

REST IN HOPE

Psalm 16

Keep me safe, my God, for in You I take refuge.

I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; apart from You I have no good thing.”

I say of the holy people who are in the land, “They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.”

Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.

I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips.

LORD, You alone are my portion and my cup; You make my lot secure.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With Him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will You let Your faithful one see decay.

You make known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.

Have you ever been in a position to be able to retaliate on someone who has wronged you – and did; how did you feel afterwards?

Have you ever been in the same position and chosen to walk away – how did you feel then? David was exactly in that space too.

We read in 1st Samuel chapter 26 what he was enduring. He was being chased by Saul and 3000 of his best soldiers. The army had settled down for the night so David and Abishai crept up to Saul's camp to check it out. And they see Saul asleep with his spear embedded in the ground beside his head. Abishai whispers to David – this is the opportunity – kill Saul now!

I wonder what was going through David's mind? Was he going to let Abishai influence him, after all he had good reasons? But he didn't, instead he paused to listen to God. He looks within himself and sees that apart from God there is no goodness. Instead he took Saul's spear and jug of water and retreats. David looked at things as God would see them and he realized that he was not in any position to remove God's anointed king from the earth.

As you read on you see that once David was at a safe distance, he stood on top of a hill and shouted to Saul. Saul was startled and realised that David had crept into the camp, his guard was

unaware, and David left with his spear and jug of water. But he had not harmed Saul in any way. In the end Saul begged David to come back to him and David gave praise to the Lord.

What a wonderful result. Have you ever reflected upon the things in your life – your family, talents, possessions, friendships, potential and realised that they all have a string leading back to the love and grace of God.

There is no good thing within us or about us or connected to us that doesn't come from Him.

James 1:17 – every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

When we pause to reflect on the power and majesty and love of God, everything begins to change. There is awesome power unleashed by a simple action when you “count your many blessings, naming them one by one.”

The Psalms were used by the people to pray, lament and praise the Lord throughout their trials and the Lord answers them.

Romans 8:32 tells us that receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour makes us the recipient of even more than eternal salvation. He will bless us bountifully in every way.

While David had been through many harrowing experiences God had never failed to provide a friend to go alongside him. David had never had to be alone.

We are often encouraged to take note of our past negatives as a means of moving on, but this can often lead to people feeling worse.

But a very important spiritual principle is to stop, and to simply delight in your friends and family and let them know they are so important in your life.

Take an inventory of all the positives, review your life, see if you can find 8-10 good things that have happened to you. That action can often help turn you from always responding negatively to seeing the positives, even in times of crisis.

The Word of God never ceases to remind us to review the mighty works of the Lord.

1 John 3:14 writes that we know we have new life in Christ by the way we love our brothers and sisters in fellowship.

God does so many things for us. He blesses us coming and going, right and left, when we are awake and when we are asleep.

We are never isolated. We are significant. In this Psalm David looks at what God is doing at the present time.

God never slumbers nor sleeps. That is so comforting. He is always at work. Rejoicing in what God is doing whether we like it and understand it or not is a way of worshipping Him. It is an act of obedience and a sacrifice of praise.

But we do forget don't we – we get so busy or get caught up in anxiety that we simply forget all the good things God does on a daily basis. And this even happens when things are calm – but when the storms of life hit, we can't seem to find our way back to the Lord.

You tube video – Didn't I walk on Water.

This psalm is often called a Messianic psalm because it is quoted in the New Testament as referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Both Peter and Paul quoted this Psalm when speaking of Christ's bodily resurrection.

By saying that he will not be shaken, David was talking about the unique sense of security felt by believers. God does not exempt believers from the day to day circumstances of life. Believers and unbelievers alike experience pain, trouble and failure at times. Unbelievers have a sense of hopelessness about life and confusion over their true purpose on earth. Those who seek God, however, can move ahead, confident in knowing what is right in God's eyes. They know that God will keep them from straying off His chosen path.

David had lost nearly everything – his freedom, his home, his family and his good name. Yet his heart was glad – he had found the secret to joy. True joy is far deeper than happiness; we can feel joy in spite of our deepest troubles. Happiness is temporary because it is based on external circumstances, but joy is lasting because it is based on God’s presence within us.

David reviews the blessings of God and says – I have felt the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

What a powerful statement – with God in our sights, the world and all its forces can be against us, but we will not be stopped.

David gazes into the future through the eyes of faith – all communicated to him by the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament is astounding – the writers reveal future events. How can anyone doubt the validity and authority of the Scriptures when they see this.

David rejoices in his own resurrection – He stated confidently that God would not leave him in the grave. Many people fear death because they can neither control nor understand it. As believers we can be assured that God will not forget us when we die. He will bring us to life again to live with Him forever. This provides real security.

In this Psalm, the words Holy One are in capital, because they refer to the Lord Jesus. David had foreseen the resurrection of the Messiah.

As David speaks of victory over the grave it is like the Holy Spirit has lifted a corner of the curtain to give him a glimpse into the future and the cornerstone of human history.

And these were selected and quoted on 2 occasions in the New Testament, once by Peter on the Day of Pentecost and once by Paul when he was in Antioch and delivered an inspiring sermon.

The final verse provides such a beautiful ending – **You will show me the path of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence with eternal pleasures at your right hand.**

Can you hear the sense of hope David has that will be and now is made real in Christ?

This hope is where we dwell in the presence of our all-wise, all-knowing and all-loving Creator.

Death or life – it is a win-win situation.

We are going to know joy as it is meant to be known and pleasure as we have never known it.

Can you look beyond the current crisis and trust that, even though you can't see when it will end, the best is yet to come?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we praise you as the sovereign Lord of the universe. We praise you that, to you, the nations of the world are like a drop in a bucket and like the dust on the scales. We are so thankful to know that you own the cattle on a thousand hills, and that nothing is too hard for you. We thank you that you care for us—that you number even the hairs of our head, and that all the days ordained for us were written in your book before any of them happened.

We thank you that you can be trusted. And we do trust you. Help us to trust you more.

Thank you that the coronavirus, and all the frightening circumstances popping up around it, are not frightening to you. Thank you that you know everything there is to know about this virus.

Thank you for this desperately needed reminder that we need you. Lord, we confess that we spend so much time thinking and acting as if we were self-sufficient. Forgive us. Help us to remember that we depend on you for everything we need, whether we feel healthy or sick, whether the global economy is healthy or sick. Use this time to teach us to trust you more during good times and bad.

Father, please pour out your common grace on our world to halt this virus in its tracks. All things are possible for you, Father. And so we ask for healing for a sick world.

Please heal those who are already ill. Please protect the elderly and others who are especially vulnerable to this virus. Please intervene to slow the spread of this virus in countries all over the globe.

Please give wisdom, insight and knowledge to scientists and researchers as they search for the most effective treatments

and for a vaccine. Please provide for a vaccine to be quickly discovered, tested, developed, and made available.

Please give wisdom to all rulers and officials who are making vital decisions and who are under such enormous pressure. Guide their hand so they make decisions based on both truth and love. Please withhold power and influence from anyone who would use this time for selfish gain of any kind.

Please be with church leaders making big decisions that will affect so many of your people and their fellowship together. Please give them wisdom on how to best listen to governing authorities and to respect the directions that are given, while still caring for one another and prioritizing the need to encourage one another as we see the day of Christ drawing near.

Wherever regular gatherings are interrupted, please provide ways for your people to stay connected to one another, and please strengthen us to care for one another in creative and genuine ways. Please be especially gracious to those who are already lonely and who may feel particularly isolated during the weeks ahead.

Loving heavenly Father, at a time of great need, please pour out your saving grace on our world and bring people into your kingdom in an extraordinary way.

Please use this virus, and all the circumstances surrounding it, to bring people to their knees. Turn people's hearts and minds back to you in repentance and faith. Enable us all to see that, for too long, we've based on our life on shifting sand. Bring people all over the world – whether for the first time, or in a fresh way – to turn to the Lord Jesus as their Rock, and to put their hope and trust in him.

Thank you that, no matter where we have wandered or how long we've run from you, you are always ready to welcome us back through Jesus and what he's done for us.

Please help us to be strong and courageous, not afraid or discouraged, because you are near. Help us not to be anxious, but to present all our requests to you in prayer. As we do that, may your peace guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

At a time where it feels like the whole world is changing, we praise you, Father – for you never change. We praise you, Lord Jesus, for you are the same yesterday, today and forever.

AMEN