

GOD ALONE PRESERVES

PSALM 16:1-11 AND ACTS 2:27-36

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The Introduction

Scripture Introduction

Throughout the history of the Church, Psalm 16 has been ascribed beautiful titles, such as, “*A Prayer of Confidence*” or “*God the Supreme Good*.” There are other titles; yet, whichever appeals to you may it arrest your heart to the attention of God. God preserves and blesses His saints for the sake of His Son, the Holy One. The fact of which is established and secured forever by the resurrection from the dead.

Let us read Psalm 16 and then look to the explanation given by the Apostle Peter applied to Christ the Lord in Acts 2:27-36/

Sermon Introduction

The fact that God preserves is seen throughout the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Take for instance the patriarch Joseph. Through Joseph the God of Israel preserved the lives of the people (Gen. 45:5). Not only does God preserve people, but He also preserves animals (Ps. 36:6). So, preservation is very much so a blessing of God which all people must rest in. After all, there is more. As God preserves, He has certain blessings as the goal of preservation, namely, blamelessness, sanctification, and preservation in Christ (I Thess. 5:23; Jude 1:1).

This Summary of the teaching of Scripture oftentimes encounters doubts. Somebody might say, “*This looks good on paper but just how are these blessing applied in my life?*” Good question. So, how might you know that God preserves you and that you must rest in these same blessings?

Beloved, Psalm 16 teaches the care, the comfort, and the confidence of resting in God who preserves.

The Points

Main Point 1 - *Because God alone preserves, you must rest in care (16:1-2).*

Here in Psalm 16:1-2, the Old Testament king, David, teaches the Church at least three things. How shall we consider these things? Well, ask yourself this question: at what time do I rest in the care of God; only during emergencies or all the time? The answer to this question is found in (1) the *Request*, (2) the *Address*, and (3) the *Reason*.

(1) the *Request*

David begins this Psalm from an unexpected place during his life. As he makes this *request* to God something appears to be very different than at other times. Look at the first words. The *request* says, “**Preserve me.**” What does this word “*preserve*” mean? In a general sense of the word, it means to guard or to be aware of somebody’s circumstances in order to attend to them. But what is different about this situation?

There is no emergency present. For example, Psalms 3, 34, and 51 begin by prefacing some sort of trouble; whether trouble with Absalom, Saul, or adultery. However, Psalm 16 begins with no such sign or indication of trouble. The tone of this Psalm is not set to a blue note of despair, distress, or disaster, such as Psalm 42. Is it okay to call upon God during times of resting in His blessing and beg for His care. That appears to be exactly what David is doing.

(2) the *Address*

Next, David’s *request* moves to an *address* to God. He says, “**O God.**” This is a simple *address* to the Lord. Yet, this simple *address* still acknowledges something. This simple *address* acknowledges man’s need and misery. And, so David humbles himself in the presence of God as one standing in need of the care of God, even during times of blessings.

(3) the *Reason*.

Putting the *request* and the *address* together we read, “**Preserve me, O God.**” Doesn’t this beg the question? Why would God preserve David or anybody else? There is one simple *reason* laid out here in the text. David says, “**for in thee do I put my trust.**” Notice the *reason*, it is not superfluous. The *reason* is not found in David but in God. It is in God that David confesses to have placed all his care as only God can do.

Application - Resting in the Care of God

Beloved, let us look at the question again. At what time do you rest in the care of God; only during emergencies or all the time? David begins this Psalm during a time absent of despair, distress, or disaster; any emergency. Isn't this a great example of thankfulness to God? Resting in the care of God includes the good times. Otherwise, how will you rest in God for all your care during the bad times?

You see, the priority in many of our lives is backwards; that is, first an emergency then resting in the care of God. But it should be, first resting in the care of God then dealing with emergencies as they come.

This is evidently seen in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. From His holy conception to His birth throughout His ministry and eventual death on the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ delighted in doing the Father's will. Surrounded with despair, distress, and disaster, real emergencies, the Lord denounced His own will. In Matthew 26:42, the Lord Jesus placed all His care under the protection of the Father. Scripture says, **“He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”**

Did the Father preserve His Son? Was He raised from the dead? Yes, Indeed! Now, Jesus has removed every excuse to not rest in the care of the Father. You have every privilege through Jesus Christ to *request* His protection as long as you trust in Jesus Christ.

Main Point 2 - *Because God alone preserves, you must rest in Comfort (16:3-7).*

In the next part of this golden Psalm, David explains his comfort. This is such a comfort that he can rest in doing good. It is from this position of comfort that David can assertively *caution* other believers against pagans. Furthermore, David can rest in the fact that God means everything to him. Let us look at (1) the *Affirmation*, (2) the *Caution*, (3) the *Enjoyment*, and (4) the *Intimate Instruction* of comfort.

(1) the *Affirmation*

Look at what David says in verse 2 and 3. Verse 2 is an *affirmation* and verse 3 explains the *affirmation*. Where is the comfort of David here in this *affirmation*? Please look at verse 2. He says, **“O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord.”** This is such an intimate comfort of David. How so?

Well, the first word is tricky but reveals the quality of David's comfort. What do other translations do with this word? The LEB says, "Oh my soul." The MSG says, "I say to God." The OJB says, "I said unto Hashem." The ESV says, "I say to the LORD." This word is a verb, the verb to speak or to say. And it is feminine. David is not a woman. So, what is this? The verb is used according to John Calvin in a poetic manner. It is an intimate way of indicating the soul. So, David *affirms* the comfort of God from the inner man. Let's hear this again: "**O my soul.**" Now apply it. "**O my soul**" God is my only comfort in life and in death!

(2) the *Caution*

In order to set up the *caution* contained in verse 3, look back at verse 2 for a moment. David says, "**My goodness extendeth not to thee.**" Basically, David said that there is no good thing that stands over, above, or instead of God. God is unchangeably good (James 1:17). Indeed, God fills heaven and earth (Psalm 139:7). And, Jesus Christ is better than the prophets, better than Moses, better than the priesthood, and is exalted above every name (Phil. 2:9). It is foolish to say that there is good that stands over and beyond, and above, or in the place of God. So, what is the *caution*?

Do you involve yourself with false worship and false religion? Then, if this is true, you must read verse 4 and get this into your head and into your heart. Verse 4 says, "**Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, Nor take up their names into my lips.**" The *caution*? Weakness, sorrow, and pain. You will be the cause of your own disadvantage, destruction, trouble, and discomfort.

(3) the *Enjoyment* of comfort.

God must be your *enjoyment* for lasting comfort. Look at verse 5 with me. How does David *enjoy* God? In summary, the people of God belong to Him and He to them, are sustained by Him, and defended by the strength of the Almighty. David says, "**The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot.**" God is the portion belonging to David. David was the youngest among his brothers. Thus, he expected no inheritance. But, his portion, his inheritance was God Himself. Let me illustrate.

One man gave this simple math problem in order to illustrate *enjoyment* and comfort. He said, "Pretend that you have \$20. Pretend that your wife has \$5. She has \$25." If you do not understand this, then you need to talk to the Elders about *enjoyment* and comfort in marriage. Likewise, there

is nothing to be found in false gods. Nothing instead of, beside, above, or beyond the King of kings and Lord of lords.

(4) the *Intimate Instruction*

There is another part of this *enjoyment of comfort*. Look at verse 7. Scripture points out the intimate instruction of God on behalf of the saints. Scripture says, **“I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.”** The word here in the text, “*reins*”, can be translated “*kidneys*.” That might sound strange. But this means the most sensitive part and vital part of the person is being instructed by God.

Application - Resting in the Comfort from God

Beloved, David knew these two things about the comfort of God. *First*, it meant forever. *Second*, it meant salvation. According to Psalm 73:26, although the flesh fails there is something else to look at for comfort. Scripture says, **“My flesh and my heart faileth: But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”** Furthermore, Psalm 116:13 says, **“I will take the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the Lord.”** The flesh will fail, but God promises the comfort of entire salvation.

Look at it this way, namely, being a child of God. Over the last several months, a number of people have called me or emailed me and expressed with coffee-laden-enthusiasm just how God is instructing them right now about an issue of extreme importance to them. Scripture and praises to God was pouring off their lips. Now, isn't that comforting? God does not waste time with the children of the Devil (Heb. 12:6). But, God instructs His own to comfortably enjoy Him.

You must look to God, not with the quantity of words but with the quality of an intimate resting in His comfort. From deep within, *affirm* the Gospel everywhere. For instance, during the time of the Reformation many Christians were burned at the stake. The inquisitors said to the Christians, *“Be converted - be converted or you will die in the name of the devil.”* What was their answer? They said, *“No, we will die like Christians, and for the truth.”* Then they sang, *“O Domine Jesu! Fili David! Miserere nostri!”* *“O Lord Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us!”* On July 1, 1523, the first martyrs of the Reformation laid down their lives for the Gospel while they rested in God for ultimate protection. Likewise, the Lord is yours and you are His through the blood of Christ. It is forever and it is salvation. Rest in this blessing for eternal comfort.

Main Point 3 - *Because God alone preserves, you must rest in Confidence (16:8-11).*

Unbelievers call the confidence of believers in Christ either vain hope, speculation, superstition, or arrogance. What is confidence? There are different ways to explain this word. But the word applied to believers means the guarantee of every blessing of God. But what happens if and when somebody is blinded to those things which establish confidence, namely, the presence of God, the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, and the perpetual blessings of God? Well, they will not be protected or preserved by God. On the other hand, David shows us our confidence in (1) the *Constant Presence*, (2) the *Implied Delight*, and (3) the *Perpetual Blessings* of God.

(1) the Constant Presence

Notice what decision David made in verse 8. He says, **“I have set the Lord always before me.”** The verb David uses highlights the *constant presence* of the Lord. The verb is being used to indicate an ongoing repeated action. The affect of this is David’s determination to make God always, over and over, *constantly* before Him in his thoughts, words, and deeds.

For example, my friend Dan calls himself number three. That sounds weird, doesn’t it? He says, *“God is first, then you, then me.”* In this way, the devotion to God is always *constant*.

(2) the Implied Delight

But, there is another affect as a result of confidence in God. David makes two interrelated factual statements. Look at verse 9 and 10. Verse 9 says, **“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: My flesh also shall rest in hope.”** And verse 10 says, **“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption”**

First, he says, **“My flesh also shall rest in hope”** And, **“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.”** Although David will eventually die, he will immediately be taken up to the Lord and wait for the resurrection of the body. In essence, this is the same confidence that Job had. In Job 19:25-27, the patriarch said:

For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, And *that* he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And *though* after my skin worms destroy this *body*, Yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, And mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

Second, he says, “**Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.**” Despite the curse of the cross, Jesus Christ bore the penalty for sin. What proof is there of this? The resurrection from the dead. If His work had not been perfect and complete, there would have been no resurrection and no confidence in the Gospel.

(3) the *Perpetual Blessings* of God.

Therefore, the resting in God for His protection is met with this confidence, namely, *perpetual blessings* of God. How do we know this? Look at 1 Corinthians 15:20. Pay attention to what Jesus is called: “**But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.**” Christ is the first from the dead. Let me explain.

Application - Resting in the Confidence of God

Have you ever heard of a 401-k investment? You know, your employer gives to your retirement. Usually, they will match your contribution. Have you ever heard of a “401-Dave”? A “401-Dave” is a term Dave Ramsey uses. You see, each of his children were told that mom and dad would match their investment for their first car. The first born hesitated, but eventually had confidence in the mom and dad. The second born child saw what had been done and invested twice as much.

Like wise, we have seen it done. Christ is raised from the dead. Christ was first; the Old Testament predicted this and the New Testament verifies the resurrection.

The Conclusion

The fact that God preserves is seen throughout the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. He promises to protect those who trust in Him. He verified every blessing in Christ Jesus, even your future resurrection. We need not doubt the word of God. Beloved, Psalm 16 teaches the care, the comfort, and the confidence of resting in God who preserves you through Jesus Christ. Amen.