

Logan Smith  
Bread of Life Baptist Church  
December 19th, 2021

## Psalm 19

### The Satisfying Joy of Trusting in the Lord

In the classic Christmas movie, “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” Charlie Brown seeks the meaning of Christmas. At the beginning, he confides in his best friend, Linus, that he knows Christmas is a time for joy, and that he should feel happy and excited about it, but he just doesn’t. He laments the commercialization of Christmas, the obsession with material gifts and things; he asks, “What’s the meaning of Christmas? What’s it all about?” Finally, at the end of the movie, Linus answers him: the meaning of Christmas is about the greatest gift ever given; the gift that God gave the world: his own Son, Jesus Christ, who was born to deal with the sins of the world and save all who repent and believe in Him, making a way for peace between God and man! As believers today, we know well that this is the meaning of Christmas. This is why we get excited, why we sing songs and give one another gifts!

But Charlie Brown’s worry about the commercialization of Christmas rings true; and if it was true in the 1960’s, it resonates even more today, over 50 years later! Our culture has become increasingly more secular, less Christian, more consumeristic, more materialistic - more driven by an obsession over things, stuff, money, and the comforts and pleasures of this world. There is a great temptation, even for us Christians, to get sucked into the lie that the presents we get, the stuff we buy, the food we eat, or the fun and happiness we have in life is *the most important thing*, that they will bring true joy and meaning to our lives, and satisfy the yearnings of our souls. But they won’t; in fact, if we begin to think that way, then we’re turning stuff, money, toys, clothes, or any other thing of this world into *idols*.

You see, we all crave joy and satisfaction in our hearts and souls. No one wants to be unhappy, joyless, or depressed. We chase after and prioritize the things and lifestyle which we think will ultimately satisfy our hearts and bring true joy. What we seek happiness from or ground our joy in reveals what we think truly matters the most where we think true meaning, purpose, value, and joy comes from. It reveals what we’re putting our trust in, where our souls seek refuge.

Where do you seek refuge? What do you put your hope and trust in? Money? Friends? Family? Your career? What people think of you? The things that you have? Comfort, pleasure,

and happiness in this world? Yourself? Where we turn to for refuge when we feel sad, empty, scared, or helpless can reveal where our hearts lie - what we're truly trusting in; and this can reveal what we're worshipping.

All too often, when the going gets tough, we end up turning to the vain things of this world, putting our trust in them, thinking that they will be our refuge, rather than God! In fact, think of times when you're most clearly tempted to do something that you know is sinful, and you end up doing it anyways. I know for me, it's moments when I just want to *escape* from my current situation or reality that I'm most tempted to sin. When I'm feeling helpless, frustrated, fed up, scared, sad or depressed, overwhelmed, stressed, or just plain bored and joyless - those are the moments when I'm most tempted to turn to sin; in the moments, I'm tempted to seek my refuge in sin, to escape into it, instead of seeking my refuge in the Lord, trusting in Him! But this is idolatry. When you're turning to something other than God as your refuge, that means you don't think God is good or powerful or loving enough to take care of you; we're saying you don't trust Him, and that we trust those other things more; and when *anything* takes on a higher place of value or importance in our life than God, *it becomes an idol, by definition*. It becomes an object of *worship* for us. Where we turn to for confidence, hope, trust, refuge, and joy - well, I think these moments are very clear barometers for where our heart is at, for good or ill.

Every single one of us is prone to such temptations. The temptations are different for each of us; so are the different sins and idols we're tempted to put our refuge in, as are the circumstances that most often drive us there. But the temptation remains. And so does that craving for joy and the good life that we all have, deep within our souls! So what do we do with it? We go to the one place that can satisfy the cry of our hearts: we run to the presence of God, seeking Him as the only true refuge, trusting in Him alone!

That's the antidote to our wandering, idolatrous hearts. That's the path to true refuge, joy, and life - running to the presence of the Lord! And to do this, we need to remember just how good, powerful, and glorious the Lord is! And that's exactly what Psalm 16 does for us! It calls us to have a God-centered life; to truly view God as the center of our lives, and the entire universe! It calls our hearts to be captivated by a vision of the Lord, so that we seek Him with our whole life, our heart, soul, mind and strength, being captivated by a vision of just how good, great, and glorious He is!

So let's walk through Psalm 16 as it helps us to reorient our hearts, beginning with...

## I. Trusting God as Our Only Refuge (vv.1-4)

David begins this psalm with a prayer, a plea for God to “preserve” and protect him: “Preserve me, O God.” Now, we see David make this kind of petition a lot in the psalms, usually followed by all kinds of trials and tribulations David is walking through, giving reasons for why David needs saving. But that’s not what David does here. In fact, he doesn’t give us any details of his circumstances; it’s possible that he’s walking through difficult circumstances while he writes this, but it could just as easily have been written during the times of peace in his life. INstead, what follows this petition is David’s declaration that he’s trusting in GOD alone as his refuge, his only hope. We see this in verses 1-2: “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.’”

David’s declaring confidence in God and complete devotion to Him as “*my Lord*” - the only true God, whom David worships in faith. Furthermore, David recognizes that GOD is good and the only source of all that is good. David recognizes that everything good in his life, everything good in this world or anyone’s life, is found only in God and comes from God. There is “no good apart from you,” he says. We see this same thought similarly expressed in *James 1:17*: “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*” David recognizes that everything good in his life, everything good in this world or anyone’s life, is found only in God and comes from God. The life lived outside of GOD, and the things that do not come from God are, therefore, not good, but worthless, bad, harmful, wrong, and evil. Therefore, since God is the only God and the source of all that is good, He is the only place we can go to for refuge! He is our only hope, the only true ground for confident trust!

In other words, David is declaring that he worships and trusts in God alone, not putting his trust in any idols as his refuge. He makes this clear in verses 3-4, where he draws a contrast between those who trust God, as His people, and those who are not GOD’s people and instead trust in false gods.

Let’s look at the negative example first, in verse 4: “The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pur out or take their names on my lips.” This clearly describes idolatrous pagans, those who worship false gods and “pour out” profane, sinful “offerings” or sacrifices to them. In the language we use today, these would be

“non-believers” who do not worship God. Now, we might protest and say, “Well, there are lots of people today who don’t worship or put their faith in God, but they don’t exactly worship false gods either. Sure, those who practice false religions, like Muslims, Mormons, Buddhists, and Hindus do, but secular “nones” in our culture don’t exactly worship idols, right?” But this is, I think, a wrong way to think about it. Yes, even secular ‘nones’ who claim not to believe in God do, in fact, worship false gods and give themselves to idolatry. At the end of the day, everyone is going to believe in and put their trust in *something*, whether it’s a statue of a Hindu idol or a Buddhist ritual or the belief that the science and ingenuity of mankind is the greatest hope for the world and humanity, or whether you simply put your trust and hope in yourself, your money, your things and comfort and pleasure, as your refuge. Everyone trusts in something as their ultimate hope and refuge. Everyone worships something.

And verse 4 makes clear that anything outside of God is a vain hope; those who trust in idols do not find the good life they seek, but instead their “sorrows... shall multiply.” So, David declares that he will have nothing to do with their idolatrous lifestyle; he refuses to “pour out” their sacrifices; he refuses to identify with the wicked, saying he will not “take their names on my lips.” David wants nothing to do with the idolatrous lifestyle outside of God or to identify with the wicked. And neither should we. Now, I doubt any of us today are tempted to pour out offerings to Baal, or even to embrace a false religion like Islam or Buddhism (though that’s possible). But I think a temptation we all face is to want to identify with the increasingly non-Christian majority culture around us; we might be tempted to want to fit in, even to embrace the wicked, unbiblical morality of our culture - so as to condone sexual immorality, unbiblical views of marriage and family, LGBTQ+ and non-binary gender identities, abortion, or radical freedom and personal autonomy. When these views are preached as ethically right in our culture, on the news, in the shows and TV we watch, at school or work, or even by friends and family members, we might be tempted to cave in, thinking life will be better and easier for us if we go along with it, bowing down to these false gods of our culture. This is especially true if we’re being threatened with negative consequences for living out our biblical convictions publicly; we might be tempted to just give in, at least out in public, at school, or at work. But that is not the way of life; it will only multiply your sorrows. Don’t turn to those false views as refuge; don’t try to identify with the wicked, idolatrous, unbelieving world.

Instead, we should identify with GOD's people, as David does in verse 3: "As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." David is fully devoted to the Lord. And his devotion to God is reflected by his delight in God's people, as we see in verse 3: "As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." David trusts in GOD alone, and therefore, he *delights* in everyone who does the same! He knows that, despite what the unbelieving world might say, it is those who unwaveringly trust in God that are the "excellent ones," the "saints," the people of God! If we're trusting in God alone as our refuge, then this will be reflected in our delight in and association with God's people - which for us today means, being identified with Christ's church, our fellow believers! Anyone who trusts in Christ alone for salvation is forgiven of God, declared holy and righteous, and united to Christ - and therefore, since all Christians are united to Christ in faith, we're also united to *each other*. We're brothers and sisters, part of one family - the people of God, the Church. If we trust and delight in God, we will identify and delight in God's people, the church.

Brothers and Sisters, Christ is our only hope; there is no good outside of Him! Let us put our faith in Christ alone, seeking God as our only refuge!

And we can do so because *God is all we need*.

## **II. Trusting God Because He is Truly Satisfying (vv.5-8)**

In verses 5-8, David gives some reasons for why he can confidently trust in God as his only hope and refuge: he can do so (and so can we), because God's *truly satisfying goodness, sovereignty, and guidance in our lives*. David points to how good the Lord is, even pointing to the benefits of the Lord, to show that the greatest benefit is *God Himself*; if we have God, then He is all that we need!

Verses 5-6 read: "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." Now, what we need to recognize is that David is drawing on language used quite frequently earlier in the Bible. The words "portion," "Lot," "lines" (or boundary lines"), and "inheritance" - all of these words are used over and over again in the Old Testament, especially in Genesis through Joshua, to refer to the Promised Land that God gives to Israel when he brings them out of Egypt, dividing up a "lot" and "portion" of the land to each of the twelve tribes as their "inheritance," apportioning various "boundary lines" for each of them. However, one tribe doesn't get a "portion" of the land as an "inheritance." The Levites have a different inheritance; God says to the Levites, in Num.

18:20, “You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.” God Himself is their inheritance!

And that’s the language that David is using here; he’s saying that the “portion” and “inheritance” he chooses is God Himself! He desires God above all. He knows that GOD is good and sovereign, that God “holds my lot.” In other words, he knows that God is in control of His life, so that everything that comes in this life is the will of the Lord for Him. And because God is good and in control, and David is part of God’s people, he can say, “the lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.” I think what he means is, regardless of circumstances, *the Lord* is his inheritance, and therefore, *he has a beautiful inheritance*, far better than anything else in this world! When the Lord is our inheritance, our portion and our cup, He is more than enough - truly satisfying to our souls! - so that we don’t have to worry about our lives; we know God is good and in control, that he holds our “lot” in his hands, so that *no matter what* comes our way, be it blessing or suffering, we can see it all as “pleasant places” because *we have the Lord*. We know that every good thing we have comes from Him, so we can rejoice and thank Him for it, enjoying every good and pleasant thing in our lives as a gift from God! And when sorrow and suffering comes into our lives, when we lose our job, when money is short, when our health fails, when things don’t turn out as we’d like - we can rejoice, knowing that our hope is not in this life or the things of this world, but that our hope and refuge is in God alone, and He is sovereignly in control!

Therefore, David pursues the Lord, praising God for guiding and instructing him in the way to go: “I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me” (v.7). Knowing that the Lord is all the we need, being our truly satisfying portion and inheritance, we pursue him, meditating on the Lord’s word, following his ways and pursuing God Himself in all things! And when we do so, when we have a truly God-centered view of life, trusting in God to be our satisfying inheritance, then this gives us an unshakeable foundation for life. We see this in verse 8: “I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.” David gives us an example here of a robust spirituality; an example of a person who truly knows God, trusts Him, and delights in Him above all things! And this isn’t some pipedream fantasy, or something reserve for a special few spiritual “elites” - this is a picture of Christian maturity that we should all aim for. It’s a picture of having a genuine

relationship with God, of yearning for, trusting, and delighting in Him who alone can satisfy the deepest yearnings and desires of our hearts!

One of my favorite songs of all time is the great hymn “Be Thou My Vision,” and I think it perfectly captures what David says here. The opening line says, “Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart/ Naught be all else to me, save that thou art.” Or, as the third verse says, “Riches I heed not, nor man’s empty praise/ THou mine inheritance, now and always.” We must set our eyes on the Lord; we must set our hearts on Christ, desiring Him above all, knowing that He is all that we need, that He will satisfy our yearning souls, and that because God is with us, we shall not be shaken!

This is the only foundation for true joy and the life we long for. Which brings us to our final point...

### **III. Trusting God Because of the Joy of His Presence and Salvation (vv.9-11)**

David confidently trusts in God alone as His refuge, knowing that there is no good apart from Him, and that there are no other gods or places to turn to (vv.1-4). He has experienced the goodness of the Lord and is satisfied in Him alone (5-8). Now, in verses 9-11, he tells us what such trust produces in him: and the answer is confident *joy*. “Therefore,” he says, “my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices” (v.9a). In other words, because David trusts in the reliable, sovereign, good GOd as His refuge, “therefore” David’s “heart is glad and [his] whole being rejoices” - his joy comes from resting and trusting in the Lord.

But in the rest of verses 9-11, he goes on to give further reasons for the great joy he has in the Lord: he continues, “my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.” Now, what is David saying here? “My flesh dwells secure” means his body is safe from harm, even death. “Sheol” was a name for death, or more specifically, the place where people go when they die; he’s saying God “will not abandon” him in death. Nor will he “let his holy one see corruption” - that is, he will not let him stay dead. In other words, this is confidence in being delivered from death!

But here’s the problem: David eventually died, and he *stayed dead*. So what do we make of these verses? Well, thankfully, these verses are quoted twice in the book of Acts, first by Peter (Acts 2:24-32), then again by Paul (Acts 13:34-37).

If you would, keep your finger in Psalm 16, and just flip over two Acts 2. In **Acts 2:24-32**, Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11 and gives us a very helpful exposition of these verses.

Peter's argument is that: 1. David clearly died, and was buried, and indeed he stayed dead and his body saw corruption, so David clearly couldn't have been talking about himself here (v.29); Secondly, 2. David had a promise from God, in 2 Sam. 7, that his descendant would sit on his throne forever, as the Messianic king (v.30); 3. Therefore, in Psalm 16 David is explicitly speaking about the Messiah, Jesus, because, as Peter says in Acts 30-31, David was "a prophet" and "he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption." IN other words, Peter tells us that when David wrote Psalm 16:verses 9-11, he was *prophetically speaking about and looking forward to the resurrection of the Messiah*, great David's greater Son, Jesus Christ! Peter quotes this Psalm, therefore, to show that David was making it very clear that the Messiah could not be held by death: God would not abandon the Messiah in Sheol or let his "holy one" see corruption, meaning he would not let him be defeated by, held captive by, or stay in death. Therefore, this meant that he would be raised, meaning the Messiah *had* to be raised from the dead, just as Jesus was.

In **Acts 13:34-37**, Paul also quotes these verses and makes the exact same point. Paul's logical argument is clear: 1. Paul takes Psalm 16:10 as plainly referring to Jesus being raised from the dead, "no more to return to corruption" (Acts 13:34); 2. Clearly, then, it can't be talking about David, since he died and "saw corruption" (Acts 13:36); 3. The one spoken of in Psalm 16 is "he whom God raised up" since this is the one who "did not see corruption" (Acts 13:37); 4. This one is Jesus Christ, the Messiah, through whom forgiveness of sins is proclaimed, and "by whom everyone who believes is freed" from the condemnation of the Law (Acts 13:38-39). Paul's point is that the resurrection of Christ fulfills Psalm 16 and brings about the way to eternal life in the presence of God, being forgiven and reconciled to Him, having our sin debt paid by the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ.

That's the amazing gospel truth that David is looking forward to by faith, here in Psalm 10! He knows he will die. But he also knows that he will be secure, even in death, because he knows that the resurrection of Christ will also secure eternal life for himself, through faith! We see this in v.11: "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." What we see here is a confident, sure hope in the resurrection of the dead, in eternal life! Jesus Christ rose from the grave and conquered over death itself! The grave could not hold him, for in his sacrificial death and resurrection, he



defeated sin, Satan, and death, for *anyone who trusts and believes in Him!* In Christ alone we find a sure hope, in this life and in death! Christ is a refuge for us, even in the face of inevitable death, because in Christ we find “the path to life!” And this surely refers to eternal life, to life in “the presence of GOd” where “at your right hand are pleasures forevermore”!

God is worthy of our complete devotion and confident trust, not just in this life, but even in death and the life to come! We have nothing to worry about or fear; Christ has risen and conquered over our sin and even the death we deserve! If you’re trusting in the good news of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, then God has made known to you the path of life! Death will not hold us - we will be raised with Christ to eternal life! And that eternal life will be *absolutely wonderful, glorious, and full of joy and pleasure forevermore!* Why? Because we are heading to live in the *very presence of God for eternity!* And in the presence of the Lord “there is fullness of joy!” God is perfectly good, so that every good thing comes from God and “there is no good apart from” him. In his presence it is perfectly good, full of joy and pleasure; after all, God Himself is our “*beautiful inheritance,*” as we saw in vv.5-6! And one day, we will be raised to receive the inheritance of eternal life in the very presence of God; for God Himself, His presence, is our inheritance, and it will be full of “joy” and “pleasures” forevermore! On that eternal day, there will be no more sin, sorrow, sadness, pain, sickness, or death! We will not joy unending, for we will be in the very presence of our glorious God - and there is nothing better, no safer place or refuge than Him!

So then, let us trust in the Lord, seek Him, and delight in the satisfying joy of His presence, even now! For even now, Christ is with you! That’s what CHristmas is all about; Immanuel has been born; God is with us! Christ has come, and He is still present with us through His Holy Spirit! Even now, we are in His presence, through the Holy Spirit of Christ in us! Even now, if you’re in Christ, we know a *glimpse* of the joy of the Lord’s presence, as He walks with us! So let us trust him, because of who He is and what He has done in the gospel of Christ!

And if you’re not a believer, this joy and eternal life can be yours! Simply trust in Christ alone, and He will save you! THEN make your faith public by being baptized and join the church. If you have any questions about this gospel, or about baptism or church membership, I would love to speak with you.

Let us pray.