answer to this question, but don't jump the gun.
Let others ponder and see what they come up with.
- 7 Let folks grapple with this one. Don't rush in to provide guidance or answers.
[FYI—the key is the value one places on things. You may be extremely rich, but what do you value most? David would gladly have lost all of his wealth rather than miss out on experiencing God.]
- 8 Again—this question is is **not** meant to be nosy, it is designed to help folks really grapple with what **they** value most, and therefore what they wish to pass along to their kids. This is a soul-piercing question!
Are folks making sure that their child excels in sports—or in spirituality? in finances—or in faithfulness? in their career—or in their character? in their societal reputation—or in their family relationships?
Do be ready with your own answer—**after** some soul-searching of your own! **This is important!**
- 9 The NT makes it clear that David had “telescoped” the view from himself to Jesus, the “Son of David” who would sit on David's throne forever! See 2 Samuel 7:11b-13! Acts 2:22-36 & 13:26-39 prove this.
- 10 Easier said than done! The proof is this: “What are you giving up now—time, sleep, money, opportunities—in order to get to know God better? What do you do when God takes away something you value? Do you grumble or do you worship God as Job did?

Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.
He said,

*“Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I shall return there.
Yahweh gave and Yahweh has taken away.
Blessed be the name of Yahweh.”*

Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God. (Job 1:20–22)

Sermon Summary (Key Text: Psalm 16)

In the opening verse of Psalm 16, King David declares that God is his unshakable refuge. The rest of the psalm helps us understand why all the rest of us need an unshakable refuge—and it tells where to find it! As we will see, that's what Easter is all about!

1. We need an unshakable refuge. In v. 1 David cried out for protection, and then in v. 8, he claimed that he will not be shaken. The need for protection is one of the main themes of the Bible. This need is not confined to David. Abraham too sought safety and stability (Hebrews 11:10 and 12:28). The Scriptures tell us that this present form of the world will pass away. Its foundations will crumble. This is not a safe place. Everything in this world is passing away. It's fleeting, temporary, precarious. Our world has no lasting **physical** foundation. Physicists tell us that matter is just energy in motion. The second law of thermodynamics guarantees that our world is winding down. Our world offers no lasting **philosophical** foundation. What is considered to be enlightened thinking today will be obsolete tomorrow! Our world has no stable **emotional** foundations. We can't even keep our families together!

2. Where can we find an unshakable refuge? In order to find an unshakable refuge—and thereby become unshakable people—we must understand three things: **[a]** We must recognize the false refuges we reflexively run to (v. 4). Ancient people believed there was a god of war, a god of beauty, a god of fertility, a god of wealth, a god of athletics, a god of wine and parties, and they worshipped these gods. Today, we don't believe those gods exist, but we still run after every one of those things. If we try to find refuge in the wrong place—wealth, sex, partying, sports, social status, etc., you will pay a price. Even if you are part of that lucky minority of people who actually get the things you're running after, they'll start slipping away, and you'll be shattered and shaken. **[b]** We must recognize that, outside of God, there is no true good (v. 2, 5). David didn't just believe in God, he ran to him. He put all his hope in God. We need to pursue God himself, not the good things he gives. **[c]** We must recognize that God won't allow death to separate him from those who love him (v. 9-11). The ancient Jews had some idea of the afterlife, but it wasn't very well developed. But here's David saying, "I don't believe God will allow death to come between us." He was convinced that he'd see God face-to-face (in v. 11, the word "presence" literally is "face").

God was so joyful when he created the world that he infused it with his joy. In Genesis, God repeatedly pronounced that his creation was "good", and in Proverbs 8 he talks about the joy he had when he created the world. When God was creating the world, he was in rapture, and some of that joy got permanently embedded in the world he created! The pleasure we experience when we view a beautiful sunset, feel a mountain breeze, smell a rose, or have a great meal, is the experience of the joy God implanted in creation. C.S. Lewis put it this way:

"[The] energies which God's creative rapture implanted in matter when he made the worlds are what we now call physical pleasures; [but] even thus filtered, they are too much for our present management. What would it be to taste at the fountain-head that stream of which even these lower reaches prove so intoxicating?"

The greatest pleasures you've ever had in your life are just far-off hints of what it will be like to be in God's presence! In his presence is fullness of joy! At his right hand are pleasures forever more. This temporal world is not all that there is. It will be shaken, but God has provided for us an unshakable place of refuge, and it is found in God himself.

David was confident of that based only on a prophetic **hint** (v. 9-11), but we have the prophetic **fulfillment** in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-27 and 13:32-35). What David saw as somehow applied to himself, the New Testament sees as a prophecy that David's descendent, the Lord Jesus, would be raised from the dead. Because of Jesus' resurrection we can take refuge in him. His resurrection is the guarantee of our own (John 6:40)! David was confident that God would show him the path of life (v. 11a), but Jesus is that way (John 14:). Today is Easter Sunday. The resurrection that David anticipated in the future, we celebrate today! Have you embraced him as your Savior? Is he your eternal refuge? If not, he will be—if you'll trust in Him as your Savior.

Psalm 16

1 ¹ Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You.

² I said to Yahweh, “You are my Lord; I have no good besides You.”

³ As for the saints who are in the earth, they are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.

⁴ The sorrows of those who have run to another god will be multiplied;

I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, nor will I take their names upon my lips.

⁵ **Yahweh** is the portion of **my** inheritance and **my** cup; **You** support **my** lot.

⁶ The lines have fallen to **me** in pleasant places; indeed, **my** heritage is beautiful to **me**.

⁷ I will bless Yahweh who has counseled me; indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.

⁸ I have set Yahweh continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely.

¹⁰ For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

¹¹ You will make known to me the path of life;

in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

[illegible]

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

This month we've been studying the psalms—which were meant to be sung!
One of the greatest hymns of all time, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*,
is based on one of the greatest psalms of all time, Psalm 46!

Each day this week, slowly and prayerfully listen to it (YouTube) as you follow along in the lyrics.
(Carry these lyrics with you throughout the week, and see if you can get them stuck in your head!)

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our Helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate—on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth His Name, from age to age the same—and He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure—one little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still—His Kingdom is forever.



God is our "unshakable foundation". As Psalm 16:8 says...

"I always trust the Lord. Because he is close by, I will not be shaken up or hurt."

Buy two matching glasses or tea cups from the thrift store. In your garage or driveway, set up a barstool and a solid table or workbench. You'll need a broom and dustpan too!

That night, at the dinner table, show your children the two matching glasses or tea cups. Ask them which one is stronger. Let them compare them and see that they're both the same.

Then, head out to the garage! Set one glass on your solid workbench—well in from the edge! Invite each child to shake the workbench (as you sit casually on the barstool). Then, have the kids back up, set the other glass on the barstool—and knock it over! Feign surprise that the broken cup was so weak, while the other one was so strong. Let your kids instruct you on why one cup broke but the other didn't. Then, read and discuss Psalm 16:8. Close in prayer.