

"Unwavering Hope of Resurrection"

Psalm 16

All of us are fully aware of what day this is on the calendar, Easter Sunday. But on the Jewish calendar today, the first Sunday after Passover, was also a special day. According to Lev. 23:9-14 the people were to celebrate the early harvest of grain (barley) by offering as a sacrifice the first sheaf. The priest would wave the sheaf to God as an offering as a symbol of your pledge that by giving God the first and the best to Him you were trusting Him to provide the rest of the harvest, which you would celebrate 50 days later at Pentecost by giving God 2 loaves of bread made with the new grain (wheat) and an animal as thanksgiving for God's provision. Each Jewish holy day foreshadowed events in the life of Christ. Jesus is the Passover Lamb. Jesus is the unleavened bread of life sacrifices to God. Jesus is the First fruits of the resurrection, guaranteeing a future harvest (because He was God's first and best) of saved souls (Pentecost) who will also experience resurrection one day.

The apostle Paul used the First fruits analogy to prove our own future resurrection when he wrote in 1 Cor. 15:20

²⁰ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

The resurrection of Jesus guarantees that all those who believe in God's promises will also be resurrected. Even David believed this, as we read in Ps. 16. Ps. 16 was used by both Peter and Paul (which we'll see shortly) that Jesus' resurrection was prophesied in the Old Testament and secures our own resurrection because Jesus paid the price for our sins to be forgiven.

The belief in our own resurrection because of our faith in Jesus' resurrection changes the way we think and live. Psalm 16, a poem/song of David's, shows us that even he had unwavering hope in a future resurrection. And this psalm shows how his view on life in the present and in the future was impacted by the hope of resurrection. Is your life impacted by the hope of your own resurrection based on faith in Jesus?

How does an unwavering hope in our own resurrection impact and change the way we live now? David ends the psalm on this hope of resurrection but the whole psalm permeates with that hope which helps us see how resurrection hope changes the way we think and live. He began the psalm with a prayer of confidence,

Keep me safe [or preserve my life], O God, for in you I take refuge.

"Keep me safe" implies an acknowledgment that God has already been keeping him safe. We don't know what the context of this psalm is. No enemies are mentioned. No scenario is mentioned. Just David and God. If David wrote this while running from Saul or engaged in battle (a few psalms were like this) then he is praying God will get him out of a jam again. If he is praying this in a peaceful season during his reign he is not taking for granted that God is the one who gives him peace and

meets his needs. He knows God and knows God secures his life. When we have that kind of confidence in God it

Gives us Confidence to Pray in the Present **(16:1)**

Growing in God gives us confidence in prayer. Over time we experience answers to prayer. Rescue from situations (and ourselves!). Meeting of needs. Healing of bodies, healing of relationships. People saved. And the only explanation was praying to God. So David prays for continued preservation of his life at the time. His unwavering hope in his future gave him confidence to pray in the present. If God promises to preserve my life for all eternity then certainly He can preserve/keep me safe in the present. And should God choose not to heal in the present, then my future is still secure, just no longer here on earth. God was David's refuge; his safe place. Who better to place our trust in?

As David prayed he said to God,

² *"You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing."*

³ *As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.*

⁴ *The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods.*

I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.

Prayer has a way of clearing our minds. Sometimes we come to God in prayer afraid or confused and we sometimes pray things that are what we want. And yet, as often happens in our talking to God we reorient our minds about what is true. And we reflect again on God's assurances to us. So again, another sign of unwavering hope in our eternal security is it ...

Opens our Eyes to View Life from God's Perspective **(16:2-6)**

Even Jesus experienced this in Gethsemane. He was afraid and asked God to take the cup (of suffering) away from Him but then as He no doubt thought through the whole plan of God and what God was going to do through His suffering He said 'Not my will but yours be done. David talks to God, Asks God to continue to keep him alive or at least safe because he wants to live but also accomplish God's will for his life. But ultimately he says '*I have nothing and am nothing apart from God.*' '*Apart from You I have no good thing*' is the flipside of saying 'You God, are the only true good in my life'. Take away all our possessions and securities, we still have God. Nothing here lasts, but God lasts forever. He said the same thing in Ps. 23:1,

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing.

With similar confidence in God's unwavering future hope, Asaph would write in Ps. 73,

²³ *Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.*

²⁴ *You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.*

²⁵ *Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.*

²⁶ *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

There are four things here that helps us see God's perspective on life through our unwavering hope in the future;

Our relationship with God is most valuable (v.2)

We have nothing without God. It's true after death, it's true in life. God is our all. Without Him where do we go for strength, for hope, for direction? He said 'I say to Yahweh (my covenant/promise keeping God), you are my Adonai (Lord, master) and you look after all my needs.

David also reminded himself (and us) that ...

Our relationship with God's people is to be treasured (v.3)

If you feel like self-isolation and lack of human contact is getting to you, read the psalms. David spent 15 years running from Saul for his life. Hiding in the wilderness. Isolating in caves. Avoiding people to stay alive. If David is running from Saul at this time he may very well be reminiscing about going to the tabernacle to worship with God's people. Missing out on fellowship. And that experience taught him, even if he is secure in Jerusalem here, that he didn't take his godly relationships for granted. He delighted to be with the saints 'in the land' referring to God's people.

I hope we are all learning that fellowship is a treasure we don't want to lose. That even online is helpful and we are looking forward to when we can get back together and see each other face to face. I trust this pandemic is helping all of us value each other more.

David continues to show us he has God's perspective on life as he compares what he has to how the unsaved live:

⁴ *The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods.
I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.*

As he looked at how the ungodly worship self-made idols and pour their life and resources into that pursuit,

His desires for the world decreased (as should ours) (v.4)

I have told the story before of my dad's homemade spaghetti. My dad was forced to be our cook when my mom's multiple sclerosis grew worse. Dad was an old school Dutchman trying to make North American food for 5 hungry growing boys. His spaghetti included rice instead of noodles and tomato paste instead of tomato sauce. Dad's idea of homemade pizza was Buying those pizza in can kits with frozen pizza doughs you threw in an oven. Yes we had lots of cauliflower and broccoli but no we had never heard of cheese sauce. And my dad's pancakes were fried to a crisp and the size of your plate. But we didn't know any better so we ate them.

As we grew older and began to eat at other people's houses and learned about real spaghetti, real pancakes, real pizza and other things like cheese sauce, our tastes and desires for the old way of life drastically decreased as we experienced new tastes. And so it is with God. "*Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him.*" David looked at the unsaved running after false gods and compared it to what he had with the true God and his appetite for God only increased. He also saw that their way of life only adds 'Sorrow upon sorrow'. There is only a future of pain and suffering without God. But with God there is true joy and peace.

And as David meditated on his life in vv.7-8, he recalled

⁵ *LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure.*

⁶ *The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.*

'Portion', 'lot', 'cup', 'boundary lines' are all Old Testament phrases that speak of God's sovereign working in David's life. As he looks at his life through God's perspective (knowing he has a secure finish means he has a secure present) he sees that ...

Our experiences in life have purpose (vv.5-6)

All those terms refer to the circumstances God led David to and in. He can look back at the 'lot' and 'cup' and 'portions' God dealt to him and see how now God's 'boundary lines' [the situation he's in now] had God's hand all over them. And when we see God's hand all over our life we see God had a purpose in all our cups, lots and portions. Because God has our future secure then He must be directing us in the present toward that future. That means we can rest and find peace even when the cup involves difficulty and pain as Jesus' did. And when we have God's sovereign perspective on our life, that

Encourages us to be Unashamed about God **(16:7-8)**

⁷ *I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.*

⁸ *I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*

David's unwavering hope in God's future promises and present presence enables him to be vocal about God. He has listened to and obeyed God's counsel through His Word and as a result has put God first in his life. He has seen and continues to trust God who is at his right hand. Remember from Ps. 110 that right hand means honoured and reigns with. David's desire was to do nothing without God. He vows to 'bless God'. Which means to speak well about Him. David has been ministered to by God and His Word, knowing God is with Him and confidently declares 'I will not be shaken' (a phrase that appears nine times in the Psalms). A phrase that means in the midst of shaking or unsettling one will remain firm, unmovable.

Again, David's unwavering hope in his secure future beyond the grave gives him confidence in prayer, helps him see life from God's eternal perspective and makes him bolder in witnessing. And resurrection hope also

Frees Us to Enjoy Life **(16:9-11)**

⁹ *Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, ¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*

¹¹ *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

David's understanding of life beyond death was not as advanced as ours simply because he lived pre-cross. Old Testament promises about the future of the godly often involve happiness in the Promised Land forever [which the New Testament further explains as two-fold; the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth ruling from Jerusalem which moves smoothly into the New Jerusalem on the New earth]. So David's words here are profound, probably even speaking beyond himself. Because as the

apostle Peter explains the resurrection at Pentecost in Acts 2 he quotes Ps. 16:9-11 applying it to Jesus when he says,

⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him: "I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope,

²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

²⁹ "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand ³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

David understood that death wasn't the end of life for the child of God. He knew somehow his flesh would dwell securely after death because God had made known to Him the path of life. What is that? Simply believing in God's promises by faith of His ongoing presence in this life and forever when life here ends. In your presence (David admitted back in v.8 that God was with him at David's right hand) and here in v.11 he looks forward to the day when he will be with God at His right hand.

Look at the connection of words here. Glad and rejoice are connected with the security of his body (which would die one day, so he is looking beyond death). Knowing the 'Path of life' results in fullness of joy now and pleasures at God's right hand forever.

As we celebrate an isolated Easter, it in no way diminishes our future hope. Jesus rose from the dead, the First fruits sacrifice to God, guaranteeing a future harvest of souls who will also be resurrected. If you have not placed your faith in Jesus, who secures a place in heaven for you if you accept that He paid the price for your sins, then you will experience the sorrow upon sorrow as David described for the ungodly who pursue the things this world chases after and find unsatisfying. Find secure hope now and forever by putting your trust in Jesus.

You and I who know Christ are experiencing an uncomfortable 'lot', 'cup' and 'portion' right now. While our lines may not be pleasant at the moment, we know God has a purpose in them and we remain unshaken because we know the path of life and we are experiencing joy even now because He is with us. Continue to pray with confidence. Keep looking at life from His perspective. Don't be ashamed to tell others about Him. Because He is your fullness of joy and eternal pleasures await us at His right hand.

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If you have any comments or questions about this message please contact us at olivet@rideau.net