

Confidence in the Risen King

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning, Watermark. The scripture reading today comes from Psalm 16. You can follow along on your bulletin on the screen or in your own Bible.
- Starting in verse 1, we read, Amictim of David, 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, would take their names on my lips. The Lord is 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.
- [1 : 0 4] 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.
- Therefore, my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to shield.
- 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 the Word of God. Great, thank you, Iris. Fear and insecurity are such a terrible thing, aren't they?
- I guess in some ways fear has a good purpose. It keeps us from danger. It keeps us from doing stupid things like running in the road. But to be governed and controlled by fear, to be controlled by insecurity, is such a debilitating and entrapping environment.
- [2 : 1 5] I wonder how many of us feel that our lives are controlled by fear and insecurity. Fear of what people think of us. Fear of failure. Fear of loss.
- Fear of sickness. Fear of the markets turning down. Fear of death. Fear of rejection. How many of us have allowed insecurity to close in on us and to feel like a burden on our shoulders?
- Maybe you feel insecure about your position at work and you won't apply for another job because you are fearful of rejection. Maybe you're fearful of entering into a relationship because you fear of what will that person, how will they hurt you?
- Maybe insecurity keeps you in a job that you shouldn't be in. Or keeps you in a relationship that you shouldn't be in. And for those of you that are in high school, if you're one of the youth with us this morning, I wonder how fear and insecurity governs your life.
- Imagine living not being afraid of what anybody thinks of you. Not being insecure about exams. What university are you going to get into. How are you going to do at school. How people at school think about you.
- [3 : 2 6] Fear and insecurity are such a terrible thing to live with. Live with. Friends, I wonder what your life would look like if it were not governed by any fear or insecurity at all.

Rather, if your life was governed by a joyful confidence. A hopeful assurance. A confidence both in this life and the life to come. I wonder what decisions you would make.

I wonder how you would respond to challenges that come your way. This morning we're looking at Psalm 16. And Psalm 16 is a psalm that brims with confidence and assurance.

For much of this year as a church at Watermark, we've been working through the Old Testament. And many people think the Old Testament is boring and it's outdated. And the God of the Old Testament is angry all the time.

But actually what we've been seeing is that the Old Testament is full of God's mercy and His grace. The stories and the events in the Old Testament are like shadows that point us, that give us an outline picture of the wonderful grace of God in Jesus Christ.

[4 : 36] And the Old Testament is constantly showing us how God is going to put right all that is wrong and broken and destructive and chaotic with this world. God is working all things together and He's putting them right in Jesus Christ.

The whole Old Testament points to what God is doing in Christ. And so we're going to continue with the Old Testament by looking at Psalm 16 today.

Now Psalm 16 is written by King David. David is Israel's greatest king. And as I said, it's part of a collection of psalms that are very confident.

David in this psalm is very confident as we're going to see. And in this psalm we're going to see a couple of things. We're going to see that it is possible to live life full of joyful confidence and hopeful assurance in this life.

But the psalm has a twist to it. There's something in particular that you need to see. And so what this psalm is going to do, it's going to actually tell us two things. It's going to tell us how not to find confidence in this life and where to find joyful confidence.

[5 : 47] The psalm is going to show us that if you find confidence in the wrong things, it ends in bitterness and destruction. But there is a way to find joyful confidence that is stable and steadfast.

Okay, so that's what we're going to look at today. But first, let's try and make sense of it and understand it. So if you've got your Bible or your bulletin, look at Psalm 16 with me. And it starts off, there's a description at the top that says, A mictum of David.

Okay, nobody really knows what the word mictum means. It's one of those Hebrew words that nobody understands. But the word appears six times in the Psalms, the book of Psalms.

And most of them, David is on the run. He's pursued by his enemies. He's hiding in a cave. There are people that want to get him or kill him or end his life. David is on the run.

Some people have suggested the word mictum means a silent prayer that is offered up to God because you're surrounded by your enemies. You can't go to the temple and pray. You can't ask the priest to pray for you.

[6 : 51] So you're hiding and you kind of offer the silent prayer, God, I need you. Look out for me. Okay, but you're not exactly sure. But that would make sense because look at verse one with me.

Verse one says, preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. So David's obviously facing some kind of danger. There's something going on. He's feeling insecure.

And he says, God, I need you. Preserve me. Look after me. I'm taking refuge in you. I wonder if you feel like David this morning. I wonder if you feel insecure, afraid, unsure of how things are going to turn out.

Maybe somebody is opposed to you. Maybe somebody wants to take you out, a colleague, a client, a competitor at work, a family member.

Maybe just feel insecure about what the future holds. But David cries out to God. But then the rest of the psalm is overflowing with confidence.

[7 : 51] David is very confident. Look at what he says. He's sure that God is going to look after him and protect him and keep him safe. And why is that? Well, David considers his own track record of faithfulness.

He looks at his life and he says, God, I've actually been really faithful. I've been really good. I've followed your word. I've honored your word. I've done everything that's expected of a good Jewish covenant-keeping man.

Surely you're going to look after me. So look at what he says here. Verse 2. I say to the Lord, you are my Lord. There is no good thing that I have apart from you.

David is saying, God, you're the most important thing in my life. There's nothing else in this world that is of more importance to you. You have my supreme devotion and dedication.

You're the most important thing to me, God. Look at verse 3. He says, as for the saints in the land, that means the other believers, other followers of God. They are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight.

[8 : 54] So I say, God, not only are you my highest priority in heaven, but on earth, my highest priority are other believers. I've surrounded myself with faithful men and women. I don't know if you know that saying that says you can tell a lot about a person's character by the kind of company that they keep.

Maybe not very fair, a little bit prejudicial, but there's some truth in that, right? And the reason is because friendship is not formed so much by just hobbies and interests.

Deep friendship is formed by shared values, shared principles. You have goals in life, right? Two people like tennis. Okay, you like tennis. I like tennis. Okay, we can be friends. But real friends are shared by the things that you love, what you value in life.

So picture this, right? Imagine someone's really passionate about the environment and global warming and looking after the environment and recycling. And they meet somebody else who's also passionate about the environment and recycling and looking after our planet.

There's immediately going to be this deep connection, right? But if someone's like this and they meet somebody who doesn't care at all and just litters and who cares? It's all going to burn anyway. Oh, it's going to be hard for them to resonate deeply with each other.

[10 : 08] In other words, friendship is formed not just by you like tennis, I like tennis. You like the color blue, I like the color blue. It's actually shared values. It's what you love. David says here, I love God supremely.

And my friends are people who love God supremely. We are faithful, devout followers of God. Look at what else he says. Look at verse 4. He says, The sorrows of those who run after other gods or idols shall multiply.

Their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out. I haven't even taken their names on my lips. Now again, if you're new to church, let me just explain. The Bible talks quite a lot about idols and other gods.

And the Bible talks about the way that people offer offerings to foreign gods and idols. Now you may think, hey, I'm a modern person. I'm well educated. I don't believe in bowing down to gods and idols.

I'm not a superstitious person. I'm a rational person. I'm illogical. I don't bow down to gods. But actually, one of the things the Bible says is that all human beings are tempted by idols.

[11 : 13] Maybe not physical idols at the temple, but idols of our hearts. What is an idol? An idol is something that you put a lot of hope in, a lot of trust in, a lot of confidence in.

Something you almost ascribe supernatural power to something to give you blessing, to give you peace, to give you prosperity, to give you security in life.

So it's something that you look to and you think, if I can honor that thing or look after that thing, that thing will look after me. So you may say, listen, I don't go to the temple. I don't burn incense to my ancestors.

I'm not superstitious like that. Okay, but how often do you check your stock portfolio five times a day? Are you wrapped with anxiety about what your colleague or your boss or the market says about you?

Are you very anxious about what your parents think? Are you controlled by how your children do at school, what their grades are? Because that will reflect on you. In other words, we all have these idols of the heart, these things that we trust in and love.

[12 : 15] And we think, if I can keep this thing safe, this thing will keep me safe. But look what David says here. David says, God, I know there are other things that tempt me to love them and trust them and follow them.

But God, I've been so devoted to you, I haven't even mentioned these things. I don't even take their names on my lips. Maybe you're someone who you think, listen, I don't believe in that stuff, but all my colleagues do, my boss does.

I kind of got to just go through the motions. So I'll go to the temple, I'll burn incense. I'm just going to go through the motions. David says, I'm not even going to go through the motions. God, my heart is so steadfast on you that I won't even mention their names on my lips.

Those things, I've ridden my heart from them. David, so David is very confident, right? Look at all the things that he says. Verse 5, we can keep on going.

He says, the Lord, you're my chosen portion. Verse 7, I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel in the night my heart also instructs me. I kind of like this one. It feels like David is saying, God, I've so set my heart on your word and your ways.

[13 : 19] Even at night, when I'm fast asleep, your word is going to instruct me. I don't know if David really means this, but it's kind of like he's saying, God, even my dreams are godly dreams, right?

I don't know how he managed to do that. I wish I could do that. But David, he's building his credentials. He's listing his resume. He's saying, look, God, look at what a godly, devout man I am.

I haven't gone near idols. I think about you all day, all night. My friends are godly people. I've set the Lord before me always. You're the most important thing in my life. Look what he says.

Verse 8, I've set the Lord always before me. He's at my right hand. I will not be shaken. David's really listing his credentials. He's piling up his resume.

He's giving a CV, and he's saying, God, I'm a devout, faithful man. And he's telling us what a great king he is, how faithful he's been to God. Here is a picture of really devout faithfulness to God.

[14 : 18] And so look at what this all means. Look at where it leads him. Look at where this confidence takes him. Look at verse 9. He says, therefore, because I'm such a devout man, therefore, verse 9, my heart is glad, my whole being rejoices, my flesh dwells secure.

I'm a secure man. Verse 10, for, because you, God, won't abandon my soul to Sheol. Sheol is the place of the dead. God, you won't let your holy one, that's David, see corruption.

No, God, you make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. You see what David's saying? He's saying, God, because I'm steadfast and faithful, I've always followed you, I know that you will keep me safe.

Nothing will touch me. My enemies won't touch me. The markets won't touch me. The grave won't touch me. Sheol, the place of the dead, that won't touch me. God, I dwell in security and safety.

I followed you. You will pay me back. Look, David's pretty confident, right? He's a confident man. I've lived a godly life.

[15 : 28] I've done everything that's expected of me. My lot is secure. I dwell in safety and security. Now, in the ancient world, in around the century or two before Jesus came, Psalm 16 was one of the favorites for Jewish writers.

In particular, verses 8, 9, and 11, Jewish writers loved and would often write and think about and talk about in the synagogue. Look what it says. I have set the Lord before me.

I will not be shaken. I dwell secure. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. The problem was, nobody really knew what to do with verse 10.

Verse 10 was like the fly in the soup. Do you know that phrase? If you have a bowl of soup and a fly lands in it, one little thing can ruin the whole bowl of soup, right? Verse 10 kind of messed everything up.

Because what do you do with verse 10? Verse 10, David says, You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, the place of the dead. You will not let your Holy One see corruption. In other words, is David saying, God, because I followed you, I know I will never die.

[16 : 38] I will live forever. Death cannot touch me. It seems like that's what David is saying. You will not abandon me to the grave.

And the problem is that actually, David did die. And we don't live in Jerusalem now, so we can't go and visit his grave. But in the first century, everybody knew where David's grave was.

And you could go down the road, you could see that's where David died. That's where he was buried. That's where his bones were buried. There was no doubt in the first century that David really did die, was buried, and was given over to corruption and decay.

Everybody knew that. And in some ways, that shouldn't surprise us. Because David was a good man. He was a righteous man. But he wasn't a perfect man. And he certainly didn't live up to the standard of moral perfection that he kind of claims in verse 1 to 8.

Maybe this was written when he was a very young man. You know, young people are quite confident, right? Before he had lived a little. Before he had some baggage in the cupboard. Because later on in his life, we know what happens to David, don't we?

[17 : 44] I mean, at one point, he falls in love with someone else's wife. And he seduces her and he sleeps with her. And then when she falls pregnant, he gets her husband murdered so that he can have her.

I mean, Psalm 51 is one of the greatest written confessions in all of literature. And it's written by David. As he owns his sin and his depravity.

But David was a good man, but he wasn't a perfect man. No, friends, death really did come to David like it comes to all of us. Because David, like all of us, was a fallen human being.

A man who was born with the hereditary disease of a sin-infested heart. And David acted out, he lived out his temptation.

Friends, the Bible says that death is the natural consequences of sin. And therefore, death comes to all of us.

[18 : 43] Because all of us are born with the hereditary disease of a sin-infected heart. And all of us act on it and live it out. I don't know if you remember in Genesis 3, in the Garden of Eden.

In Genesis 3, God says to Adam and Eve, When you disobey me and reject me, you will surely die. And they do, they reject him. But they don't die straight away.

But in that moment, death is unleashed on the world. And all human beings, you and me and everyone, even the very best of us, all of us, friends, are infected by sin. And the consequence of that is death.

Death now holds the power over us. But what happens? What if we could find somebody whose body and soul were not given over to death?

And were not given over to corruption and decay? Friends, what happens if there was a human being who laid down his life, wasn't taken from him, but laid it down, and yet could take it up again?

[19 : 50] Look at verse 10. David seems to suggest that this is only possible for those who are truly holy. That means truly devoted, truly devout, truly perfect, and sinless.

Friends, what if we found someone who would willingly lay down his life, and yet over whom death had no hold, no staying power, no control, no authority?

What if we found someone who could lay down his life, and yet contrary to all expectations of those who knew him, would take it up again and rise again? Not just in hallucination form, in real form.

Friends, we'd have to conclude that such a man was truly perfect, truly sinless, who had never sinned. Someone who was truly holy, a picture of covenant faithfulness.

You see, friends, you can only claim the assurances and the promises of verses 9, 10, and 11, if you can truly claim verses 1 to 8 for yourself.

[20 : 53] That's what David says, right? Look at verse 9. He says, Friends, 2,000 years ago, on Passover weekend, the disciples of Jesus Christ were downcast, dejected, sorrowful.

Because they had seen their Lord and Master crucified, died, taken down, and buried in the tomb, lying in the grave.

All their hopes and expectations were dashed. Maybe they thought Jesus wasn't the man that he claimed to be. Maybe he wasn't so righteous after all. After all.

Until Jesus did appear for them. Not in a mirage. Not in a hallucination. Jesus didn't just rise spiritually in their hearts. In real, actual, physical, bodily form, Jesus appeared to them.

The same Jesus that they touched and held and had put their hands on his face. This same Jesus of Nazareth appeared to them in physical, bodily form and said, Here I am.

[22 : 18] Risen from the grave. Friends, you know what that means? The resurrection of Jesus proves that he's the one sinless, perfect, holy man.

The one who kept the covenant perfectly. Throughout the Old Testament, as we've heard over the last few weeks, the Old Testament looks forward to a man coming who will be perfect and who will be a mediator between God and man.

One day, there will come a man who will stand in the gap between a holy God and sinful man and be able to intercede on behalf of sinful humanity. And plead for them and pray for them. The Old Testament looks forward to one day a man coming who will be like a priest who will enter into the holy place.

Perfect, untainted by sin. And can go into that place and plead for God's people. Make atonement, which means make reconciliation between holy God and sinful man.

The Old Testament looks forward to a day when one day this mediator priest-like figure will come like a servant. He'll have a job, an assignment from heaven. And he'll accomplish this assignment, but he will suffer terribly.

[23 : 30] Extraordinarily, extraordinarily he'll suffer. But his suffering will be the means, the method by which he accomplishes his task. But friends, don't you see that also the Old Testament anticipates this perfect, mediating, suffering, priest-like figure will also die.

But he won't stay dead. He will rise again. Because he is sinless and perfect, death will have no power over him. Death will have no control over him.

Death will have no authority over him. He will die of his own free choice. And he will rise again. Friends, this is Jesus, who on Good Friday died and on Easter Sunday rose again.

And who now lives in God's presence at the right hand of the Father with pleasures forevermore. Friends, in the weeks and months after Jesus died and rose again, his disciples who just a few weeks before had been dejected and downcast, short on confidence and long on fear, were now these bold, courageous, exuberant men and women.

They walked the streets of Jerusalem proclaiming Jesus. And the authorities said, didn't you see what we just did to Jesus? We killed him. We're going to do the same thing to you. And they said, that's okay. We don't mind.

[24 : 51] We must tell you about Jesus. These disciples who just a few weeks before were anxious and worried and fearful and hiding in the upper room, doors locked, making sure no one could find them, are now boldly proclaiming, Jesus was dead, but he's alive.

Where did they find that confidence? Where did they find that hope? Where did they find that joyful assurance? They had seen. Jesus who was dead was now alive.

Listen to what the apostles write in Acts chapter 13. They preach this. We bring you good news today that what God promised to our forefathers, this he has fulfilled.

By raising Jesus from the dead, as it is written, you will not let your holy one see corruption. So they quote Psalm 16. For David certainly died, was laid with his ancestors and saw corruption, but Jesus, whom God raised from the dead, did not see corruption.

Let it be known to you therefore, brothers and sisters, people of Hong Kong, this man, Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. And by him, everyone who believes in him is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by trying to obey the law of Moses.

[26 : 07] Dear friends, every one of us here are infected by the curse of sin. None of us are perfect. And what that means is that every one of us deserves to die.

Physically, yes, but also spiritually for all eternity. Cuddle from God. Eternal death that never ends. But friends, because Jesus rose again, if you are in Christ, if you love him, and trust him, and hope in him, if you'll surrender to him, and follow him, Jesus' life again can become your life.

Jesus' resurrection becomes your resurrection. Jesus' defeat of the grave becomes your defeat of the grave. What the apostles declared 2,000 years ago, friends, I declare to you today, that through this man, Jesus Christ, there is forgiveness of sins, there is overcoming the grave.

So, what does this mean for us today? How should this change our lives this week? Great question. I'm so glad you asked. Two things. Two things that this should mean for us.

Okay? First thing's this. Don't look to yourself. Don't look to yourself. Friends, if you look to your moral performance, your religious devotion, your religious track record, your spiritual performance, you are going to be utterly devastated and disappointed.

[27 : 36] And one day you'll stand before God, and he'll say, good effort, not good enough. Friends, you are not good enough. I am not good enough. None of us are good enough. Don't look to yourself.

You cannot save yourself. You did not rise from, you did not die on the cross and rise again. Jesus did. Friends, maybe you're here and you're a good person. Maybe you always try to live a moral life.

Maybe you always try to be religious. Friends, you cannot save yourself. David was a good man. The Bible says David had a heart after God. David couldn't save himself.

Friends, don't look to yourself. Don't look to your religious pedigree, your track record, your moral performance, your devotion. No, friends, don't look to yourself. Second thing, look to Jesus.

Look to the Savior who died and rose again. Friends, here is good news that all those who will look to Christ and hope in him and trust in him get to live with joyful confidence and hope-filled assurance not only for eternity but in this life now as well.

[28 : 45] In 1840, 180 years ago, an old Scottish priest, pastor was writing a letter to his friend. His name is Robert Marie McShane and this is what he said. For every one look at yourself, take 10 looks at Christ.

He's altogether lovely. Friends, the only good look that you can take to yourself is to see your need. But for every one look at yourself, take 10 looks at Christ. See the Savior who died and rose again.

Friends, the gospel is good news because not only of who Jesus was and what he did, but what he did now gets credited to those who trust in him.

Friends, good news of Easter Sunday is not only that Jesus died and rose again but if you trust in him, his track record, his moral track record gets credited to you. His perfect resume now gets credited to you and our God the Father can look at you through Jesus and say, my son, my daughter, I accept you.

The grave has no hold on you. Death has no point. The power of you. Jesus rose again and so will you. Friends, now we can look and proclaim verses 1 to 9, verses 9 to 11 that we can dwell secure knowing that he will not abandon our souls to hell because death has been defeated and we too will enjoy pleasures with him forevermore.

[30 : 10] And do you know what that means? Final thought. It means that now you and I can actually say verses 1 to 8. We can live with confidence this week because we know our eternal destiny is secure.

And so, friends, if you are in Christ, you too can say, verse 2, the Lord, you are my Lord, I have no good thing apart from you. Friends, you really can live for Jesus because your future is secure.

Friends, you can say, verse 6, the lions have fallen for me in pleasant places. I have a beautiful inheritance. Friends, what can go wrong in life? The stock market can crash, okay, but you're secure in Christ.

Friends, you can face cancer, okay, that's terrible, but you're secure in Christ. That's not the end of the world for you. Friends, no hell can throw their worst at you. The boundary lines have fallen for you in beautiful places because you are in Christ.

Friends, if you're a Christian, you can say, verse 8, the Lord is always before me. He is at my right hand. I will not be shaken. Friends, if you're a Christian, you can say, verse 9, my heart is glad, my whole being rejoices, my body rests secure.

[31 : 18] So friends, what are you afraid of? What are you fearful this morning? What governs your life? Fear of failure? Fear of people?

Fear of rejection? Are you insecure about what your boss thinks about you? What your parents think about you? What your colleagues or boys think about you?

Friends, what a terrible thing to live with fear and insecurity. How might your life look different if you're truly secure, truly unshakable, lived with joyful confidence?

Friends, look to Jesus this morning. You can do that. Easter Sunday tells us it's possible to live free from fear and free of insecurity because Jesus, the sinless one, died and rose again.

and now if you know him, your life is in him and you can be secure in him as well. Let's pray together. Oh Lord Jesus, the risen one, we can pray to you this morning.

[32 : 20] Not just an image of you, not just a picture of you, not just a hopeful representation of you, you, the living, resurrected Christ, we get to pray to you this morning because you died and you rose again.

but more than that God, we can live secure, confident, unshakable because our life is now in you. Oh God, I pray for us this morning. Lord, I pray for those of us who know you, those of us that are Christians.

God, I pray that you will help us to drive out fear and insecurity as we meditate on you, as we know who we are in you. Help us to live secure in you, I pray.

But God, for those of us that are not Christians this morning, won't you help us to see that Jesus, your resurrection is not just a myth, it's not just something disciples came up with, it really happened.

You really did die and rise again and that changes everything. God, I pray, won't you reveal yourself to us this morning? Won't you, God, help us to live with joyful confidence and hopeful assurance because our life is anchored in you.

[33 : 31] We pray these things in your good and gracious name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.