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Psalm 16

Introduction – The Risen Christ spent forty days speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Luke wrote that this was the conversation on Resurrection Day (Luke 24:25-27, 44-45). Many have wondered over what those Bible classes would have included. We will see that most likely one of the central texts that Jesus used to show that He was the promised Messiah was Psalm 16. This is the psalm-singer's plea for deliverance in the face of death bathed with great confidence and hope in his God. The psalm-singer first renders that plea (v1) followed with evidences which indicate that his plea is not hypocritical (vv2-4), and ends exhibiting impossible, exuberant, and exalting faith (vv5-11).

Plea and Evidence (vv1-4) – There is a cry for preservation in the midst of a psalm that certainly is written during a time where the psalm-singer's life is threatened. Therefore, we can apply such a psalm at any terrible trial up to and including our own death. Even at death's door there are prayers of faith to be offered.

Reminders to Me and God – The psalm-singer reminds himself and the Lord that his love is upon the Lord (v2), upon His people (v3), while rejecting the folly of idolatry especially in times of trial. Verse two could read, "*Down in my soul I have said to YHWH, you are my Master...*" It is this foundational truth where we must begin in order to arrive at the joy of the rest of the psalm. He knows there is no goodness in himself apart from God (James 1:17) so that is where he seeks for good. That is why he is seeking for good in God now, when it appears that God may have ordained even death for him.

Learning from Jesus, the Psalm-singer (vv5-11) – How do we get to that point, trusting in God even in the face of death? How do we sing this kind of song while obeying the Lord's command to pick up our own cross and follow Him (Matt 16:24-26)? Jesus apparently used this psalm, because both Peter and Paul use it to show how the scriptures spoke of Christ (Acts 2:25-26, 13:39). David's body did see corruption; the apostles show that this psalm was speaking of Christ, and particularly of His death and resurrection. This means that, in the face of death, Jesus was able to turn to His Father and sing of how good His portion and cup were (vv5-6), of how YHWH had given Him counsel, even in the "*night seasons*," that is, the darkest times (v7). He knew that the Father was at His right hand and could therefore believe the impossible: that His soul would not be left and His body would not see corruption. In short, with even death facing Him, Jesus counted it all joy because of an impossible faith in God (Heb 12:2). We are told that we can and must grow up into this same faith.

Impossible Faith (vv5-11) – This faith is a gift from God and it is a faith cultivated by "...looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..." David wrote and sang this song looking to His Redeemer. We are to meditate and sing this psalm looking to Jesus as well.

My Portion and My Cup (v5) – "*Give us this day our daily bread*," we pray. And of course, Christ is the Bread of Life, He is "*our inheritance*" and He "*maintains*" that portion for us.

Pleasant Lines (v6) – This was sung by the Son of Man who said He had nowhere to lay His head (Luke 9:58), of whom it was prophesied that He was stricken and smitten (Isaiah 53:4). Contentment never comes from one's situation, never from getting more stuff or better stuff (or circumstances or relationships or...). It comes when we believe Prov 16:33, "*The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.*"

Listening to Your Gut (v7) – Not only are we to receive counsel from the Lord, but even our affections are to instruct us, especially in the darkest hours of life. What can this mean but that through the Word of God dwelling in us richly in all wisdom, we are to teach ourselves and one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord. This is the affect of the Word put to music: your deepest feelings instruct you.

Set YHWH Always Before You (v8) – This is what Jesus needed to do. How much more must we? And why bother? "Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved."

Glad Hearts, Rejoicing in Glory, Restful Hope (vv9-10) – Even death cannot separate us, not only from God, but from the love of God which is ours in Christ Jesus – and Jesus taught us this in Word and deed. The souls of believers upon their death immediately are brought into the very presence of God in heaven. On the Final Day of Resurrection, our bodies, finally and completely glorified, will be rejoined with our souls and everything will be good. Everything. We win. The devil, this worldly flesh, the sinful struggles, the short-term victories by the enemies – they all lose. Forever. God wants you to think about this. A lot.

The Path of Life (v11) – This is not only a path that leads to eternal life. It is this path of life for today, for every believer in

Jesus. Here we only taste, but we do have the privilege of the tastes. And it is so sure, this future promise, that even today we are invited to partake with our Savior in these words, “*In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*”

This faith looks impossible. It looks ridiculous. Except to those in Christ Jesus, because our lives are in His life. Join the Psalm-singer. Sing the psalms.

Dave Hatcher – September 16, 2007

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