

Psalm 16

Psalm 16 is a prayer of *faith*. It was composed by King David.
King David was often in difficult situations. He needed help and protection.
He knew that this protection could only come from the LORD, his God.
Therefore he prays: *Preserve me, God, for in you I put my trust.* (1)
Protect me, LORD. I come to you to be safe.

And then he continues to praise God, by talking about his faith.
We can learn much from this song. Because David's faith is our faith, the Christian faith.

A believer confesses 宣告 the goodness of God.

1. *He entrusts himself to God (2-4)*
2. *He enjoys blessings from God (5-8)*
3. *He expects eternal life with God (9-11)*

1. The believer entrusts himself to God

O my soul, you have said to the LORD:
You are my Lord; My goodness is nothing apart from you. (2)
These are strong words.
There is nothing good in my life. Nothing at all. Except belonging to God.

This is a *radical* faith!
There are so many things in the world that look good to us.
David teaches us to say: none of it is good enough. None of it is worth living for.
It is only worth living for the LORD.

This is what it means to be a Christian.
Christians are people who say that there is only one good thing, only one thing worth living for.
Christians live for God, the God whom we know especially through his Son Jesus Christ.

What does that mean?
As for the saints who are on the earth, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. (3)
Some Bible scholars say that the "saints" here are the priests, who worked in the tabernacle.
David was not a priest, but he longed to be as close to God as they were!
Or maybe the "saints" means all people who serve the LORD.
These are the people, said David, that I enjoy being with.

On the other hand, *the sorrows of those who hasten after another god shall multiply.* (4)
David also knows people who do not serve the LORD, but have a false religion.
These people have no true hope, no true protection, no true happiness.
Their lives will not go well.
David says that he will not participate in their activities. Certainly not in their false worship.
I will not *take up their names on my lips.* (4)

You see, if you have a Christian *identity* you must also keep Christian *company*.
Who are your friends? Who do you respect? Who do you follow?
Do as David did: stay away from false friends and false religion.
Do not take their wicked words on your own lips.
Rather, surround yourself with believing friends. Speak to each other the words of God.

In the company of believers, the Holy Spirit works.
That is why we call each other "brother" and "sister". We are one family in Jesus Christ.
Look for the LORD's protection and blessing where his people worship him.
Anywhere else you will be disappointed and your faith will not grow.

Does this mean that you should shun your unbelieving family and friends?
No. The Lord Jesus did not avoid sinners. He ate with them and drank with them.
We, too, must show kindness to unbelievers.
We must invite them to the joy of serving the LORD.

But we cannot share in their lives, in their false worship, in their unbelief.

2. The believer enjoys blessings from God

In v. 5-8, David sings of the many blessings God has given him.
On earth he may be poor and in trouble. But he is rich in heavenly treasure.
That treasure consists of God's presence and his guidance.

The Lord is the portion of my inheritance. (5)

The word "portion" refers to a plot of ground in the Promised Land.
When God's people came to the Promised Land, they had to divide it.
God assigned to every family a plot of ground to live on.

It was to be their *inheritance* 产业, passed from father to son to grandson.

That piece of ground was marked out by measuring lines.

That is why verse 6 says:

The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

Yes, I have a good inheritance.

David is not really talking about his family's farm. He is not interested in physical land.

His *portion*, his *inheritance*, is the LORD himself.

David knows that the LORD will be with him and his family, forever.

That is better than the best plot of ground!

And David trusts that God will protect this inheritance. *You maintain my lot* 分. (5)

No enemy can take it away, because God himself protects it.

If the LORD is your most precious possession, you have a wealth that no one can take from you.

The Lord is my cup. (5)

In the Bible, a "cup" is a picture of the life God gives each person.

Psalm 23 says: "My cup overflows". That means: I have a rich life.

God's enemies will drink the cup of God's wrath. That means: They will live a life full of punishment.

Jesus had to drink the "cup that the Father gave him" (John 18:11). God gave him a life full of suffering for the sake of his people.

Here, in Psalm 16, David says that his cup is the LORD.

His life was full of difficulty and suffering.

But his life was also full of the LORD. His life was full of God's grace and joy and peace.

I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night. (7)

One of the great treasures of a Christian believer is the LORD's wisdom.

God's Word teaches us what is wise and what is foolish.

It shows us how to live, and how to make the right decisions.

That is why God gave his law.

David says that he will *set the LORD always before him*, that *God is at his right hand.* (8)

In other words, God is the most important person in his life.

When he needs help or advice, he will first ask the LORD.

Because his counsel is wise and good.

David did not know what we know:

that God himself came to the earth and became a man, Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that Jesus is the *Wisdom* of God, that he is the *Wonderful Counselor* 策士.

In all his words and deeds he showed what it means to live for God.

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and truth.

That Holy Spirit has also been given to believers. That Holy Spirit teaches us in our hearts.

The Holy Spirit shapes our will, our mind, our conscience.

Even when we lie awake in bed, thinking about our sin or our worries or our calling in life, the Holy Spirit of God is there to teach us.

3. He expects eternal life with God

So many blessings!

Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices! (9)

("My glory" is probably a reference to the emotions 情感 of a person.)

But David is not done yet.

There is one thing in human life that we all fear: *Death*.

What good are all God's blessings in life, if we would lose them when we die?

David's faith is so great, that he is not worried about death.

He says something that very few people in his time understood.

My flesh 肉身 will rest in hope. (9)

My flesh—my body.

Not only my spirit or my soul will live forever.

But also my physical body will be perfectly safe.

How is that possible? Human bodies get sick and old. Dead bodies fall apart.

David trusts that God will do something about that, too.

For you will not leave my soul in Sheol (the grave)

nor will you let your holy one to see corruption. (10)

This is the first time the Bible clearly speaks about *the resurrection 复活 of the body*.

God protects believers so much, that they will never truly die.

Even our bodies are safe with him. Even if we die, he will bring us back to life.

David was a prophet. He spoke of things he did not yet see. He spoke of things to come.

1000 years after David wrote Psalm 16, it came true.

Jesus Christ, who died on the cross, was raised from the grave.

His body did not decay. Instead, he received a glorified body.

On the day of Pentecost 五旬节 (Acts 2), Jesus' disciple Peter explains that Psalm 16 has become true.

This Psalm applies first to Jesus, who is the great Son of David.

And because Jesus was raised from the dead with a new and better body,

we may also trust that we will be raised from the dead with a new and better body.

Because if we believe in Jesus, we are *in* him. All that belongs to him, also belongs to us.

David, long ago, knew this by faith.

Today we may trust this by faith.

This is the gospel of Psalm 16.

We are safe with the LORD, because he gives us everything, even life forever.

What kind of life is this? The psalm summarizes it in verse 11.

Three blessings of living with God forever.

You will show me the path of life.

In your presence is fullness of joy.

At your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Now already we see the path of life, the way of Jesus Christ, through suffering to glory.

Now already the Holy Spirit gives us joy, as we understand what Jesus has done for us.

In the end, we will meet the LORD face to face and enjoy the full life he gives us.

Is that not enough to dedicate yourself to the LORD?

Are you ready to say: "*You are my Lord, I have no good apart from you*"?

May the LORD give you that faith, and strengthen your faith, and give you this joy!