

You Will Not Abandon My Soul

A ^hMiktamⁱ of David.

16 Preserve me, O God, for in you I ⁱtake refuge.

² I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord;

^jI have no good apart from you.”

³ As for ^kthe saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all my delight.²

⁴ The sorrows of those who run after³ another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or ^ltake their names on my lips.

⁵ The LORD is ^mmy chosen portion and my ⁿcup;
you hold my ^olot.

⁶ ^pThe lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

⁷ I bless the LORD who ^qgives me counsel;
in ^rthe night also my ^sheart instructs me.⁴

⁸ ^tI have ^uset the LORD always before me;
because he is at my ^vright hand, I shall not be ^wshaken.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my ^xwhole being⁵ rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.

¹⁰ For you will not abandon my soul to ^ySheol,
^zor let your ^aholy one see ^bcorruption.⁶

¹¹ You make known to me ^cthe path of life;
in your presence there is ^dfullness of joy;
at your right hand are ^epleasures forevermore.

Blurb: It is difficult to know where to turn in uncertainty when we are bombarded with headlines, grief, and the uneasiness of the unknown. Join us this Sunday as we look at Psalm 16 to see a God who is our refuge, our provider, and holds our future in His capable and steady hands.

Title: My Hiding Place, Portion, and Future

Question for the Week: How do you deal with uncertainty?

My Hiding Place, Portion, and Future

Intro

Recently I was flying back to Austin with our family after a trip to see my parents on the East Coast. Before we boarded our connecting flight home, we heard about storms that were causing delays around the Dallas area but that our flight was right on time. Flying with kiddos is a real adventure. Add in a toddler and you my friend are a real thrill seeker. As we came into the last 30 minutes of the flight, our pilot came over the loud speaker that we would experience light turbulence but it was nothing to worry about. I look outside our window seat and I see towering purple storm clouds that had sidetracked many flights for the afternoon. Seeing these clouds reminded me of flights where the turbulence was so bad that I thought my life was over. However, due to the skill of the pilot and the Lord's providence, we appeared on this day to be flying in between a path of a storm system and ended up avoiding any major turbulence.

How often do we look around at our present situation and circumstance to find ourselves losing bearings of where we are, who we are, and where we are going next? This afternoon I want to invite you into this short Psalm for a profound look at the Lord who is our **Refuge, Portion, and Providence**.

Refuge

I had a conversation recently with a family member who remarked that Christians always seem like they have it all together. That they are not thwarted and always doing well when asked. I love the Psalms as they paint a larger picture for the range of emotions and ups and downs of the believer. We are inundated with headlines of grief, injustice, and the dissonance of a dark and dying world. David is no stranger to this reality of fear. Add on the reality that he is on the run from those who are hunting him down to challenge his authority as King. He's not posturing that he has it all together. You will not find David flexing in the Psalms.

This psalm finds David in an opening plea "Preserve me, O God for in you I take Refuge (v1)." Two words stand out. **Preserve** - hold my life, save me, rescue me from the imminent danger of what I see in front of me. When I looked out the plane window at those purple clouds, I longed to be preserved, rescued, delivered. Where do you feel the need for preservation? What dangers are you afraid of? Is it a possible job loss, the results of testing for an ailing loved one, or a potential economic downturn?

How does God preserve us? By being our refuge. **Refuge** - guard me, be a hiding place, restore me, help me to stop running. To experience the relief of God's hiding place, we have to stop running and rest in him. This idea of resting in our refuge is so foreign to the wash your face, pull up your bootstraps, or crush it language. Our culture rewards progress, accomplishment, and besting our circumstances. To experience the relief of God's refuge we have to give up on our own hiding places. We have to admit we need a place to retreat. Not only to ourselves or others but to God himself. Otherwise, we're doomed to crash out in our own strength. Think

about that email that is awaiting a response or a difficult relationship with a spouse or friend that is unresolved.

Can we just sit back and know that we need a refuge? We are coming off two years of a pandemic, social unrest, and the heaviness of our times. David is looking at his situation and sees that the Lord God is a refuge and able to sustain his present reality. He is held by the Lord and has retreated out of his strength into the arms of the Lord over all. That Lord over all is also His Lord. (v.2)

This raises a question. *How do you respond to uncertainty?* For me, I am all about control. At work, I will search for the right leading and lagging indicators, hunt down the right team members to resolve the issue, position what needs to be done, and drive myself till I run out of strength to make progress. At home, I will seek to resolve the inconvenience of a fight between the girls, I will downplay the heart for the short term fix of peace. However, unlike our favorite sitcoms or stories we see on social, the tension is still there, the hurt is still there, the issue is still open. We're not strong enough to fully absorb or resolve the uncertainty in life.

I find that when I'm in this spiral I start to get short with my responses. I'm not looking to understand, I'm looking to solve the problem. I'll rush bedtimes to get down time. I'll get frustrated or angry that these blockers are getting in the way of the real things that I should be doing. Frankly it's cold, efficient, good old fashioned selfishness and pride. I think of my wife who is an Enneagram 9. You know this personality as the Peace Keeper. They are the ones feeling the awkwardness or tension in a room, making sure that everyone is alright, alright, alright. If I'm trying to blow past issues or discomfort, she is absorbing it. If she can keep everyone happy, we'll be set. Ignoring or absorbing, we need a refuge.

BUT we are not left to this kind of attitude that its all up to us. There's good news here. We are not left to our own strength with our worries, cares, and anxieties. We can bring him all of this for wisdom, strength, power, and peace. Does this mean that we check out and avoid our circumstances? No - he restores us in the moment or for the current season to work, serve, rest and war from our refuge. **He is our refuge. He is our security. God flexes in the Psalms because he is our strength.**

What would it look like before you open your email, social feed, or task list to just open the day with a simple prayer. Spirit - thank you for your kindness in today. I give you whatever is to come. Lead me to make much of you and serve those around me. Anxious about the day? Add in a text to a friend or your CG to ask for prayer. What a grace that we have the refuge of the Lord and the communion with the saints in the local body!

Let's look at where He is our Portion.

Portion

This theme of the Lord as our portion permeates scripture. Portion is associated with an inheritance. Your name afforded you the blessings, rights, and entitlements from the estate. David points out two portions. First God himself as the giver of the inheritance and secondly the gifts from God that are our provision. Why are we given gifts? David points out that the “saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.” God’s chosen people are his delight. You are loved. Let that just sit for a second. Unearned, undeserved, and often unimaginable love. Nothing to strive for and everything to receive and relish in.

David points out the sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply. David is drawing on a theme of the old testament that created things can’t provide provision. Hoping in something to deliver that cannot deliver breeds more disappointment. Our idols can only consume our devotion and they do not deliver relief.

Have you found yourself disappointed by your if only’s? You know if only’s, right? If only I had the right title at work, if only my spouse understood this about me, if only I could get a few minutes alone, if only... Here’s the problem with if only’s, more often than not there is another if only after the condition is met. They are a mirage. The next title carries more responsibility, oversight, and accountability. Relationships take more work and often require more grace from both individuals to make it work. If onlys lead to more if onlys. The wheel never stops.

July is performance review season in the majority of the corporate world. I am gearing up for reviews for my team and my own review. This is time that I start building the case of where I am already doing more than what I have been asked and where my impact is being seen. All of this is well and good but I come face to face with my thirst and heart for more. If only I had this title, more money, more respect, I would be happy. These are good things to pursue but they are insufficient saviors to run after. This passage shows us we have a greater portion from the Lord, greater gifts than these career goals.

What if your if only was already filled by the one overall? What if we could accept the delight and acceptance already offered to us? Where would that allow us to put down the face wash, bootstraps, and effort for a minute? He can satisfy where our effort only drives more appetite.

What is this portion that is so satisfying? Paul points us to the reality that the Lord is our Portion because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Look at this with me in Ephesians 3:3-10

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us[a] for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known[to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

He is our portion because he freely and willingly laid down his life to bear the weight of our sin so that we would have redemption and the fullness of God. He doesn't hold back the portion that He lavishly gives us. Would you receive it?

If God as our portion wasn't already good news, he takes it further by giving good gifts for our needs. Examples of his provision are the skills that you use for your vocation, the very breath that animates your body, common graces of a good meal, company around you, and nature. If it is true that every good and perfect thing comes from the Father's right hand, then we can't help but look around to see his gifts towards us and also extend the awareness of these gifts to those around us.

Our enjoyment of God is tied directly to our knowledge of God. Press in this Summer in the Pslams series and lean into to the wonder of the good father. In the coming weeks, we will look at the rest to be had in God in the midst of all our getaways.

Our family started a tradition of a Saturday feast. We make a good meal and make it a practice to recount the week with Roses and Thorns. Roses being the high points of the week and Thorns being the lows and stressors of the week. Recently we invited some friends over and we made a spread of Tacos and Indian takeout. It was such a joy to share in the practice with friends that we love and walk through where the Lord has kept us while having infants around the same age. Take some time after the service to grab a friend, meet a stranger here, or gather with your CG and recount the Lord's goodness. While you are at it save us a seat! We would love to hear about it and praise and pray with you.

We've looked at where the Lord is our Refuge and hiding place, where he is our ultimate portion and gives good gifts, and now we turn to his Providence.

Providence

Providence is his governance of all things, his special providence to us (now as his children) is his favorable treatment and protective care. “Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol” (v. 9-10). Notice how David is shaping the logic of this Psalm. The Lord is our refuge. He is our portion and gives us good gifts. That realization of our inheritance and the awareness of how he is for us should humble us to a place to responding in worship and thankfulness. Calvin describes the awareness of the Lord’s Providence, **“when once the light of Divine Providence has illumined the believer’s soul, he is relieved and set free, not only from the extreme fear and anxiety which formerly oppressed him, but from all care.**

Worship and thankfulness shifts our focus from our circumstance to our Savior and redeemer. David marks three shifts that occur in the believer. **Heart is glad** refers to the state of his heart. He is assured by the Lord in the lines that the Lord has placed around him. David is where he is supposed to be and with the Lord; his Lord. His communion with the Lord evaporates the fear of the unknown. **Whole being Rejoices** refers to David’s joy of communion with God. He knows his sonship. He sees his portion and the gifts of God that are his provision even in this season. Running is exchanged for rejoicing. **Flesh dwells secure** is one of my favorites here. David writes later in Psalm 23 with the image that the Lord makes us lay down in green pastures. Sheep are inherently skittish, worried, and constantly on the run. Ever relate to this? The idea here is that the sheep is able to lay down because it has the absence of fear. It is overwhelmed by the security of the shepherd’s care for it. Church - this kind of rest is available to us through the work of the Cross. Now and forever! Freely given for you to receive.

This is made evident by the gift of the Spirit to point, encourage, and exhort us more into the image of Christ! Would you turn to him even now to see his gaze fixed on you mighty to save?

David closes that not only is the Father’s presence and provision for us in the moment but for ever. “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (v.11) Ever feel like you have trial de ja vu? You have been through a similar trial with a strained relationship, another appliance on the fritz, or maybe even a funk that just keeps coming back? I work with companies in the start up and scale up stages. I have seen a few layoffs and a couple of market corrections. Few things bring up my anxiousness more than financial insecurity. I forget where the Lord has been faithful over and over to sustain our family. Be it meeting a financial need on the spot, an introduction to a company, or even a contract that turns into a gig at the right time. While the clouds look choppy and there will be some degree of turbulence ahead, will we look to the father to see a steady hand with us and guiding us into his fullness out of his care to sustain and keep us. He is your shelter in the storm.

Closing

As we close, I want you to think back to that unanswered email, unresolved conflict, or other weight that is on your shoulder. It didn't go away while we are here together. Practically would you write this down and ask the Lord to show you his care for you. Where would he speak to this worry? Where has he kept you this week? Thank him, praise him, and ask him to guide you in this concern. Bring along a friend in prayer.

Maybe this text draws up awareness on some anxiety that you have been pushing down or avoiding. What would it look like to bring that out honestly to God? That prayer may be as simple as Lord - I can't help thinking about this conflict with my boss. I'm afraid of losing this job. Fill me with your peace and help me wisely approach this time with my boss. Lord - I need you to be my refuge!

Maybe you came with a friend and all of this is new to you. First - welcome! Secondly - I would encourage you to ask the Lord to show you his providence around you. He has blessed you, and he is inviting you to join his family of faith where you get the whole inheritance of eternal life!" Pray that he would show you more of his character. We have several people who will be up at the front after this to help you walk through and discuss more about this amazing Father and the work of Christ to bring us to himself.

Wherever you find yourself, would you see the Lord's arms spread wide open as our refuge, our portion, and our providence.

Let's pray.