

# **Life of David: The Intentional Choices that Assure us we are Ending Well Psalm 116**

To arrive at whatever destination you are headed, you just need to stay on course. David spent his life aimed at the Lord, and he ended well. Today, you can check on how you are doing at intentionally pointing your life God's Way. This Psalm explains a checklist for a life that pleases God. Stay with me and see what God desires from your life and mine!

So, we can say that David ended well because his whole life was built around heading towards his eternal home. Each of us need to soberly ask ourselves: what direction are we intentionally aiming our life?

## **The Kind of Destination Jesus Christ Offers**

The Bible begins with Jesus Christ speaking the Universe into its created existence; and the Bible ends with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ offered to all who would receive it.

Turn with me to where the Bible ends—with Jesus Christ inviting us to join Him in Heaven.

*Revelation 22:17, 20-21 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

His voice can be heard from Creation, as He spoke all things into existence (Colossians 1), to the end of Revelation, where He delivers back the Universe to God the Father (John 19): because Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus is the subject and the theme of the Bible, just as He said in John 5:39.

*John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*

Whenever you read God's Word always remember that the writers of the Bible were listening to the Spirit of Christ that was in them.

*1 Peter 1:11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*

So from cover to cover Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

*John 10:11-14 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*

## **Jesus Shepherds His Sheep All the Way Home**

Jacob confessed that the Lord was his Shepherd and that was his only hope as he died.

*Genesis 48:15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, NASB*

David started as a boy singing about his Shepherd; he remembered that hope through all his hard days—and in the end he never took his eyes off from the home with Jesus he believed was his.

So David followed his Shepherd through life and then as the night began to fall—he went home with Him to dwell in His House.

*Psalms 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.*

Though he was but a youth, David pictures life as a long walk behind a Good Shepherd heading to spend the night with the shepherd, in His house, safe and secure.

Life is walking *behind the Shepherd*, the end of life is secured *by the Shepherd*, and eternity is spent *with the Shepherd*.

## **JESUS IS THE SON OF DAVID**

David came to this hope by trusting and following the Good Shepherd. One of the first things we notice when we open to the New Testament is that Matthew 1:1 opens with a reference to David our subject of study for these many months.

*Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:*

The “Son of David” later (Matthew 1:21), named Jesus, is Christ's introduction in Matthew, which opens our New Testament. The parallels between David’s life and the Son of David—Christ the Lord’s life, are very striking.

We have often noted that Christ's last words were Him quoting David’s words in Psalm 31.

*Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.’ ” Having said this, He breathed His last.*

*Psalm 31:5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.*

But, the lessons from Christ's death do not stop there. Many of us miss a wonderful insight the Gospels capture. We actually know the last song that Jesus is recorded as having sung in preparation for His death.

If you ever want to learn how to face death in a practical way—note the content, the lyrics of the songs that Jesus used as He marched to the Cross. So a great question to find the answer to is to ask:

## **WHAT DID JESUS SING AS HE FACED DEATH?**

First, we know Jesus sang His last night. If we take the time to look we find that there are Psalm songs, mentioned in the Gospels by Matthew and Mark. Turn with me and look at Matthew.

*Matthew 26:30 And when they had **sung a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

*Mark 14:26 And when they had **sung a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

The word in Matthew and Mark translated “hymn” is from one Greek word which means, literally, “hymning.” This “hymn” was sung and the Passover meal, or the Seder, so we know that hymn being sung must have been one of the Hallel (or “praise songs”) Psalms recited at festivals. Those seven songs are in our Bibles as Psalms 113–118 or 136<sup>1</sup>.

Throughout the Last Supper Passover Seder, God's Word is giving us an insight. Matthew & Mark tell us that Jesus must have led the disciples in singing the seven Psalms (113-118 and 136) which the Jews of Christ's day called the Hallel in Hebrew, which means “Praise God”.

Traditionally Psalms 113 and 114 were sung before the meal.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Jewish New Testament Commentary*, (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications) 1996.

Then, at different points of the Passover Feast Psalm 115-118 were sung in sections; and at the very end there was sung *The Great Hallel*, which is Psalm 136. So, we know what the “hymn” was that Christ and His disciples sang as they left the meal and walked to the Mount of Olives: it was Psalm 136.

So, at Passover these seven Psalms were sung in the offering of praise called the Hallel.

The fourth of the Hallel Psalms, or the middle of the seven (which is the place of importance in the Hebrew mind when listing seven items) is Psalm 116.

## **Jesus Led the Disciples in Singing These Psalms**

During the evening we know that they sang all seven. So one thing we know is, that they heard Jesus lead them in the middle one; the one that structurally is emphasized.

So instead of going through them all, we will just focus on that middle Psalm, the 116<sup>th</sup> Psalm.

Ending well, and fearing no evil, means that we die gracefully—and no one died more gracefully than Jesus.

What makes this insight about preparing to die even more special is that Jesus Christ Himself sang and filled with ultimate meaning to His very own disciples. That makes these words and truths even more powerful to us.

This word for “singing” describing what Jesus and His disciples did as they headed out and began walking to Gethsemane: is the same word that Paul uses for singing from the depths of the jail in Philippi.

*Matthew 26:30 And when they had **sung a hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

*Acts 16:25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and **singing hymns** to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*

*Hebrews 2:12 saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will **sing praise** to You.”*

Jesus sang as he walked to the cross, Paul and Silas sang as they suffered for the cross and Hebrews 2:12 says that Christ is present as we sing celebrating His death for us on the cross. Now let’s use the very Psalm Jesus used His last night, and learn the lesson of:

## **DYING GRACEFULLY**

## From PSALM 116

In Psalm 116 we find that Christ is our Refuge even for Death.

As David sang of the Good Shepherd walking him through the Valley of Death's shadow in Psalm 23—so the Good Shepherd sang of God's power and grace as He also Himself headed to die the death of deaths as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

1. The first truth we can learn from what Jesus said and did that night is that the pains of death are **very personal**.

It was only Jesus who couldn't sleep as He faced death—the disciples couldn't stay awake. So we also notice in Psalm 116 is that it is a very personal Psalm; the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun is used 37x and the Lord's Name 15x.

2. The second truth we find in Psalm 116 is that death is a time about which we must be **very intentional**. As David, and as Christ—we must intentionally choose to do and say what pleases God.

Psalm 116 gives us what we can call:

### Resolves for Ending Well in Christ

If you follow along, and even mark these in your Bibles, you will have a treasure. A Scripture tool to use when you get old, much faster than you ever dreamed. Or when someone you love is slowly slipping away. Whether you or a loved on, Jesus gives us a powerful insight to live by whenever death is near.

First, note with me the eight times the Psalmist says: "I will" in Psalm 116:1-19. Also note the resolves that follow each "I will".

1. v. 1 I love the Lord, because He has heard My voice and my supplications. 2 Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore **I will call upon Him as long as I live**.
2. v. 3 The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. 4 Then I called upon the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I implore You, deliver my soul!" 5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful. 6 The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. 7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. 8 For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling. v. 9 **I will walk before the Lord In the land of the living**.
3. v. 10 I believed, therefore I spoke, "I am greatly afflicted." 11 I said in my haste, "All men are liars." 12 What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits

toward me? 13a ***I will take up the cup of salvation, And***

4. v. 13b ***call upon the name of the Lord.***

5. v. 14 ***I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people.*** 15 Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints.

6. v. 16 O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds. 17a ***I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving,***

7. v. 17b And ***will call upon the name of the Lord.***

8. v. 18 ***I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people,*** 19 In the courts of the Lord's house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

The 116<sup>th</sup> Psalm also reminds us of Christ's favor that lasts for a lifetime. Note that the past, present, and future are all covered by Christ's grace.

In the past he "prayed" (v.1, 4); and in the present he "loves" (v. 1); and in the future he "will call" (v.2).

Jesus also may have used Psalm 116:13 in the Last Supper Communion as He said in the words of this Psalm, "I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord." The 3<sup>rd</sup> cup of the Passover meal may have been this cup.

We only drink the cup of salvation because Christ already drank the bitter cup for us taking my sin, my cross, my shame and rising again we bless His name as we drink the cup of blessing.

*1 Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*

*John 18:11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"*

## **Lessons for Ending Well in Christ**

Finally, here are the lessons we can draw from the song Jesus sang as He headed towards death. These lessons are for us and can become such a precious source of preparation now and hope as that day draws near!

Especially remember that these words are not only what God led David to write, these are also the description of how Jesus prepared for His death on the Cross. So these

words have a double weight upon our lives.

- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we always remember He hears us.*** Psalm 116:1 I love the Lord, because He has heard My voice and my supplications.
- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we pour out our fears and needs.*** Psalm 116:2 Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.
- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we always remember that troubles and sorrows are neither wrong nor avoidable.*** Psalm 116:3 The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. Every great saint since the Garden of Eden (except two) have died in pain of one form or another. Jesus died most painfully. It is not wrong or sinful to have troubles and sorrows—it is normal and also a part of God’s plan.
- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we seek the Lord’s aid when life hurts.*** Psalm 116:4 Then I called upon the name of the Lord: “O Lord, I implore You, deliver my soul!”
- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we praise Him for His mercy and goodness that have followed us all through our life.*** Psalm 116:5-7 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful. 6 The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. 7 Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.
- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we make it a habit to walk with God each day we live.*** Psalm 116:8-10 For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling. 9 I will walk before the Lord In the land of the living. 10 I believed, therefore I spoke, “I am greatly afflicted.” The same One who walks through life with us keeps walking and takes us through the Valley of Death’s shadows. And shadows of death are all we get—not death. Jesus said who ever lives and believes in Him will never die.
- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we drink from the cup of salvation.*** Psalm 116:12-13 What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits toward me? 13 I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord. Believers never die!
- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we seek to obey Him during life.*** Psalm 116:14 I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people. Jesus said His sheep hear His voice, follow Him—and He gives them endless life, even when their body dies!
- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we serve Him in life.*** Psalm 116:15-16 Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints. 16 O

Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds. Serving God is what saints are going to be doing forever.

- We end well, and are not lonely at death: ***if we thank Him through life.*** Psalm 116:17-19 I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And will call upon the name of the Lord. 18 I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people, 19 In the courts of the Lord's house, In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

To arrive at whatever destination you are headed, you just need to stay on course. David spent his life aimed at the Lord, and he ended well.

David ended well because his whole life was built around heading towards his eternal home.

Each of us need to soberly ask ourselves: what direction are we intentionally aiming our life?

The Intentional Choices that Assure us we are Ending Well from Psalm 116.