

# Secure in the Lord

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[ 0 : 00 ] For those of you who don't know me, my name is Jesse. I am one of the pastors here. And we have the privilege of preaching today. We're pivoting from our prayer series. We're gonna go through three Psalms.

If you have a Bible, go ahead and turn to Psalm 16. That's what we're gonna be looking at today. If you don't have a Bible, they'll be up on the screens as well. The verses will be. So we're doing three Psalms over the next three Sundays.

We're gonna then do Easter together. And then that's the first Sunday in April. And then after that, we're gonna kick off a series going through the book of Colossians, okay? So you may be asking why Psalms and why only three?

Well, first of all, Psalms is 150 chapters. That would be a lot to go through. But often the Psalms, they're thematic. And so to kind of go through chapter by chapter, you'd just be getting through a lot of the, you'd be circling back to a lot of similar themes.

And so the Psalms are important. We realize it's important. So strategically, and we think it's strategic, hopefully, as an eldership team, is that we want to just sprinkle them every so often throughout the year.

[ 1 : 02 ] And here's why. We believe that the Psalms are important, right? They teach us how to connect with God in every circumstance of life. What we love about the Psalms is the Psalms, they are, when you read them, they are raw, and they are real, and yet they are reverent, and sometimes all at the same time.

They guide us to God, no matter what our circumstance in life may be. So if you're suffering, there's a Psalm for that. There's a Psalm for many different types of suffering. If you're seeing in your life God coming through for you in amazing ways, there's Psalms for that.

If you're wondering what words are worthy for worship to this wonderful, amazing, glorious God, there is Psalms for that, to give you words for that. If you're in a season where you're just like, man, God, I think you unfriended me, where are you at?

There's Psalms for that as well. If you're wanting your enemies to die a thousand deaths in the third circle of hell, guess what? There's a Psalm for that too, all right? If you're feeling convicted of sin and wondering what it looks like to repent, there are Psalms for those seasons as well.

Psalms, what they do is they give us a window into life with God, no matter what we may be facing. It's why God's people were saturated with the Psalms, even Jesus and his apostles were.

[ 2 : 17 ] It's why the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament are the Psalms. They're a window, a window into the Psalms is a window into life with God.

So let's read Psalm 16 together. It says this, Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, you are my Lord. I have no good apart from you.

As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. 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.

The Lord is my portion, my chosen portion and my cup. You hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

I bless the Lord who gives me counsel. In the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand. I shall not be shaken.

[ 3 : 20 ] Therefore, my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol or let your Holy One see corruption.

You make known to me the path of life. In your presence, there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. This is God's word.

Lord. So we see this psalm open up with these words, preserve me, O God. And it looks like the psalm is about to launch into, Lord, deliver me. I need help. I am in trouble right now. But in fact, this is not a psalm of deliverance. The psalmist is actually writing from an understanding that life as it is and life as we face it and the life we live in always has the potential for struggle or attack or failure or a temptation to sin, to fall away, to chase after false gods and idols. And because these are always present possibilities, the psalmist takes a posture of confidence in God's covenant faithfulness, which means he's looking at God and he's just saying, you are with me and because you are with me and for me, you are the God who provides and protects and supplies good things.

[ 4 : 30 ] This is an everyday kind of psalm. Whether life is good or whether life is bad or whether life is, as the young folks say these days, whether life is just mid or low-key mid, whatever that is.

So even when there is nothing terrible to lament of, which is next week's sermon, whether there's nothing spectacular to celebrate and maybe the hottest thing breaking on the news is simply traffic or Farmer Bud's prize watermelon.

It's easy to forget about God when life lacks suffering or wonder, but the psalmist is saying to us, don't do that. Press into God even when it seems you have no need to.

You and I, we need to remember that God is our refuge when we don't need him to be, where it feels like we don't need him to be. We need to remember that the Lord is our only good even when things around us seem to be going well or seem to be just fine.

And when we remember those things, when we keep that part of God in front of us, that he is our refuge and our only good is found in him and he's our provider and all these things, it makes it a lot easier for us to remember that in the hard times, when the hard times hit us.

[ 5 : 50 ] Consider Israel's history. It's often during times of peace where they went, things got bad for them. Like they started to drift into idolatry and injustice and act like the other nations around them, what God didn't want for them.

It's easy to forget God when life feels like it's on autopilot and there's no turbulence. We don't often think of him being Lord over our lives when things are going well enough.

We might even forget that we have indeed 10,000 reasons to stop and remember that God is good as Lord over our lives. Verse two, the psalmist says, I say to the Lord, you are my Lord.

I have no good apart from you. Notice the different spellings when he says, he first, he says, I say to the Lord and then he goes on to call him, he is my Lord. Why is one in caps and one not in caps? Well, there's a reason for that. The all caps, one means Yahweh. He's talking, he's invoking the name of God, the covenant name of God that he gave to Israel to know him by.

[ 6 : 58 ] In that first verse in Psalms, if you remember, he's praying to God. He refers to God, a generic word that is categorically true but is very just like, it could mean any kind of deity but now he's saying that there's an important progression here that he goes from praying to just a higher being in general to praying to a very particular one with a very particular name.

Well, why does he do that? You might say, well, what's a big deal about a name? Actually, everything. Know and remember who your God really is.

Yahweh, that word, it means the self-existent God. It's how he've revealed himself to his people. It means he's the one who has always been.

He is the uncreated. He is the eternal. He is the God who had no beginning and therefore he's the creator of everyone and everything. And when you think about the Canaanite gods of the nations surrounding Israel, they were not like this at all.

They were regional deities. They had a limited authority that was just over the land that the nation who worshipped them occupied. That was it. But the Israelite God was different.

[ 8 : 06 ] He claimed to be superior and greater to those gods in every way. He was the God over Israel, yes, and he was the God over their land, but he was also claimed to be the God over the whole earth and to be a God who had lived in the highest heavens above and the heavens above them.

So there was really no limit to this rule, his rule. He is truly the Lord in all caps, but also he is the Lord. That second spelling there we see in verse two.

And that is another name for God in the Hebrew. That name is Adonai. That's what they called him. And that is a title of God and it confers covenant faithfulness, supreme lordship, and sovereign right to rule.

Now I want to say this at the time that Psalm 16 was written. Those names of God, they were associated with the actions of God recorded throughout Israel's history. They look back and they could see in Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus, in Numbers and Deuteronomy.

They get to see all the mighty acts of God and all that he did. And for Israel, Yahweh Adonai was the centerpiece and master of the story of history and they got to be a part in it.

[ 9 : 15 ] Particularly as his people, saved by him and separated unto him. And their very existence as a people, their very existence as a nation was due to this God's sovereign choosing and calling of them and his merciful provision and sustaining of them.

When they look back and they saw his mighty deliverance from Egypt, his benevolent inheritance and allotment of land as they came into the land for every tribe and family of Israel.

And then they look and they see his gracious patience with them through their cycles of apostasy as it was recorded in the book of Judges where they would, now that they had the land, they went on to forsake the one true God and they begin to worship the false idols of the nations around them, forgetting them and living not according to the law that God had given them but going their own way.

That common refrain in Judges, everyone did what was right in their own eyes. But God didn't give up on them. He was merciful. He would discipline them and he would get them to a point where they would cry out and they say, you know, things are bad enough.

We remember that you are a God who does good things to us. Come and save us. And God would step in and save them and he would deliver them. So when the psalmist says here, Yahweh, you are my Adonai, that really meant something.

[ 10 : 30 ] It was a confession of faith. He says, I have no good apart from you. That's to say, without you, without you being my God, without your influence, without you caring for me, watching over me, saving me, sustaining me, what would I be missing out on?

And how terrible would life be? In verse three, he goes on to say this. As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight.

But the sorrows of those who run after another God, they shall multiply. Those sorrows multiply.

Their drink offerings of blood, I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.

And this psalmist, because he's filled his heart and his mind with God's goodness and glory, it does two things to him and it does two things to us. It makes us delight in God's delights and it causes us to renounce what grieves him.

The writer begins by rejoicing in the saints, right? The saints in the land, that Hebrew word means the holy ones. These ones that who are faithful to love and trust and obey God, worshiping him alone.

[ 11 : 42 ] They're the ones that in whom he can see God's glory and his otherness and that holiness factor. The character and nature of Yahweh Adonai is reflected in them in their attitudes and in their actions and he looks at them and he says, man, the excellencies of God beams out of these excellent ones.

They are the ones that have stories of God's faithfulness in their lives. It is something that we desperately need in our own lives today. It's why we have such a high value of community at City Grace.

It's why we say, man, it's important to live at the speed of relationship. It's important to spend time amongst the saints and learning and listening to the God stories of his goodness and his glory that's in their lives.

The God, we need to know this. The psalmist says, hey, the God who saved his people out of Egypt long ago is the God who's at work among the saints in the land today. That's what he's saying and we need that too.

We don't need just like, man, the God that saved us long ago, well, where's he at today? We need to know these stories and guess what? They're out there. They're amongst you guys.

[ 12 : 50 ] Philip and I have been thinking about how do we do that? We know they're out there but how do we get these stories to be shared among us? And so he built out a new webpage on our website called Stories. You can go and you click on it to the navigation menu and it gives you a chance to get on there and to share your God story with us.

So we get to see and delight in what God is doing among the saints in the land. If you just want for us to hear it as pastors, thank you, but there's also an option if you're interested. If you say, hey, be

open to share this with anybody else, we'll get those stories out there.

We'll share it in some way, shape, or form. But we want to do that because we are a community of people. We are people looking at each other excited and rejoicing and delighting in the states of the land who we know God has been working in and God has been working through and we need to hear those things.

We need to be reminded, you know what? God is still among us, active and working. Otherwise, if we don't do that, you know what we tend to look at? We tend to just see the failures. You know why?

Because they are so obvious. So often, God's works rarely get shared, but the sin among us seems to get all the press. Now, I'm not saying we should ignore sin.

[13:58] That's a terrible idea. That's not what I'm saying, but, and we should grieve it like the psalmist does here in verse four, right? He says, those who run after false hope and false saviors, they multiply their sorrows.

We know that to be true. We don't want to do those things, but let's not ignore that, but let's also delight in what God delights in, right? While we are renouncing what he abhors. And that's the proper response when God is your Lord and your Lord, your Yahweh Adonai.

We need to be those that delight in what God is doing in the lives of others. And we also need to remember him in our own lives, what he is doing in our own lives, who he is in our own lives.

And that's what the psalmist pivots to here. In verse five, the Lord is my chosen portion and my cup. You hold my lot. The lines for me have fallen in pleasant places.

Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the Lord. He gives me counsel. In the night also, my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand.

[15:09] I shall not be shaken. So the psalmist, he just finishes renouncing any allegiance to other gods, saying, I'm not gonna be like those people that do that. I'm gonna not lift their name up to my lips.

I'm gonna lift up my name, my allegiance, my sole allegiance is to Yahweh alone. He says, you are my chosen portion and my cup. And then he goes on to confess the abundance and security he has because of God.

And we would be wise to do the same. You and I, we need to declare how God is our sufficient provision and security. We need to say that. We need to say that. We need to pray that out loud so it can go into our ears and back into our hearts.

We need to declare those things. Even if we are by ourselves, we need to declare those things.

There is something interesting here that the psalmist points out.

He says, you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. And what he is doing, he is connecting his present with the past.

[16:18] When Israel came into the land to possess it, there was an allotment that happened and every tribe and family of Israel was, allotment was determined by casting lots.

And when you're like, what is a lot, Jesse? Well, the closest thing we kind of have to it is rolling dice. And Israel would use, they would cast the lots and they would, it would be seen as God's divine choice, sovereign choice for certain matters.

One of them was this allotment of the land. So the allotment in the land that the psalmist is currently living on, even though it was given centuries ago, he is saying, you know what?

Where I am, this is God's sovereign choice for me. This small place in this great earth, God has set aside for me and my family to keep and to cultivate.

And it is a beautiful inheritance. He is saying the grass isn't greener anywhere else. He isn't coveting his neighbor's better view of Jerusalem or larger boundary line.

[17:23] He isn't looking looking at another tribe that gets to be closer to the Jordan River because they get to fish and have boats. He looks and he says, you know what?

My God has given me his best. And this psalmist is satisfied in Yahweh's choice for him. But, think about this.

even in exile, God's people prayed and sang this psalm, even when they were out of the land. And then it took on a different meaning in that context.

It wasn't physical boundary lines, but God himself. He was their very provision. And that means something for us today. Your spouse, your friends, your kids, your house, your cars, your job, your church family, the list can go on and on and on.

Those are your boundary lines. The life that you get to live, those are your boundary lines. Would you stop and say they've fallen for me in pleasant places?

[ 18 : 25 ] Would you say they are beautiful? Are you pining for something else? Do you wish you could trade up for better? You know, it's interesting, one of the big no-nos the laws given to Israel is do not move a boundary stone.

That was a big deal. Moving a boundary, because what you were saying is, God, what you have given me is not enough. I don't like this. Where are you at?

Could you stop and say and take stock and be like, you know what, Lord? The grass isn't greener. I can look at all the problems in my life, but you know what? I'm going to stop and say, what you have given me, my boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

The psalmist is leading us into faith in who God is and satisfaction in his sufficient blessings. But also, he's confident.

He's confident in a God who is going to keep him from falling and so should we. We should be confident in a God even though, like, we can look and say, man, my boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

[ 19 : 34 ] also, I can trust that this God is going to keep me from falling, keep me from failure. The psalmist goes on to bless the Lord for his wise guidance over his life in verse 7.

He believes the Lord's counsel will keep him from folly and destruction. Though our hearts may tend toward more than our lot and our portion, though at times we may feel like our boundary lines are wanting and meager, or in the night when fear and doubt creep in, we can stop and we can remember, no, it's the Lord who instructs our hearts towards what is true.

We can remember that. And as the psalmist says, he is at my right hand. What does that mean? Well, that is, that's a little idiom that is just saying, the psalmist is saying, the Lord is next to me and he is in the place of my support and my protection.

He is the mighty God who is able to support and to protect me. And that is the source of the psalmist's security. The assurance that God's wisdom and support and protection is going to be with them.

And so he can confidently say, because though he is ever before me, I will not be shaken. And what happens when you're secure in the Lord? Verse nine happens when you're secure in the Lord.

[ 20 : 49 ] Therefore, my heart is glad. My whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure. Life begins to feel light again.

When Jesus said, my yoke is easy and my burden is light, that's what that feels like. When you are following him, when you're obeying him, when you're submitting to the lordship of Jesus, it proves to be that just like he said it would.

And in that place where it's like, man, life is good and life is easy, we can start to look ahead with some assured hope that no matter what we face, the Lord will keep us firmly in his presence.

Nothing can separate us from God. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing means nothing. The psalmist in verse 10 says, for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol or let your holy one see corruption.

To see how radical of a statement that is, we have to understand what Sheol is in ancient Israelite theology because that was the place that was absent of God's presence.

[ 22 : 00 ] Sheol was the grave. Sheol was death. It was the opposite of life and living. And again, we have to understand that in the Hebrew cosmos, there was three places. There was the heavens where God's most manifest presence was, where he was ruling, where he was reigning.

There was no sin. There was no corruption in there. All things were good. And then there was the earth, right? And God's presence was still in the earth. He was still there, but there was corruption there. There was imperfections. God's presence wasn't as manifested.

There was only certain places that his Shekinah glory, his very manifest presence, his most evidence of his glory and his holiness. There was particular small places where that could be, the Holy of Holies, where the temple was.

It was one of those places. And then below, you have heaven's earth and then below the earth, underneath the earth was Sheol. And that was the grave.

That was underneath the ground or in the deep, underneath the sea. And that was darkness. That was absolute separation from God's presence. That was not the place you wanted to be. What is interesting is at the time of this writing of this particular psalm, Israel had no theology of life after death.

[ 23 : 10 ] There wasn't this idea of like, oh, when I die, I get to be eternal life with God. There wasn't that. It was like, when you die, you go to the grave. When you die, Sheol swallows you up.

So you know what? I need to enjoy life with God, life in the present, as much as I can. There was no sense of resurrection. Only later did God begin to reveal this idea of resurrection through the prophets.

But here, that mystery had not yet been revealed by God. So this psalmist, what he is saying is, God, I hope in you that you will sustain me so that I can live long in the land.

Another place in the psalms, it says, I will walk with the Lord in the land of the living. And that is true. Lord, I want to live long in this land and walk with you in the land of the living.

That's all he had. That's all the hope he had for this life. But later on, it became clear that this psalm and what the psalmist had penned, even though he didn't understand it, began to mean something else entirely.

[ 24 : 15 ] The apostles Paul and Peter referred to that verse to explain its fulfillment in Jesus' resurrection. Right? That old adage of, in the Old Testament, the new is concealed, and in the New Testament, what has been, the old has been revealed.

It fits well. The resurrection of hope, of verse 10, was concealed until it was finally revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Though the psalmist had a great hope from God to live long in the land, for us, we see that there's even greater hope to hope in here.

Jesus was not abandoned to Sheol. God's Holy One did not let his flesh see corruption. And by faith in Christ Jesus, that is true for us as well.

But what does that mean? What does that mean? One, it means that we get to live forever, but those who are alive forever, firm and secure in his presence, we get to enjoy now living in God with confidence.

We get to enjoy his presence now living with him, and we get to look ahead with confidence that is going to be true forevermore. We get to be the ones that know that God will always be with us.

[ 25 : 28 ] That's an amazing thing. I would argue that's the greatest news you could ever hear, and here's why it's the greatest news you could ever hear, because in his presence is life without lack. The psalmist goes on to say in verse 11, man, there is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore, eternal pleasures.

On this side of heaven, we get a taste of God's goodness. And in a sense, there is a fullness to that experience. But we experience that fullness in a very limited way because we have very limited hearts and minds and capabilities of understanding and perceiving that.

Yet one day, we're going to cast off all these limitations. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians, right now, we see but through a glass dimly. But then, we will see face to face.

Then, we will behold the fullness of his glory, the fullness of his majesty. We're going to look upon our Savior. We're going to look upon the glory and the presence of Yahweh Adonai, the uncreated, self-existent, unchanging, all-powerful, covenant-faithful, Father, Redeemer, Spirit, all-sufficient, all-satisfying, all-powerful, all-wise, all-good.

We will look upon him and we will declare his glories forever and ever and ever. Truly, then, we can say and agree with this psalm, our lines have fallen in pleasant places and we have a beautiful inheritance.

[ 27 : 05 ] We are those who are secure in the Lord who is our Lord. Amen? Amen. As the band comes up and we look to respond, in a moment, we're going to take communion.

I want to say to you, if you're here and you are not yet a follower of Jesus, I'm so glad you got to hear who this Jesus is and what his plan has been from all time.

This beautiful redemption that he worked that for all of us, we are going to go to the grave but you don't have to stay there. You don't have to stay in that darkness and that separation from, the eternal separation from God.

But your only hope isn't to do better and try harder. Your only hope isn't like, oh, let me cross my fingers. God has made a way. He's revealed the pathway of life and it's Jesus Christ and faith in him.

He came and he lived a perfect life that you couldn't live in obedience to God. He came and died a death that you deserved in your place so that you can experience forgiveness of sins and to be reconciled to God and to know him to be able to live in his presence and resurrection life and that is what is on offer for you today and I'm saying to you, enter into that life with Jesus right now through

faith.

[ 28 : 17 ] There's gonna be a prayer on the screen for you to pray if that is you and you can do that as we who are followers of Jesus are going to come to the communion table and I wanna prepare us as followers of Jesus for this moment.

As you come to the table, the communion table is many things but you know what it is? Ultimately, it is a meal of thanksgiving and celebration and yes, we are coming and it commemorates our Savior's suffering and his body broken and his blood shed for us and the bread and in the cup that we drink and it reminds us that because of his death we get his life.

This is, we get life in him, resurrection life in him that he secured for us and our security is in him and what he has done and so when you come, come with thanksgiving.

Come with celebration in your Savior. Let me pray. Heavenly Father, Jesus our Savior, we thank you for your goodness over us.

We can truly be those who can stop and say our boundary lines truly have fallen for us in pleasant places. Lord, help us to come as we come to the table to be reminded of all that you are.

[ 29 : 34 ] Help us to celebrate and give thanks as we eat your body broken for us and drink the cup that represents your blood shed for us. Thank you.

Amen. Amen.