

## BETTER THAN “TURKISH DELIGHT”!

Psalm 16

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C.S. Lewis, the brilliant English writer, wrote many mind-boggling philosophical Christian works. They have continued to be read widely since his passing in 1963. But probably his most loved books are from his six-volume children’s work entitled *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The first time I read this I was a junior in college and couldn’t put it down. Since then I have read it several times. From the volume *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*, the reader is introduced to the battle between the evil White Witch of the North and the good King of Narnia, Aslan the Lion. In order to reach her goal to rule all of Narnia, she must defeat King Aslan. To do that, she needs to raise an army. She already has a small army made up of various creatures from Narnia, as well as demons; but if she is going to be successful, she needs more soldiers who are intelligent and will be loyal to her.

She has her eye on the lookout for human children to capture and force into her army. One wintery day she comes upon a little boy named Edmund out in the snow. She has her sleigh driver stop next to Edmund, and she invites him up into her sleigh. She quickly begins to interrogate him to see if there are any other children about that she could kidnap for her army.



In order to get Edmund to talk, this evil witch uses her powers to grant him whatever he would like to eat. Edmund asks for his favorite sweet, Turkish Delight. Turkish Delight is a family of confections based on a gel of starch and sugar. The witch quickly produces her magical, enchanted version. Like all of her magical food, this

Turkish Delight was highly addictive and made those who ate it want more and more, thus making them easy for her to control. The funny thing about this wicked Turkish Delight was that while Edmund ate the food, he never seemed to get full. Pretty soon, Edmund ate all of her Turkish Delight and hoped she would offer him more, but she refused until he agreed to do her bidding. She knew that if allowed to, a person could eat her Turkish Delight until it killed him, but she did not want that now. She wanted to use Edmund. She leaves Edmund to do her bidding, but as she does, he suddenly begins to feel sick to his stomach from eating so much of the sweets. Later in the story, he is offered normal Turkish Delight, but for some reason, what used to taste very good to him paled in comparison. All he wanted was the wicked witch’s Turkish Delight.

The first time I read that story, I realized the lesson behind it deals with the consequences of sin. When God gives us something to delight in, we can fully enjoy it without negative consequences. But when we take or try to use something outside the range of what God intended and sin, the consequence is that what was once meant to delight us will make us either sick, or it will become blah. Evil has that negative affect on what God designed for good.

So I pose a question to you this Easter: In what do you delight the most? Is it something God created or provided or God Himself? Adam and Eve learned the negative consequence of delighting more in God's creation than in God and His instructions for getting the most out of life. They discovered that no possession, no relationship, no position of influence can bring the delight and satisfaction that knowing and walking closely with God can bring. As a result of Adam and Eve's failure, not one human being since their creation has ever been able, this side of heaven, to fully grasp the joy, meaning, and sense of satisfaction that God intended Adam and Eve to possess.

However this Easter, I would like us to look at one man's testimony about his ability to delight in the Lord, even though he lived in a fallen world, surrounded by evil temptation and wickedness. The man's name is David. He tells us a little about his own life story in a song that he wrote. If you have your Bibles with you, please look with me at his **Psalm 16**.

If you have never looked closely at a psalm before, there are a few things that you need to know about studying one. First, many of the psalms have a byline, informing us of who wrote it. In this case, we are told that David is the author.

In addition there is often a statement concerning the event that caused the writing of the psalm or some instruction concerning its playing or singing. In this psalm, we learn that it is a Miktam. So, what is a Miktam? None of the scholars really know. But if it were important for us to understand today what a Miktam was, God would surely have told us. But since He has not, we are to let the question go for now.

Every psalm has a subject or theme. As you read this psalm, you will see that it is filled with joy and confidence. For that and other reasons, I call it "David's Psalm of Delight."

When you grasp the content of this psalm, you can't help but notice that which is David's greatest delight, his passion for living, and his cause for hope while living in a world filled with injustice, evil, and betrayal. David's greatest delight was

knowing and walking in close communion with his Creator, Yahweh.

If you could have taken away from David his intimate relationship with God, he would have shriveled up like an over ripened grape, fallen off of the vine, and died. His personal relationship with God meant everything to David.

In a moment, we are going to read through the entire psalm. Before we do, let me alert you to this psalm's structure. It is made up of six sections, each with two verses except the last section, which has only one. As with most psalms, the first section introduces the point of the psalm. In this case, the last verse/section is the conclusion that somehow relates to the point introduced in the first section. So, if you will, the psalm has two bookends, with four sections in between.

With that brief structural overview, let's read the psalm, and then we will work our way through it.

**<sup>1</sup>Preserve me, O God, for in You I take refuge.**

**<sup>2</sup>I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."**

**<sup>3</sup>As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.**

**<sup>4</sup>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.**

**<sup>5</sup>The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.**

**<sup>6</sup>The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.**

**<sup>7</sup>I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart**

**instructs me.**

**<sup>8</sup>I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

**<sup>9</sup>Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.**

**<sup>10</sup>For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,  
or let your holy one see corruption.**

**<sup>11</sup> You make known to me the path of life;  
in your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

In **verse 1** we read of the reason behind David’s writing of the psalm. It is to make a request of God, and the rest of the psalm deals with this request. His request is “**Preserve me!**” or “**Protect me!**” From what does David want to be protected? The answer, in a nutshell, is this: David is requesting God’s protection from anything or anyone that would tempt him toward wickedness or seduce him away from his close communion with God.

Furthermore, David’s statement in **verse 1** is emphatic and is why I like the ESV translation best here, “**In YOU I take refuge.**” David is finding his very life and refuge, his satisfaction and security in the Lord, not in the Turkish delights of this world. David delights in GOD.

Let me pause for just a moment to ask each of us a question: When you are not at school or work, focused on what’s before, what do you think about most? When you are enjoying discretionary time with others, when you speak of anything you want, what do you talk about most? Typically, that which brings us the greatest satisfaction, joy, and delight in life is that which we think of or speak of most. It’s not wrong to sit down with friends and speak of your delight over your team winning or what new accomplishment your child achieved or the fun you had over

Spring Break. But if those you spend time with were asked, “What really excites him most,” what would they say? Would it be like David--his love for God?

What captivated David’s attention most was his intimate walk and relationship with the living God. That’s why, when he did experience brief periods in which he found himself feeling distant from God due to his sin or going his own way, David quickly realized what he was missing in life and longed to return to the closeness that he and the Lord had come to enjoy the most. That’s why following one of those seasons, and after David had sought God’s forgiveness, David pleaded in **Psalm 51:10-11**, “**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.**”

As we work through this psalm, you will see that David is declaring before God that his present delight and his future delight depend upon the Lord. He does not want any temptations of this world nor his tendency to sin to separate him from the Lord that he has come to love. In the end, David’s request in **verses 1-2** is exactly the same request that Jesus taught us to pray in what many call the Lord’s Prayer: “**Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**” God, please don’t let evil overtake me and remove from me your sweet fellowship!

In **verse 2**, David declares that apart from God he has no “**goodness,**” no satisfaction, nothing worthwhile to live for or look forward to.

In the eight verses that follow, David reveals why he believes God will preserve their relationship. The first three are based on David’s actions. The fourth is based on the work of God.

In **verses 3-4**, his present communion with God has remained holy, because he has not associated with the wicked who worship idols. Instead, he has made his closest and intimate friends, those who share his love for the Lord, the basis of his fellowship. In short, David delights in God’s people.

Look again at the contrast between the people mentioned in **verse 3** and **verse 4**. In **verse 3** we read, “**As for the saints [the fellow faithful followers of Yahweh] in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.**” In other words, “I much prefer and enjoy being with other faithful followers and seekers of God.”

In contrast to these fellow believers, we read of another group of Jews in **verse 4**, those who have been unfaithful in their worship of God. We read, “**The sorrows of**

**those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out** [meaning he won't join in their pagan sacrifices or worship services] **or take their names** [meaning the names of the foreign pagan gods] **on my lips."**

David may have to work with these unbelieving Israelite citizens, his kids may play on the soccer team with some of these unbelievers, and he may have to buy groceries from some of these who don't know Jesus, but he chooses not to make them his best friends. He reaches out to them that they may delight with him in God by writing this very psalm that they may sing in the temple as unbelievers going through their religious motions, but he won't partner with them.

I'm convinced that David is clearly illustrating here what centuries later Jesus, David's greatest son, would exhort his followers to do. Jesus said in **John 13:34-35**, **"<sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

This concept in the form of a principle would be: The soul who loves God, loves the people of God.

Next, in **verses 5-6**, David points to God's earthly blessings upon his life. The terms **"portion"** and **"cup"** point to David's provision of food. He is full, and the Lord is the one who has made him full. The terms **"lot," "lines,"** and **"inheritance"** are references to the allocation of the land in family plots, which the Lord has given. The bottom line is that as long as David seeks the Lord, he is content, fully satisfied with what he has. Hence David is confident that God will continue to preserve him, because David delights in God's blessings. He makes it known to God and others how grateful he is to God for what he has.

In **verses 7-8** we learn that David enjoys and intentionally spends time with the Lord. Why? Because David receives instruction and delights in God's counsel. We read:

**<sup>7</sup> I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;**

**in the night also my heart instructs me.**

**<sup>8</sup> I have set the LORD always before me;**

**because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.**

Because David intentionally spends time alone with the Lord, God gifts to David moral as well as theological and practical instruction that results in his living an emotionally and relationally stable life.

In these verses, David is modeling what Jesus promised in **Matthew 7:7-8**. **“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”**

David persistently asked God, David persistently sought after God, David persistently knocked on heaven’s doors; and as a result, he received counsel, he found wisdom, and the door of insight was opened to him.

**Verse 8** describes the result in David’s life of one who is convinced that he has heard from the Lord. He will **“not be shaken.”** Why? Because he knows that God stands **“at his right hand,”** which is a way of saying that he knows God will stand in battle with the one who loves Him with his whole heart, and will assure the lover of God victory in the end.

David is confident that God will continue to preserve him in this life, because God has continued to communicate with David when he has sought after the Lord.

Here then is a principle: Having your affections centered on God gives your soul stability as you live out your life on earth.

But what kind of counsel or instruction does God give David? David gives us a specific example of God’s instruction in **verses 9-10** that literally rocked his world and even our world today. The counsel God gives David has to do with David’s greatest Son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Beginning with **verse 9**, David suddenly starts writing not about himself, but about Jesus. In fact, each **“My”** used in these two verses refer to Jesus. In essence, Jesus is saying these words. This is a prophetic quote of Jesus. First, let’s read it, and then I’ll explain how it is that I know this. **“<sup>9</sup>Therefore my heart [Jesus’ heart] is glad, and my whole being [Jesus’ whole being] rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure [nothing is going to permanently damage my body such that it will keep me from God]. <sup>10</sup>For You will not abandon My soul [Jesus’ soul] to Sheol [hell], nor let Your Holy One [Jesus] see corruption [His body will not decay].”**

How do I know that this is a prophetic quote of Jesus? Because the Apostle Peter and Paul both tell us that this is how these verses are to be interpreted. In **Acts 2:25-31**, Peter is preaching on the Temple Mount at Pentecost to thousands of Jews. He is telling them that Jesus, the one whom they had recently crucified on the cross until he had died, had risen from the dead, thus not only proving that Jesus was the Messiah, but that He also was God. To support his claim, Peter quotes part of David's **Psalm 16**. Peter declares:

**<sup>25</sup>For David says of Him [Jesus], "I saw the LORD always in my presence, for He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken.**

**<sup>26</sup>Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; moreover my flesh will also live in hope; <sup>27</sup>because you will not abandon my soul to Hades, not allow your Holy One to undergo decay. <sup>28</sup>You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of gladness with Your presence."**

That concludes Peter's quote from **Psalm 16**, but then Peter adds, "**<sup>29</sup>Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.**" Peter's point is that David could not be speaking of himself in the Psalm, because David's body did decay and was in a tomb just outside of Jerusalem. "**<sup>30</sup>And so, because he [David] was a prophet . . . <sup>31</sup>he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.**" I'm convinced that although David probably didn't have the whole picture of the Messiah and all that would happen to the Him, David knew that what God had instructed was not to be applied to David, but prophetically to the coming Messiah. He also knew that God had sworn to him on oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne.

Similarly, to a Jewish crowd in a Jewish synagogue on his first missionary journey, the Apostle Paul was also preaching about the resurrected Jesus Christ being the Messiah. In his preaching, Paul too mentions **Psalm 16** and these verses that prophecy Christ's death and resurrection. Follow along as I read in **Acts 13:26-39**.

**<sup>26</sup>Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. <sup>27</sup>For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, recognizing neither Him [Jesus] nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him [Jesus]. <sup>28</sup>And though they found no ground for putting Him [Jesus] to death, they asked Pilate that He [Jesus] be executed. <sup>29</sup>When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb.**

**<sup>30</sup>But God raised Him from the dead; <sup>31</sup>and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. <sup>32</sup>And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, <sup>33</sup>that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are my son; today I have begotten you." <sup>34</sup>As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: "I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David." <sup>35</sup>Therefore He also says in another Psalm, [Psalm 16] "You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."**

**<sup>36</sup>For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent**

decay; <sup>37</sup>but He [Jesus] whom God raised did not undergo decay.

<sup>38</sup>Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him [Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, <sup>39</sup>and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the central theme of the apostles' teachings. This event proved beyond doubt the deity of Jesus Christ and established His messianic credentials. The greatest proof that Jesus is the Messiah is not His teaching, His miracles, or even His death. It is in this specific prophecy of His resurrection. By his resurrection, Jesus not only proves that He is the Messiah, but that He also had the credentials to pay for our rebellion and sin against God, so that anyone, regardless of their past failures, can be forgiven and resurrected to a new life today and eventually from the grave.

David did not put his trust in his good works or efforts to appease God for his wrong doings, David placed his hope in His future Messiah son, Jesus. Hence, David delights in God's specific prophecy about his Messiah's resurrection. For David, all of these things convince him that God will preserve him while he is alive and forever more, because he will be resurrected with Christ.

**"<sup>11</sup>You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."** When we come to verse 11, David is now writing about the effect that God's prophetic instruction had on him concerning the Messiah's death and resurrection. It has caused him to rejoice in heart and soul, because God has answered David's prayer for preservation, not just in this life but in the next as well. He will enjoy ultimate delight in living with the One he loves forever, never to be separated or out of fellowship due to sin and temptation. He is convinced that one day his body also will **"rest secure"** in being resurrected.

The **"path of life"** is so called by David, not only because of its goal that it leads to a forever relationship with God, but because this **"path,"** delighting in the Lord, making Him number one in your life, is the way is to live now if you want to gain the most satisfaction from life in the true sense of the word. This closeness with the living God is described as being **"full of joy"** and having **"pleasures forever**

**more.”** In our terms, this path is the most deeply satisfying and fulfilling life possible, and it will never be boring but endless in its variety of pleasure.

David tells us in **Psalm 25:10**, “**All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.**” Later, David’s son Solomon writes **Proverbs 4:18**, “**But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.**” Mind you, this is a description of living life right now, in the midst of a world of wickedness, with the assurance of one day living in perfect communion with God in a setting where there is no wickedness.

I’m convinced Jesus had this very psalm in mind when He declared to His Jewish brethren on the night before his betrayal and crucifixion, “**I am the way [the path], the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me.**”

Do you know Jesus?