

Knowing God is the Best Thing in Life

Psalm 16

Perhaps you’ve had an opportunity to share the gospel with someone and you clearly explain to them from the Bible that they are sinner who falls short of God’s glory and that Jesus died for their sins, rose from the dead proving He is the Son of God. And that if they put their faith in Jesus, confessing they are a sinner, they can know they will be in heaven when they die. But what if they say, that’s fine but what about now? Is faith in Jesus only a ticket to get out of hell or is there something more to it than that?

Or you’re talking with a friend about someone who many years ago used to go to church and they haven’t for years, and one of you makes the comment, ‘Well, they did make a decision for Christ when they were a kid, teen, etc.’?

Do we sometimes sell the gospel short by emphasizing eternity after we die and not emphasizing eternal life in the gospel now? Are we enjoying eternal life now and growing in our walk with God in such a way that we could easily rattle off 3 or 4 blessings to knowing God and Jesus by faith?

If we struggle to think of an answer to that question perhaps its because we’re not growing the way we should and we’re not enjoying our relationship with God as we should. That our minds are too focused on what we physically see, and not what we spiritually should be seeing by focusing our minds on things above. That’s been our theme for 2023:

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1-3)

In Psalm 16, David gives us a great framework for enjoying God now through our relationship with Him by faith alone, as we look forward to what’s ahead for us in the future. If you struggle to help unbelievers see the benefits of a relationship with God by faith in Jesus, or if you’re not experiencing God’s joy in your own life, even though you claim to know Him, then David will help us see more clearly what we have in God.

The Psalm is a trust psalm that begins with a prayer request for protection or preservation from a difficult situation, possibly even life-threatening. Yet as he meditates on the goodness of God, he finds the answer to his prayer.

Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. ² I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.”

“Keep me safe or preserve my life” refers to an unmentioned threat. Most of these dangers or problems are unmentioned so that we can identify with them and apply this to our own dilemmas. So many psalms speak of problems that the child of God faces and the need to turn to God in them. Which totally debunks the false gospel that proclaims a problem free life if you’re ‘walking wit God.’

So what does knowing God do for us? What benefits does faith in God through Jesus Christ give to us?

Knowing God Gives us Divine Help for our Earthly Problems **(16:1-4)**

We live in a world full of sin, surrounded by sinners, on a planet experiencing the curse of sin and with our own sin nature – we will have problems! David had a serious problem here. Where does he go for help? God. Why? Because he knows God by faith and knows that God is with Him.

David had made God his “refuge”, the place where he went to for comfort, encouragement and his problems. He went to God because God gave him the help he needed. He is with us always and invites us to come to Him to have our real needs met.

² *I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.”*

David gives a brief testimony. He says to Yahweh [LORD] refers to God’s covenant name, you are my Adonia [Lord], my Lord master.’ I relinquish control of my life from me as lord to the true Lord. We can’t solve our own problems. Having a relationship with God means I’m not left alone to solve my own problems. God invites us to pray because He wants to answer our prayers in ways that will help us mature in Jesus, not necessarily give us what we want. David often said that his help comes

From the Lord (vv.1-2)

Ps. 121:1 I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from

² *My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.*

Why go to God for help? Because He’s the Creator. He made everything and sustains everything. He has everything at His disposal that he can use to meet our needs. When we ask God to help us out in our difficulty He provides needs/ He gives us peace from anxiety. He calms our fears. Every ‘good’ thing we have is from God.

This is where our need to remain focused on seeing life through God’s eyes [‘things above’] is so crucial. When we don’t, we look around and see what we don’t have because our sinful nature is never satisfied – it can’t be. But when we see how God has blessed us, been with us, has done everything good for us in our life – we experience satisfaction and joy. Why? Because we’re made to only be satisfied through God.

Edd. 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart;

Why do people ooh and aww over the creation? Why do we marvel at a baby? Why do we get so much joy when we give and serve others? Because we’re made in the image of God and when we do what God does and see what God sees, we feel what God feels. Glimpses of glory, one writer calls it. The trailer for the movie is yet to come.

We not only get divine help from the Lord but we get divine help

From the Lord’s people (vv.3-4)

³ *I say of the holy people who are in the land, “They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.”*

David delighted in people who shared his love for God and delighted in knowing God more. God helps us often by moving the hearts of His people to meet our needs. I wonder how often when you and I decline a believer’s help that we are declining God’s help? It’s like God saying, ‘Hello, you

prayed for this. I sent so-and-so, and you're rejecting my help and robbing them of the joy of serving.'

One of the most amazing blessings when you come to know the Lord is this unique relationship we share with other believers. This oneness we have because we both have His presence dwelling in us. God is joining us together through our mutual love for Him. We're not perfect and in our sinful tendencies can rub each other the wrong way at times. But when we see each other through God's eyes [we'll talk more about that next week] we see how we're both undeserving, still Christ-forming, recipients of grace. And fellow heirs of the promises of God.

David saw the difference between those who followed God and those who did not:

⁴ Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips.

David knew the difference between the true God and the gods the world chases after. God never asks for 'libations of blood'. Animals were killed and the priest would sprinkle a little bit of the blood on the horns of the alter or the curtain in the Most Holy Place but you didn't offer God the blood as a form of sacrifice itself.

The 'libations of blood' mentality is the more blood, or the more sacrifices you offer to your god, the greater chance you will have of him responding to you. And that mentality creeps into our worship of God as well. God prefers quality to quantity. Numerous times we read that God doesn't want a multitude of sacrifices so much as a repentant heart and a just life.

Knowing God is the best thing in your life because He genuinely hears us and helps us. He is our refuge and does only what is for our good. He even gives us friends who will do His will for us and with us. What other benefit do we have from knowing God? Knowing God gives us ...

Indescribable Peace Knowing His Hand is on Your Life

(16:5-7)

⁵ LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.

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

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

When David uses words like 'portion', and 'cup', he's talking about how God had planned his life and everything David had came from the hand of the Lord. 'Boundary lines' similarly speak about where and when God had placed him and everything around him. He can see God's hand all over his life because he acknowledges they are from God. When we see whatever it is we have and have done and how the 'boundary lines' look for us through the eyes of God, knowing that all these 'good' and 'not so good' things have been used by God to shape us into who we are today, we too can praise God as David did.

When David says the Lord is his inheritance, I think he is alluding to what God told the Levites when they divided up the promised land through Moses in Deut. 18:1-2

The Levitical priests—indeed, the whole tribe of Levi—are to have no allotment or inheritance with Israel. They shall live on the food offerings presented to the LORD, for that is their inheritance. ² They shall have no inheritance among their fellow Israelites; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them.

God, You are all I really need. All the things we have are bonus. You alone are my share, my inheritance. How was David able to see his life through God's eyes? Because the Lord counselled him with His words and David reviewed those words in his heart and mind, 'even at night'. Why at night? Because at night you are quieter; you may be having a hard time sleeping and your mind thinks about everything. Thinks about your lot and your portion. And at times our minds worry and race ahead of God and go in anxious directions they don't need to go. And then we bring our minds back to what does God say about this in His Word. I correct my vision when I listen to His counsel. I see things from His perspective and not mine. I worry less about the people I worry about and trust God a little more. And I experience His peace.

Every time our minds go where they shouldn't don't go, what do we do? We go back to the counsel of His Word and we do it all over again. Hopefully a little less as we mature in Christ and quicker. Listen to these words from Ps. 119:23-24

Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on your decrees.

²⁴ Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors.

People were saying nasty things about the author so he went to the Word of God to hear what God says about him. Don't listen to the voices of your peers or the world who don't have your best interests in mind. Listen to God's Words for an accurate portrayal of who you are.

What's another benefit we have from knowing God?

An Unshakeable Hope Now and Forever **(16:8-11)**

⁸ I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

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 realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

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

David sought to always have the Lord before him or to see things through God's gracious perspective as much as possible. Even though he made some terrible choices he always returned to God. When he refocused he straightened out his life. And when he did that he experienced great joy!

How do you know you have that kind of joy in God? You talk about God ['gloried'] and the way God works in your life out of a glad heart. David said his body was at peace because he knew even if God didn't answer his prayer for preservation [remember the context of this psalm?] that death would not separate him from God. David, speaking for himself was not talking about his own body not decaying in death. He was using that as a metaphor to say death was not the end. But because Jesus is the Son of David, both Peter (in Acts 2:31 and Paul in Acts 13:35) saw this also as prophecy about Jesus, God's Holy One's body literally not seeing decay. God did not abandon David at death, nor Jesus at death and He will not abandon you and I who know Him when we die.

David's joy was grounded in a healthy theology. He kept his eyes on the Lord because he knew God was at his right hand (place of honour/priority). David made God the priority in his life therefore he was secure. He had joy. He talked about God with others. He saw all his life through God's perspective. He saw how God had made known to him the path of life. The path of life is faith in God as He revealed it through his Word. The sacrificial system taught that you were separated

from God because of your sin. A spotless sacrifice was required to make you right with God. You believe that by faith. You believed His words gave you life and joy when you obeyed them.

Nothing different now except Jesus became the only spotless sacrifice required to pay for our sins. The shedding of His blood makes a relationship with God possible. When we see our life from God's perspective in His Word we know He is always with us (at our right hand) because we are always at His right hand. And when we are living knowing He is always present in our lives we experience the fullness of joy – true, eternal life joy now – and forever.

These benefits are just a sample of the blessings we have from knowing God. What if we do not experience these things very often? It could be numerous reasons:

- You have sin that's disrupting your fellowship with God and you are robbing yourself of His joy until you repent
- You are not putting the Lord before you very often. You rarely read His Word or you are not applying His Word to your life situation
- You are lacking in thanksgiving. You let worry and anxiety rob of you seeing God's goodness all over your life
- Your spirituality is circumstantial. As long as life is going God, God is good. But your lack of spiritual maturity is not allowing you to see God's goodness even in life's difficulties
- Your spirituality is intellectual only. You get excited about learning something new about the Bible but you're not really applying what God is saying to you. You don't repent when confronted. You don't serve people very well.

'Set the Lord always before you'. Look at your life through the lens of His Word. If God has helped you figure out the path to life (faith alone in Christ saves you) then thank Him for where His boundary lines have fallen for you. And the cup and portion that he has measured for you – which you may struggle with at times – is still His way of saying, 'If you acknowledge this is from Me, you will experience My joy and see your life through My eyes.' When we're setting Him before us we are mentally acknowledging He is at our right hand and we will experience the pleasures of His presence now and for all eternity when this life ends.

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