

Jesus is the Giver of LIFE (PSALM 16)

APRIL 9, 2023

▶ CONNECT

As you begin your group, take time to look back and answer the following questions:

How did God's Word speak to you this week?

Where do you see God at work in your life?

Joy is the critical nutrient each of us needs to make the soil of our following Jesus together healthy and fertile. Joy leads us on the path to growth and flourishing. Without joy, our faith, and relational connections to God and others suffer. We might obey out of a sense of duty or go through the motions because that's what we're supposed to do. But simply doing and saying the "right things" does not make a healthy and vibrant relationship with God. And it certainly doesn't lead to life transformation. If we want to see our lives transformed by Jesus, joy is not optional. It is essential.¹

What do you like to do that brings you real joy?

▶ GROW

In Psalm 16, David's joy in God is unmistakable. His words overflow with joy and thanks to God for the many blessings He has given him. David's reflection in the psalm gives us a window into his soul and desires and how he finds God to be his all-sufficient portion of joy and pleasure in life. David begins the psalm by contrasting his close relationship with God with those who worship other gods (vv. 1-4). David then shares the satisfaction and contentment he has in his relationship with God and his delight in being in God's presence (vv. 5-8). The psalm closes with a bold declaration of confidence in God as his source of hope and everlasting joy (vv. 9-11).

Read Psalm 16 as a group. Make observations about the passage by answering questions such as these:

- *What do you see? What do you find interesting or insightful? Is there something new you learned or hadn't seen before?*
- *What is the author's main point? How does he make it?*
- *What lesson am I meant to learn from this passage (or story)?*

Next, ask what this passage says about God, humans in general, and yourself in particular.

END NOTES

1. Adapted from Jim Wilder and Michel Hendricks, *The Other Half of Church: Christian Community, Brain Science, and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2020), 74.

- *What does this passage say about God? What does it say about His character and activity in our lives and in the world?*
- *What does this passage say about people? What does it reveal about human nature?*
- *What does this passage say about you? How does it directly apply to your identity, worth, and purpose in life?*

► SHARE

There are no explicit messianic prophecies in Psalm 16, but the implications of Jesus's death and resurrection are certainly there. The psalm is about having a joy-filled relationship with God and all the benefits that come from it. Through Jesus's life, death, and resurrection, He brought us back to God and a relationship with Him. His blood covers us, meaning we have refuge and safety. Not only do we call Him "Lord," but we also call Him "Father" and enjoy all the good He wants for us. Together we sing with joy the praises of God as members of His family. We don't run after other gods because we find our greatest delight in Him. Through Him, we receive the full portion of God's blessings for us (see Ephesians 1:3-14). We now have God's favor and, as a son or daughter, the promise of an inheritance. His Spirit indwells us to counsel and instruct us. His presence is always with us, regardless of where we find ourselves in life. Through Jesus, we discover the path to unlimited joy and pleasure, something we all really want.

Transformative joy is available to you and me. In Jesus, there is a joy that's bigger than our circumstances. In Him we have an abiding peace, rest for our weary souls, unending pleasure, rapturous delight, and abundant provision now and forevermore.

Where in your life would you like to experience more joy? What would you need to change or start doing to experience more joy?

What "joy thieves" are stealing your joy right now? How can you protect yourself against them?

Joy is a relational word. With that in mind, how can our group cultivate more joy in our relationships with one another?

Think of someone who needs to hear that God wants to give us true peace and rest. How could you share this truth with them?

► PRAY

As we prepare to leave group tonight, we desire to step out and live a Jesus-centered life and submit to the Spirit (Romans 8:6-8). Take time to reflect on this past week and set intentions for next week by answering the following questions:

- *How have you fed your spirit this week?*
- *What are ways you drifted to feeding your flesh?*

Take a few moments to pray for each other and for God's continued growth in those areas

► DISCOVER MORE

PSALM 16 OVERVIEW

The confession of confidence in God exemplifies a deep trust in the Lord in both life and death. The life setting of Psalm 16 is difficult to determine, as the psalmist speaks of his condition in general terms. A variety of opinions exists on the origin of the psalm: an expression of devotion to the Lord by a Levitical priest (so Kraus, 1:119–20); a profession of faith by a Canaanite convert to Yahwism (so Dahood, 1:87); and a confession of confidence in the midst of crisis (so Craigie, 156). Because of these opinions and the indecisiveness of the data, the psalm may at least be viewed as a composition made during a time of peace and quiet. This fits the beginning of David’s regime, before the surrounding nations challenged his sovereignty (so J. Ridderbos, 1:126); but for a date ca. 500 BC, see Johannes Lindblom, “Erwägungen zur Psalm XVI,” VT 24 (1974): 187–95. The general reference to the wicked and the expectation of death are arguments in favor of an early date.

The focus of the psalmist is on the Lord and all of his benefits. He celebrates the goodness of God that he has experienced in life. It may be that he reflects on past troubles, but the thrust is on his confidence in the Lord with respect to the future. He begins with a prayer (v. 1), expresses confidence in the Lord (vv. 2–4) because of all of his benefits (vv. 5–8), and rejoices in the expectation of a continued walk on “the path of life” (vv. 9–11). The divisions of the psalm follow this progression of the argument. The psalm reveals an inner structure:

- A Confidence in the Lord (vv. 1–4)
- B The Experience of Faith (vv. 5–6)
- A' Confidence in the Lord (vv. 7–8)
- B' The Experience of Faith (vv. 9–11)

This structure highlights the focus on the Lord and the dynamic experience of his sovereign beneficence. The various expressions of God’s goodness (vv. 5–6, 9–11) are synthetic to bring out his benefits in both life and death.

- v. 5a food and drink
- v. 5b lot
- v. 6a pleasant places
- v. 6b delightful inheritance
- v. 9 body secure
- v. 10 grave
- v. 11a a path of life
- v. 11b joy and pleasure

For compositional connections with Psalms 15–21, see Overview, Psalm 15.

The quotation of vv. 8–11 in Acts 2:25–28 and of v. 10 in Acts 13:35 (cf. LXX) makes this psalm especially dear to Christians, for it anticipates the resurrection of Jesus (see exposition below). Long before Christ’s advent, the psalmist is

confident in the quality of life assured by God's presence both now and in the world to come. Such confidence is further guaranteed by the resurrection of our Lord. Before Christ came, the life of the believer was good, but it is even better since the coming of the Messiah!²

PSALM 16:1-4

16:1 In verses 1–8 David reviewed how he had come to know and trust in the Lord. Verse 1 seems to summarize the entire psalm: **Keep me safe, O God, for in You I take refuge**. Then David developed the idea of his having taken refuge in the Lord.

16:2 David announced his exclusive trust in **the Lord**. His statement of faith was, **You are my Lord; apart from You I have no good thing** (cf. 34:10; 84:11).

16:3–4 Based on his commitment to the Lord, the psalmist described the society of friends with whom he was identified. He delighted in godly people (**saints**) **in the land**, whom he considered to be the noble (**glorious**) **ones**. God had called His people to be a holy nation (Ex. 19:6), and God's servant recognized that such were his company. They were the faithful who served the Lord. The others, **those ... who run after other gods**, will face sorrows and difficulties. David would not endorse their actions, or help them with their vain worship, or even mention the **names** of their gods. His loyalty was with righteous believers.³

PSALM 16:5-8

16:5 portion. This can refer to portions of food (Gen 43:34), the choicest part of a sacrifice to be offered to God (Lev 2:2, 9, 16; 5:12; 6:15; Num 18:29), or a tract of land (Josh 15:13; 17:14; 19:9). Sometimes it refers metaphorically to a blessing (1 Sam 1:5; 2 Kgs 2:9; Isa 61:7). In the Psalms and other poetic texts, it usually refers to God as the psalmist's blessing (73:26; 119:57; 142:5; Jer 10:16; 51:19; Lam 3:24), although in two instances, God's people are his portion (Deut 32:9; Zech 2:12). cup. The metaphor here indicates God's blessing (cf. 23:5; 116:13); elsewhere it can refer to God's punishment (75:8; Isa 51:22; Jer 25:15–17; Ezek 23:33; Hab 2:16).

16:6 boundary lines. Demarcated tribal or national borders. Measuring lines or ropes sometimes marked off such borders. David rejoices that the "boundary lines" of God's blessings have been nothing but favorable for him.

16:8 my right hand. The seat at one's right hand was the position of honor (v. 11; 45:9; 110:1; 1 Chr 6:39). In v. 11, David looks forward to eternal pleasures at God's right hand, but here the Lord is at David's right hand, suggesting that David is writing in his capacity as king and that he sees God as his helper and defender (see note on 13:3–4). God's right hand in other contexts symbolizes power (see note on 20:6).⁴

PSALM 16:9-11

As in 49:15 and 73:24–26, here there is a clear affirmation that the human yearning to be near to God and to know the pleasure of his welcome forever, beyond the death of the body, finds its answer in the covenant. Peter cites 16:8–11 in his Pentecost speech (Acts 2:25–28), applying the verses to the resurrection of Jesus; Paul used Ps. 16:10 in his similar speech (Acts 13:35). If the apostles meant that David's words were a straight prediction of the death and resurrection of Jesus, it is difficult to know what function the psalm could have played in ancient Israel: the congregation would have scratched their heads in puzzlement every time they sang it. This puzzlement goes away if the psalm is seen as

END NOTES

4. D. A. Carson, ed., *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 890–891.

cultivating the hope of everlasting glory for the faithful, with the resurrection of Jesus (the **holy one** par excellence) as the first step in bringing this hope to fruition (cf. Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:23).⁵

▶ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

John D. Barry et al., *Psalms*, The Faithlife Study Bible.

Ted Cabal et al., *Psalms*, The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith.

D.A. Carson, *Psalms*, The NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible.

C. John Collins, *Psalms*, The ESV Study Bible.

Roger Ellsworth, *Psalms*, Opening Up Commentary.

Alan P. Ross, *Psalms*, The Bible Knowledge Commentary.

Eric Lane, *Psalms 1-89: The Lord Saves*, Focus on the Bible Commentary.

R.C. Sproul, *Psalms*, The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version.

Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary.

END NOTES

5. C. John Collins, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 956.