

# A Prayer for Protection

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July 10, 2022  
Psalm 16

- In our Psalm, David appeals to God for protection and for safe-keeping.
- All of us want to be protected. All of us want to feel safe and secure and have that sense that all is well.
- Most of us also can at some level relate to feeling anxious or afraid when our well being and safety is somehow threatened...by some trial or difficulty or perhaps opposition.
- This psalm before us is a wonderful gift from God to all believers from every generation, as it helps to quiet our souls and see that our protection, our safety, our sense of well-being can only be found in one place and that is the Lord.

**Main Point: The believer's true source of protection and safety is ultimately God alone.**

***[1] Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.***

- You'll notice, in his distress, David doesn't look to alternative sources of security --Rather he looks to the Lord.

***[2] I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."***

- Here king David acknowledges that all good he ever has and ever will experience comes from one source!: God Himself, Yahweh.

[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. (ESV)

- The psalmist says v2, 'Yahweh, I realize every good and perfect gift comes from you—so I'm looking to you... I am looking to you and you alone for refuge and safekeeping.'

***[3] As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.***

- So, the psalmist acknowledged all good comes from God, and now he affirms that one of God's exceedingly good blessings to us is "*the saints in the land.*"
- He affirms that a primary expression of the goodness of God is the people of God.

- The Apostle Paul expressed his great delight in the Phillipians when he wrote to them, “*I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:8).*”
- The Apostle Paul loved the Philippians so much, that he could say the love he had for them was Christ’s very own love.
- May God by His Holy Spirit help us all to have that same kind of warm, intense affection for and delight in all of God’s people everywhere, and more specifically for one another in the context of the local church.

***[4] The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.***

- Running after false gods is idolatry. Presenting drink offerings containing the blood of animal sacrifices before false gods is idol worship.
- In the Old Testament, people worshiped false gods because they mistakenly believed that if they worshiped these false gods, their families would be fruitful, their barns would be full, and their crops would be protected against storms and natural disasters.
- The unbelieving world around us craves safety and happiness, but all they have is their idols. All they have is their money. All they have is their pursuit of power and success. All they have is their serial broken relationships...one after the other.
- And we as believers are not immune from idolatry either.
- An idol is anything or anyone we replace God with--anything or anyone we look to, to be God for us...to give us what we can only receive from God.
- Idols are often good things that we start treating as Keller says, like ultimate things.
- If some aspect of life isn’t going our way and we respond in sinful anger, OR incessant worry, OR sulking self-pity OR by going and sinning in some way--we can be sure we are dealing with an idol that we are clutching to with all our might.
- We are dealing with a desire that is SO strong that it has in effect become Lord of our lives and replaced God in our hearts!
- We should take note that — idolatry David reminds us--leads to disaster.
- When people reject God and seek blessing and protection and safety apart from Him– the inevitable consequence is sorrows. Sorrows multiplied one on top of the other.
- That’s not just true for unbelievers. It’s true for believers as well. Our God is a jealous God. He simply will not be replaced. Yahweh wants our hearts.

***[5] The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.***

- Here David says 'what I truly need is not false gods but the one true God. I need Yahweh.'
- David says essentially -- “I don’t need any idol to be happy and have a sense of safety and well-being. Why? Well because I have God...and because I have God, I have enough.

- The APPLICATION of vs.5 is Yahweh is your cup of blessing. Yahweh is your inheritance-- so find your joy in God. Find your sense of stability and peace and security in Him and in Him alone and forsake all idolatry.

***[6] The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.***

- Here David uses the metaphor of property boundary lines for life's circumstances.
- Just as God sovereignly had allotted to each Israelite the space within the boundary lines of their physical property, so he has sovereignly allotted to each person the exact set of circumstances they face in life.

***[7] I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.***

- Here the psalmist speaks of how in his bed, at night, in those moments before falling asleep, His mind is on the Lord and the Lord speaks to Him.

***[8] I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.***

- Here the psalmist speaks of the emotional security and stability he has because He has intentionally pre-occupied himself with the Lord. He has intentionally set the Lord, he has set Yahweh always before him.
- The Lord is David's constant meditation.

***[9] Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.***

- David is declaring that no matter what evil may threaten his life, He can still be happy and His soul can still be at peace.
- It is as if he has a happiness and a peace that is out of reach of circumstances.
- This indeed is in large part what sanctification is about. It's about God providentially allowing trials and difficulties into our lives that are divinely crafted to expose our idols AND bring us to the place where God Himself is more central to our identity than anything or anyone else.

***[10] For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.***

- The Apostle Peter referring to this psalm makes this very point in [Acts 2](#). And then he explains who [Psalm 16:10](#) was ultimately referring to. He says

*Being therefore a prophet...he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.*

- The Holy One of all has not seen corruption. Christ was buried, but his body did not see corruption. Our Lord and Savior Jesus has risen from the dead, thereby conquering our greatest enemy which is death!
- Just as Christ has been raised, we too one day will rise from the dead to newness of life in the new heavens and the new earth!
- Therefore no matter what evils may befall us in this life, we have reason to rejoice.
- We have reason to be at peace because the believer's true source of protection and safety is NOT in circumstances OR people—rather the believer's true source of protection and safety is ultimately God and God alone.
- Christ Jesus Himself, the Son of God, has protected us from the wrath of God we deserve and secured for us eternal life with Him in His presence, where there is fullness of joy!
- So we can say with David

***[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. (ESV)***

### **Questions for Discussion/Application:**

- Re-read the text, Psalm 16. What initial insights and observations do you have from reading this passage?
- When we find ourselves in distressing situations, what role ought prayer to have as we walk through those situations?
- When you face difficulty, what priority do you tend to place on prayer? How do you want to grow in this area?
- Re-read verse 3. What does it look like for us to emulate the Psalmists example of delight in God's people? What are you thankful about with respect to other believers and specifically other believers in our Care Group or our church?
- Re-read verse 6. It was said, "*Just as God sovereignly had allotted to each Israelite the space within the boundary lines of their physical property, so he has sovereignly allotted to each person the exact set of circumstances they face in life.*" What implications should this truth have when it comes to how we process difficulties and challenges we face?
- Re-read verse 8. How can we grow in intentionally setting the Lord before us--thinking about and meditating upon His Word?
- Consider taking time to pray, asking God (A) to help us to depend more fully on him in prayer when difficulty comes and (B) to trust in God and His sovereign goodness with those aspects of our experience of life that are troubling and hard to understand.