

Psalm 16: 1-11; “You will Show me the Path of Life”, A Communion Sermon,
delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall, on June 7th, 2015
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

We who believe in Christ here this afternoon, should be able to identify with King David. We can joyfully and truthfully say that it is Christ's having died, and His having been raised from the dead, that has blessed us with every present and future blessing of our salvation. It is His resurrection which assures us of the reality of our faith, of our own future resurrection, and our obtaining everlasting life. With the time that we have, I want to recount three of the greatest blessings of our salvation; blessings which are mentioned directly in this text. There are many more than three; but before we come the Lord's table, I want to give you these. They will be sufficient spiritual points of truth to allow us to feed upon the wonderful things which Christ has done for us. Christ, by His resurrection power, will show us the path of life. 1st of all - Christ shows the believer the right path spiritually; that their goodness is nothing apart from Him. (verses 1-3) 2nd - He shows the believer the right path, spiritually, in that their happiness will be found in hastening after Christ. (verses 4-6) And 3rd - He shows the believer the right path, spiritually, by telling them how they will be sustained in their faith all the way through this life. (verses 7-11) Let us come and find comfort and consolation in Christ this morning, through the strength of these verses.

1st of all - Christ is showing the believer the path of life when they come to see that their goodness is nothing apart from Him. (verses 1-3a)

“Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.” This is something that the person who understands themselves to be sinner says to God in prayer, when they want to be saved from their sins; or even, when they want to be saved from themselves, if they are already a true Christian. “O God,” the sinner says, “Save me and make me one of your children.” “Keep me and preserve me unto eternal life with you.” “I am trusting that you will do this Lord.” You see, this is where it all begins for the one who is seeking everlasting life. A person who sees themselves as a helpless sinner will come to God through Jesus Christ so that they can find that grace and goodness which only He can give. They know that they are not good enough in themselves. They know that they cannot do good things apart from Christ's grace. They know that their righteousness is not perfect. They know that in many ways they cannot do what pleases God, or that which will fulfill His law's demands.

That person, then; if they are wise, will come and have a talk with the Lord; a talk where they confess many things which are important to them and to God. And this kind of holy conversation will continue to take place all through their life after they have come to know Him; after they have first believed. Let me ask if you have had heart dealings with God over the salvation of your eternal soul? And if you are a saved person, do you still have heart dealings with God over the many issues of your life. Are you able to say the words of verse 2 with all sincerity of heart? “O my soul, you have said to the Lord, “You are my Lord, my goodness is nothing apart from You.” These words were spoken by “the man after God's own heart.” Salvation is when you take the Lord to be your Lord. It is when you come to see that apart from Him, that your goodness is nothing. All that is good in you originates from God. It does not flow naturally out of your nature. All the good things that you do are linked to God's having shown you goodness in some way, first. All the good in the believer's life is cultivated in their hearts and in their actions only with God's help.

The point is very simply this; the Lord Jesus is the fulfillment of this verse, “My goodness is nothing apart from You.” For the Lord Jesus Christ was so very humble before God in prayer, so very submissive to the Father's will, that He knew that even all of His own goodness as a man was nothing apart from the Father's owning it, blessing it, and using it for His own glory. But this was the very goal of His life; His coming into the world to save sinners and to make them into God's saints. Therefore, He always did those things which were pleasing to the Father. The goodness

that He went about to do, was to graciously minister healing to men's bodies and to preach to them the truth of God's word, so that they might be saved and have everlasting life. And then, in the process of His being good and doing good, He would minister grace to the souls of all those whom the Father had given to Him; even to change their hearts so that they would become the saints of God while they still lived in the earth. As for the saints who were in the earth, in those days, Christ did not show forth His own goodness to impress them. He showed forth the goodness of God so that God His Father would be honored, and so that God would be glorified through Him in everything that He did and said. He lived to show forth God's purpose of love toward sinful men. He was the One who laid down His life for those who were not good; and He made them by His grace and righteousness, into saints of the Most High God. "There is none that does good," it says in Romans chapter 3; "No not one." Listen also to 2 Corinthians 8, verse 9. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

Men and women do not become saints by their own attempts to do good works for God. Their goodness is nothing apart from Him. Christ's righteousness must be imputed to them, and His goodness must be imparted to their hearts and minds through the working of His Holy Spirit. This is where truly good works come from. This impulse to trust in your own good works to merit favor with God, either before or after conversion, proceeds from the flesh; the Old nature and the person that you once were before you came to know Christ. Those who have faith in the Lord Jesus, the righteous and holy, the pure and perfect One, they become the excellent ones, in whom is all His delight, and the Father's delight. They are not worthy of this; but they become partakers of Christ's grace by faith.

Let me bring to you an application to what I have said. Let me ask you whether you, like the King of kings, Jesus, can say that other Christians are the excellent ones in whom is all your delight? For this is what they mean to Him. Is this what they mean to you? If you are becoming more like Jesus you will see His people in just this way. You have been called to see all your goodness in relation to God and Christ. And if you see things this way; giving of your time and strength and resources to advance Christ's kingdom in relation to His people through good works; you have come to see that this is the way to glorify God with your life. This is what remembering Christ is all about. As you come to the Lord's table in a few minutes, ask God to help you to be more like the blessed Lord Jesus in this way.

2nd – God, by the power of Christ's resurrection, shows the believer the right path, spiritually, by teaching them that their happiness will be found in hastening after Christ. (verses 4-6)

"Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, nor take up their names on my lips." "O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot." "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance." You can never come to Christ too young; you can never come to Christ too quickly. He will come to the heart and the soul of the one who diligently seeks Him. There is no other god besides Him. The first commandment of the ten commandments is that, "You shall have no other gods before Me". And the reason is; that God is a jealous God. He wants all of your attention. He wants all of your heart in worship. But He does not get it until you come to Christ. He does not want you to live your whole life to the world, and spend your strength in vain on sensual pleasures, and give all your attention to worldly vanities, and then come and give Him what is left over when you are eighty. "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth." "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man," it says in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes.

Some people hold out for many years, and they rob God of the worship and service that He deserves; the worship and service that He desires; and all because they think that they might find something more interesting and more pleasing than God Himself, and what He has to give. They

falsely believe that there is something more important than serving the God who made them; something more pleasurable than the pleasures which He gives. But the God who asks for your heart and for your obedience to Him, has only the best of gifts to give, but sometimes a person will not believe it. Fellowship with the true and living God is too abstract a concept for them to take in. So they will settle for a god of their own design and making. And thus God is robbed of the worship and service of those whom He has made for His own good pleasure.

What is wonderful to notice here, is that the Lord God Almighty did get all of Jesus' heart in His worship and service to Him, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If King David did not offer the drink offerings of blood like the heathen offered, nor take the names of their deities upon his lips; then think of how much purer the worship of the Lord Jesus was. The Lord Jesus did love His Father and the Holy Spirit with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength. "I always do those things which please Him," He said in John 8: 29. And I believe that this is why we can consider the Lord Jesus to have been the happiest of men. Are you surprised to hear me say this? I say that it was the way of His heart before God to find His greatest happiness in God His Father. It says here that, "sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god..." If sorrows are multiplied for the one who quickly goes after another god, then the converse must also be true. The joys and happiness of the one hastening to trust in God, in Christ, and in the word of God must be very great. When you understand this spiritually, it is because Christ is showing you the path of life. It is very evident that He was the happiest of men, if it says in Hebrews 12, verse 2 – "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross and despised the shame, and has sat down at the right hand the Father on high." Being able to see the results of what His own faith and obedience to God would accomplish, even before He went to the cross, must have given Him great joy. He would have you to share in His joy by believing in Him and walking closely with Him.

A good example of this is found in Luke Chapter 19, verses 1-6 if you would turn with me there. What happened with Zacchaeus is a good example of what every person ought to do in relation to Christ. It says, "Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho." "Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich." "And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature." "So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way." "And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.'" "So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully." You can see that faith in Christ brings real joy; it brings true happiness. Zacchaeus made haste to come to the true God and Savior, Jesus Christ. This kind of haste is holy. And even further, he hastily brought about the restoration of what he had taken from people before, in his sinful acts of stealing as a tax-collector; he returns it to its owners. Verse 8 says, "Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore four-fold.'" There was no hesitation in his declaring what he would do, to make things right with men.

There is great joy and great happiness in following and serving the Lord Jesus. This can only be proven in your own experience when you hasten to follow Him; when your soul sees Him as the portion of your inheritance and your cup. That is when the lines fall out to you in pleasant places, and you realize that you have a good inheritance. When you see all that Christ has done for you in dying for your sins; when see all that He is doing for you day by day by His grace, changing and transforming you from a selfish person to a loving and giving person, you are truly happy with your life. This is what happens when, by faith, your soul eagerly reaches forward to lay hold of all that Christ would have you to do according to His word. This is your true happiness, O believer in Christ. It is to see the Lord as your portion. He is everything that you will want and everything that you will need. He is your cup; you can drink deeply from Him. His glorious Person and His precious grace is what God has given to you, to satisfy the hungering and thirsting of your soul. He is the One whose love you need to drink more deeply from, as you come to this Table today. Christ

is the One who makes your life pleasant; so very pleasant, that you can confess it to Him now, with all of His people gathered here now: “The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; I have a good inheritance.” Let us all come down front now and we will assemble to partake of our Lord’s Supper.

3rd – We need to see that Christ shows the believer the right path, spiritually, by telling them how they will be sustained in their faith all the way through this life.

(Verses 7-11)

As we come to the Table now, let us thank Him for what He has given us by His sufferings, what He is even now giving us grace to do; and what He will give to us in the future. Let us “bless the Lord who has given us counsel.” He has given us counsel in His word which is full of promises, instructions, commandments, and principles to live by. He blesses us in the reading of it, and in our applying it to our souls. But let us remember that there was another reason for His sufferings and death. He suffered for you, dear believer, in order to purchase for you the gift of His Holy Spirit. Christ Himself is the Wonderful Counselor. But let us understand that He has not left us as orphans. He said that He would come to us, and He has, for each and every one who believes. He has given us someone else to help us and instruct us in a practical sense. He has given us His Holy Spirit. He is called “the Helper”, and “the Comforter” in John 14: 16. Christ has given the Holy Spirit so that your heart will be instructed, and He will instruct you in the night seasons when you are lying there awake thinking about the important things in your life. You will not hear an audible voice, but nevertheless Christ will be with you in your spirit, in this holy way.

As you partake of the Supper, will you not thank the Lord Jesus that He is the Wonderful Counselor to your soul; that He is leading you and teaching you, and showing you the path of life? Thank Him also for what He is enabling you to do by His grace; good works, giving to people around you a taste of what He has given to you in abundance now, by His grace. How are you sustained in your faith so that you can do what is right and what is good in the various situations of your life? The answer is found in verse 8 – It is that He gives you the grace to set Him always before you. It is because He is at your right hand, you shall not be moved. When we come to this Table and eat the bread and drink the wine, we are setting the Lord before our mind’s eye; He is our heart’s consideration. We consider His love; that He would die for sinners like us. We consider that His sufferings on the cross really have accomplished some tangible things which He applies to our souls. He has given us grace, and mercy, and peace. And in giving us these powerful graces, we find nourishment and strength for our soul. We know that He is for us; He is with us; and He is in us, working powerfully and mightily by His grace. And because we have really come to know the He is at our right hand; we shall not be moved.

This is what Christ’s grace is meant to accomplish in your soul. This is what this ordinance does; it strengthens the heart with grace, so that as you go out into the world where you find many troubles, difficulties, and tribulations; that you will not be moved. Why? Because He is at your right hand. He is set before you, here in this ordinance, as crucified and risen from the dead. And because of the great things He has accomplished by His death and His resurrection, you shall not be moved. “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices.” Christ is leading you along; showing you the path of life. Being in His presence here at the Supper gives you fullness of joy. We look forward to the day when we shall also be at the Father’s right hand, even where we will sit with our Christ in the heavenly places. Meanwhile, “God has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you?” It is, “to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6: 8) “Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.” “The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.” (Isaiah 32: 17)