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“Because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.” Psalms 16:10

Main Idea: Here is a poem etched in stone by David that cries out to God for safety and provision. David asks that God may protect him from harm, as he takes asylum in Him. God is our only true source of confidence and safe harbor. He is The only True God, Who is LORD over all. God does only good; therefore, we can trust in Him and even be joyful when things are bad all around us. Who we are in God is far greater than any setback or travesty--or even great thing--that may come our way. The true honorable people have their basis in God; it is Him they know and trust. Their positions and possessions are not relevant. Those who trust in the other things--false gods, money, power, status, position--will only find discontentment and disappointment. A true believer will honor and revere God and will not give the same to the worldly things. God alone is our True provision, security, and inheritance. He is the One who gives us proper instructions; therefore, we can know Him and follow His precepts, knowing His ways are better than ours or others. We can be glad in and rejoice in God, to praise His Name. We can have the confidence He will not abandon His faithful; He even gives us eternity in Him. So, let us follow His precepts and ways for all aspects of our life and thought. Be filled with joy as we seek His presence!

Contexts and Background:

Psalm 16 is a poem that is possibly an engraving David did in stone, to show his confidence in God as a Deliverer, even in extreme difficulties. Perhaps, David wrote this while on the run from Saul; conventional thought would've led David to believe that there was no way out but death. Psalm 16 showcases David's almost or actual face-to-face encounter with God, his resulting faith, and what it takes to have our cares and faith centered upon God. It is about what can happen when our affections are not centered upon God. In the running theme of imminent death, David reflects on these issues on what in life is of real eternal value. Life is not chance or happenstance. We are being created for a reason: to know the Lord and love and serve Him, even in the time when we do not understand or see what possible beneficial outcome, even when our lives are on the line. What we do will matter, so let's make it by wisdom and prayer for God's glory. For what happens here has eternal ramifications.

Peter quotes the closing of this Psalm at Pentecost. This this is also a prophecy of Jesus the Messiah Deliverer Who saves us even into eternity (Acts 2:21).

Most liberal commentators will expound that the Jews had no concept of an afterlife, that it was a late first century invention. Of course, they do not read or know the Word.

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Miktam*. The word is similar to “gold” meaning something that is precious, like atonement, that was written down as an engraving called a “stelograph,” usually on polished stone. Then, it was committed to memory and recited silently in prayer (Psalm 56-60).

Verses 1-6: This is about being a faithful servant of God no matter what is happening around me or within me by fears and trepidations or who is trying to influence me. It is a call or confession of being confident and committed to God; therefore, I will worship only God and set my ambition on His will.

- *Keep me safe / preserve me*. The psalmist is in a present extreme crisis and calls out to God for help. This is also a statement of his confidence.
- *My God / O God*. A call for help while having personal trust and confidence in God and His sovereignty (Ex. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; Psalm 7:1-2; Matt. 1:23; John 1:1-7; 20:28; Rev. 1:6; 4:11; 19:10; 22:9).

- *Take refuge.* Symbolizes how the Israelites after the Exodus, wandered for 40 years, in faithfulness and betrayal, and the grace of God waiting for their inheritance of the Promised Land. God is our true refuge, not other voices of discontent, disbelief or distraction. (Psalm 11:1-3; Hosea 2:14)
- *Apart from you I have no good thing / welfare.* We are good in God and God is our good. This is a statement of maturity to realize all we are and have is by God's goodness and charity (Psalm 73:25)
- *Holy people / saints.* Meaning "holy ones," and or loyal, those who are set apart for God, same as the *elect* in the New Testament. This does not mean to be perfect, as no one is; rather, we are to make friends with those of good character and who bring out our best and likewise of us (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 2:15-17).
- *Noble / excellent ones.* Meaning, having character. Perhaps, this is referring to exercising holiness like those who are not only faithful to God but also stay away from pagan gods and their trappings. The world needs demonstrators of who God is in character and His precepts in action (Jer. 32: 5-8).
- *Other gods.* The biggest sin of early Israel was not being satisfied with the one True God Yahweh and seeking other gods for one's fulfillment. Worship and praise only belongs to God alone, not false gods (1 Kings 18; Psalm 29).
- *Suffer / multiply sorrows.* The natural consequences of apostasy and sin as well as the emptiness of false gods and human cravings (Gen. 3:16; 1 Sam. 26:19)
- *Blood libations / offerings ...names.* Meaning the worship of foreign and false gods. The two main ways of other religious system used to worship--drink blood and or use the name of a god and seek its empowerment. Usually a group or self-imposed restriction of what can be eaten or drunk, such as wine, beer, water, honey, and milk to honor one's god or membership in a sect or guild.
- *Take up their.* Being discerning and refusing to participate in sin or anything that dishonors God and His precepts. This is a call to think and rethinking one's situation and position and to out think doubts with real faith and reasoning. Our true security is in God not in situations or fears.
- *Chosen / allotted Portion... cup...lot.* Metaphors that life is a gift from God, that one should have gratitude in. The Levites were examples of this as they had no land nor could inherit and lived by faith on God's provision and the people's faithfulness to God. True riches is about who we are in God. Not elaborate pseudo-piety like the Pharisees in Jesus' time; rather simple trust and obedience (Ex. 19:6; Num. 18:20).
- *Secure ... pleasant places.* To have a quality of life, a good relationship to God and to others. Also, the fear of God disinheriting as He did with Saul. Under grace, we have no such fear. There is no true security in wealth or worldly position, only in our salvation (Jos. 19:51; 1 Sam. 26:19; Phil. 1:21; 3:8).
- *Boundary lines.* For the priests and Levites, they had no share of the land; their inheritance was the pleasure of serving God. Now our example as Christians. National borders of countries or people groups. God is the One who decides what is best and where for His people to be. Usually, stones are used to mark and strict penalties are given, like curses and death if they are moved without permission. Here dealing with our security is in God, not man (Ex. 19:6; Deut. 32:8).
- *Delightful inheritance.* God gives us favor when we are obedient in Him with His precepts and applying it to our character. Great gifting that we need is not in products and goods but in the goodness of God; this forms our joy in Him.

Verses 7-11: The result of being godly that has ramifications in eternity even though it may cost us in the here and now. God is the One we can enjoy and be hopeful in, not worldly situations or ways.

- *Praise / bless the LORD.* To give oneself over to God and enjoying our intimacy in Him. More than just "honor;" it is a call to worship. Similar rendering of "Praise Yahweh" are found in Psalms 104-106, 111-

113, 117, 135, 146-150, and many more. This is a Liturgical expletive a priest uses called a "piel," as in a command to call the people to praise and worship Yahweh (Jer. 51:48; Psalm 104:34; Rev. 19:1-10).

- *Counsels.* We can go to God with pleasure, not being scared or by compulsion. We have the ability to know right and wrong, to search our hearts and be discerning. It is our desires and pride that get in the way.
- *Heart instructs.* Actually it is "kidneys," meaning the core of one's being. Here being restless and can't sleep because of a matter of conscience, or now for the Christian, how the Holy Spirit's works to convict (Psalm 6:1; 17:3; 94:12; 127:2).
- *Right hand.* This refers to God's power, authority, and eminence and for a person, the one who is honored or is best for a position. Soldiers would carry their weapon on their right and their shield on the left. The best warriors would be on the right of the commander or king with the privilege of defending them. This is an affirmation of trust and one's ability (Psalm 109:31; Rev. 5: 1-7).
- *I will not be shaken / I shall not be moved.* Being firm in faith no matter what, like boldness in battle. To trust in God with conviction, so one's faith will not be moved no matter what. This brings about a faithful attitude, so doubts and circumstances do not rule over. As insecurity is a prime human dilemma (Psalm 10:6; 13:4; 15:5; 30:6; 109:31; 110:5).
- *Heart is glad.* One's *heart* denotes the center of our rational thoughts; *minds*, in the Hebrew as well as Greek, literally means "kidneys," and denotes our will and trust in God.
- *Rest secure.* Like recovering from an illness with a hope for a greater outcome.
- *Abandon to the realm of the dead / grave / Sheol.* Meaning, life being spared, deliverance from one's situation, not being put to death by enemies. This also points to Christ who will deliver us from death permanently with eternal life (Psalm 30:2-3; Acts 2:25-28; 13:35).
- *Decay.* Meaning one's life is spared, like rescued, like being set free for a capital crime deserving a death penalty (Psalm 30:2-3).
- *Path of life.* To commit ourselves to God's proper instructions and enjoy our walk in Him. Also, to learn from others and our mistakes and be teachable and correctable. The wisdom to make wise decisions and be our best for God's glory and our betterment too. Where does darkness take us? Where does Goodness take us? What will be our life's story from the path we take (Psalm 4:18; 25:10; Matt. 6:33)?
- *Joy.* Our fullness and contentment is in God as LORD, so we are satisfied in Him (Psalm 17:15; James 1).
- *Eternal pleasures.* The resurrection of life and or eternal life in God. That life is not just about the here and now, but also what is to come in eternity (1 Pet. 1:3).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

We need to have a rich confidence that God is worthy not just of our praise, but also our confidence. We can say, *Yes Lord*, and do as He has called. To be faithful no matter what is struggling in us our outside of us. He gives us the real good in life, what matters and echoes into eternity. He gives the things that make life worth living and joyful. There will be always the ugly people, who are hateful and rude, full of vice and contempt—those who seem to be blessed with worldly money and privileged. Who have fun with drugs and drinking and are contemptuous of their neighbors. But, the true faithful, we can take comfort, that their worldly provisions and pleasures are empty and will not last. They only have disconnect and suffering that goes with; while the godly have real security and the wealth of love and healthy relationships with God and others. All we need to do is receive His gifts of salvation and the provisions of His presence and precepts. We have what we need to live well and be well. We can be content with real fullness of joy.

Christian Life Principle: We are to enjoy our relationship with God. To know all we have and could have, it all comes from our Lord's goodness. We must be grateful for what we have, not just seeking, if we only can have something else. There is nothing greater we can seek that is outside of our Lord's goodness. Therefore, we can be content in our trust in Him.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Have you ever created a poem or art project that honors God or express your relationship in Him?
2. Why do you think David took the time in his grave situation to make an engraving about his trust in God?
3. How is Christ your "delight?"
4. How has Jesus been your only true source of confidence and safe harbor? If not sure, how can He be?
5. What does eternity mean to you today?
6. What does it take for someone to know that We have a True God, Who is LORD over all? What gets in the way?
7. What did it take for you to trust in Christ? How does our insecurity and dilemma get in the way?
8. What does it mean to be joyful even when things are bad all around us? Keep in mind David's situation.
9. How have you and or how can you give yourself over to God and enjoying our intimacy in Him?
10. When one is going through difficulties, how can we know who we are in Christ is far greater than any setback or travesty or even great thing that may come our way?
11. What happens when those who trust in other things like false gods to money and power? Why is it that they will only find discontent and disappointment? Have you ever experienced this?
12. What can you do to have more confidence God will not abandon His faithful?