

# Psalm 16: An Easter Hymn

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to the first portion of Scripture that we read, the book of Psalms, Psalm 16.

And I want us to consider the whole psalm, but if we just read again at verse 8. It's a beautiful psalm.

Psalm 16 and verse 8, 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 the grave, 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. As you know, in the day and age that we live in, the Bible is often considered to be irrelevant and even inapplicable to us who are now living in the progressive and prevailing 21st century.

[ 1 : 1 8 ] We have all these fads and fashions that our atheistic and apathetic context and culture want to promote and to present to us. And we're often told in today's world that we don't need the Bible now.

Because, well, we know better. But you know, the thing is, when life takes that unexpected twist or turn, we're all made to realize that we know nothing at all.

We know nothing at all. Because when there's a diagnosis or a departure or a death that we didn't anticipate, the question is, who do we look to?

Who do we listen to? Who do we lean upon? And yet, the amazing thing is, it's the Bible which speaks into every situation and into every circumstance in our lives.

And that's because the wonderful thing about the Bible is that it doesn't cover up the problems in this world. The Bible doesn't pretend that everything is going to be okay. The Bible doesn't paint over and just make pretty all the sins and the sicknesses and the sufferings and the sorrows of this life.

[ 2 : 2 8 ] No, the Bible asserts and affirms to us that Jesus Christ is our only hope in life and death. Jesus Christ is our only hope in life and death.

And you know, we're reminded of this so often. Even today we were reminded of it. We hear about people from our congregation or from our community who have encountered and experienced sickness and suffering and sorrow.

And you know, we're brought back to what the Bible has been saying to us all our life. There is no hope. We have no hope except in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our only hope in life and death.

We can't hope in family or in friends or in finances or even in our physical well-being because it's all frail. It's all fleeting.

It's all fragile. Therefore, our only hope in life and death is in Jesus Christ. And you know, that's David's testimony here in Psalm 16.

[ 3 : 36 ] It's an Easter hymn. What kind of hymn is Psalm 16? Psalm 16 is an Easter hymn. Because in Psalm 16, David claims and confesses that his only hope in life and death is in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

His only hope in life and death is in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And you know, in this Easter hymn, David makes this claim and confession here because David knows that in Christ, he has a divine protection, a divine provision, and a divine promise.

David, in this Easter hymn, he makes this claim and confession here because he knows that in Christ, he has a divine protection, a divine provision, and a divine promise.

And there are three headings this evening. A divine protection, a divine provision, and a divine promise. So first of all, a divine protection. And this is what I love about this psalm.

David opens the psalm, saying in verse 1, Now David opens his Easter hymn with a prayer and a plea to God.

[ 5 : 11 ] For protection. He says, preserve me. Preserve me. Literally, he's saying, protect me, or guard me, or watch over me. He's saying, Lord, as we were singing in the Psalter version, Lord, keep me.

Lord, keep me, for I cannot keep myself. You know, my friend, David's only hope in life and in death was in the divine protection of the God who keeps him.

Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge. And you know, this word, keep or guard or watch or protect or preserve, it's a pastoral word.

It's a wonderful word. Because it gives to us the image and illustration of a shepherd watching over his flock. As we mentioned earlier, the image and the illustration is the shepherd who is keeping his sheep safe.

He's guarding them with his life. He's watching over them carefully. He's providing protection for them. And ultimately, the preservation of life.

[ 6 : 16 ] He's looking after them. He's being a shepherd to his sheep. And you know, it's a beautiful image and illustration that the Lord is not only our shepherd, the Lord is our keeper.

The Lord is our keeper. I don't know if Seanac will allow me to say this, but I'll say it anyway. You know, that was the first thing she said to me when I phoned her this afternoon.

I'm being kept. What a testimony to have. Well, Mardu, I'm being kept. That's all I asked her. Seanac, how are you?

Mardu, I'm being kept. And that's what she knew. She knows the Lord is not only her shepherd in her sadness and her sorrow, but the Lord is also her keeper.

And you know, that's why the psalmist in Psalm 121, he described the Lord as his keeper. Because he's the shepherd who promises to keep and to guard and to watch and to protect and to preserve his flock.

[ 7 : 17 ] And as his sheep, as the sheep of the good shepherd, he promises to keep our going out and our coming in each day of our lives and forevermore.

And you know, it was this image and illustration that Peter used in the New Testament. Peter used the image and illustration of the shepherd and the keeper. And he reminded the Christians in the early church who were being persecuted for their faith, he reminded them that in Christ we are blessed because we're being kept.

We're blessed because we're being kept. And we're being kept by the power of God through faith in Jesus Christ. And you know, it's no wonder that Jude, I love those verses at the conclusion of his loving letter.

Jude, it's just a short letter, as you know, the second last book of the New Testament. And as Jude brings his loving letter to a conclusion, he concludes with this beautiful benediction where he reminds us and reassures us as Christians that we are those who are not only called and loved, we're also kept.

We are called, loved, and kept. And Jude says to Christians, to the Lord's people, he says, You know, my friend, that's where David's only hope in life and death was.

[ 9 : 04 ] It was in the God who keeps him. It was in the God who keeps him. And you know, my friend, is that not the hope of the gospel? Is that not your hope tonight? That whatever is going on in your life, whatever's going on in your experience, whatever burdens that you bear in your heart, is that not your hope tonight?

That the Lord is not only your shepherd, the shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep, but he's also your keeper who promises his divine protection.

His divine protection. That's what Jesus said. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give to them eternal life, and they will never perish, neither shall they be plucked out of my hand.

It's a divine protection. It's a divine protection. But let's not misunderstand David here, because having a divine protection doesn't mean that you're going to have a trouble-free life.

It doesn't mean that life is going to be plain sailing and just a bed of roses. It doesn't mean that you're going to be immune from all the ills of this life. And you know that to be true. It doesn't mean that you'll never fall into sin or face sickness or endure suffering or encounter sorrow.

[ 10 : 31 ] But you know, having a divine protection does teach us. It does teach us that we can't trust in our feelings. Feelings come and feelings go. Feelings are deceiving.

We can't trust completely in our friends or our family or our finances or our physical well-being, because all these things, as we said, they're frail, fleeting, and fragile.

And that's why we need to make this claim, the claim and confession of David that he makes in verse 2. Look at verse 2. He says, I say to the Lord, You are my Lord.

I have no good apart from you. I say to the Lord, You are my Lord. I have no good apart from you. You know, my friend, David had hope in life and in death because he could claim and confess Jesus as Lord.

You are my Lord. You're Lord over my whole life. In fact, Paul said that that was the only way to be saved. We mentioned that this morning.

[ 11 : 35 ] The only way to be a Christian is to claim and confess Jesus as our Lord. He must be Lord over our whole life, not just part of our life, not just our Sunday, but our whole life, our whole week.

And Paul said, If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. And you know, my friend, is that your claim?

Is that your confession? Can you openly and honestly say about this Jesus tonight, He's my Lord. He is my Lord.

You are my... That's what David says. You are my Lord. I think that's what holds some of you back. You believe it.

As I said this morning, you believe it. Everything I'm saying, you believe it. But you must confess it. You are my Lord. You are my Lord.

[ 12 : 34 ] And when you confess it, you must live it. Live as Jesus is Lord over your life. Because when you do, when you make that claim, when you make that claim and confession that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, you'll learn to say with David and with every other Christian, as he says at the end of verse 2, I have no good apart from you.

I have no good apart from you. Which means, not that there aren't good things in life, but what David's saying is that there's nothing else that matters in life and in death apart from knowing Jesus.

You strip it all back, and David's saying here, there's nothing else that matters in life and in death apart from loving and looking and leaning and living for Jesus.

There's nothing else. You know, my friend, the claim and confession of the Christian is that I have nothing. I have absolutely nothing apart from the goodness and the grace and the glory of Jesus Christ.

I have no good apart from him because he means everything to me. I have nothing apart from the goodness, grace and glory of Jesus Christ.

[ 13 : 51 ] But you know, what we ought to notice is that this claim and this confession of the Christian, that David here, where he's seeking divine protection, David says this in contrast to those who spurn divine protection.

Because he says in verse 3, as for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight. Then verse 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. David says that the saints, those who seek the Lord, those who shelter under his divine safety and security, they're the excellent ones.

They're the righteous ones. They're the glorious ones. They're the ones who are called, loved, and kept by the shepherd of their souls. But David says, those who spurn the Lord, those who seek after other gods, he says they have no shelter, they have no safety, no security, because they only have sorrow.

They only have sorrow. And David says, their sorrows are multiplied because they have no hope in life and they have no peace in death.

[ 15 : 08 ] Their sorrows are multiplied not only in time, but also in eternity. Their sorrows are multiplied because they don't know this Jesus.

They don't love this Jesus. They don't follow this Jesus. They don't know him as one who bears our griefs and carries our sorrows. And so their sorrows are multiplied.

Their sorrows are multiplied because they haven't come to claim and confess with the hymn writer about Jesus. Man of sorrows. Their sorrows are multiplied because they don't know the man of sorrows who's able to save us.

Is that not what the hymn writer said? Man of sorrows, what a name for the Son of Man who came, ruined sinners, to reclaim. Hallelujah. What a Savior.

My friend, our only hope in life and in death is in the man of sorrows. Because in him we have a divine protection. And through him we have a divine provision.

[ 16 : 13 ] Which is what we see secondly. A divine provision. So a divine protection and then a divine provision. We see that in verse 5.

Where David writes, You know, in this Easter hymn David not only claims and confesses that he has hope in life and death because the Lord has gifted and guaranteed him that divine protection.

But you know, David here, he also claims and confesses that he has a divine provision. And the divine provision is the Lord's inheritance. The divine provision is the Lord's inheritance.

Because Jonathan, the language that David uses here is the language of inheritance. It's the language of the inheritance. And it's the same language that's used to describe the inheritance of the children of Israel.

The inheritance that they received when they entered the promised land. As you know, the Lord had pledged and promised to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob and all their descendants after them that they would inherit the promised land.

[ 17 : 45 ] They would be gifted and guaranteed the blessings and benefits of a land flowing with milk and honey. It was a promised inheritance for them.

And the Lord was faithful to his people. He was faithful to his promises. Because as we saw this morning, even with the Exodus, after 430 years of slavery in Egypt and then a further 40 years of wandering around in the wilderness when the children of Israel finally reached the river Jordan and crossed over their final river, they entered the promised land to receive their allotted inheritance.

And it was an allotted inheritance because, as you know, the children of Israel, they were divided into 12 tribes. They were the 12 sons of Jacob.

So they were the 12 tribes of Israel or the 12 sons of Jacob. And on entering the promised land, each tribe was to receive an allotted inheritance.

They were to receive an allotted portion of the land. They received an allotted portion of the promised land to live in. Just like, I suppose, when someone passes away and a croft is left to them and a croft is left to somebody else and a croft is left to someone else.

[ 19 : 06 ] It's an allotted portion of inheritance. But what's fascinating here is that the language of inheritance which David uses here, it specifically relates and refers to the tribe of Levi.

Because when the children of Israel, when they crossed over the river Jordan, when they crossed over to receive their inheritance and their allotted portion in the promised land, the tribe of Levi, they were left out.

They didn't inherit an allotted portion of the promised land. They didn't get a piece of land to live in and to work in. Because as the Lord's appointed and anointed priests, as the ministers and mediators of God's people, the Levites, the tribe of Levi, they were told, you shall have no inheritance in the land.

Neither shall you have any portion among the people. For I am your portion and your inheritance. So the Lord gave all the tribes of Israel a piece of land.

But then he said to the Levites, you're not going to get any land. You're not going to get an allotted portion because I am your portion and I am your inheritance.

[ 20 : 25 ] And, my friend, the tribe of Levi, they didn't inherit an allotted portion of the promised land because the Lord was to be their inheritance. This is the wonder of it. That's the language David is using here. The language of inheritance.

And he's using this language because he's speaking about Jesus. He's speaking about his Savior. He's claiming and confessing the Lord as his portion, the portion of his inheritance.

And he's saying that the Lord is his divine portion. And the lines, those boundary lines which set out the allotted portion for each part of the tribe, David claims and confesses these lines.

These lines have fallen to me in pleasant places, in pleasing places, in precious places. These lines have given to me a beautiful inheritance because the divine provision of the Lord, it's something far more pleasant and pleasing and precious.

It's far more beautiful and bountiful, far more gracious and glorious than anything I could have ever imagined. And for that reason, David says, in verse 7, I bless the Lord who gives me counsel.

[ 21 : 45 ] 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. David says, I bless the Lord who gives me counsel.

I praise him, he says, I praise him for guiding and governing my life because whether it's during the night and I'm slumbering and sleeping or whether I'm awake and alert, I know that the Lord is with me because he's my portion.

I know the Lord is by my side because he's my portion. And because the Lord is my portion, I have set the Lord always before me. I have set the Lord always before me.

You know, my Christian friend, you know, David is reminding us that we should spend more of our time thinking about the Lord's divine provision in our life.

we should spend more of our time thinking about our eternal inheritance. I don't know how much time of the week we give it thought.

[ 22 : 58 ] Do we give it any thought about our eternal inheritance? But that's why David says, I have set the Lord always before me.

The Lord was always before him in his life throughout the day. And you know, the truth is, for us, it's so easy to drift and become distracted by other things. We become focused and fixated on the here and now.

We all get caught up. We all get carried away with the noise and the nonsense of the world. But David reminds us that as Christians, we're to set the Lord always before us.

We're to set the Lord always before us. He's our portion. He's our inheritance. So we're to set the Lord always before us. That means that the Lord isn't to be secondary in our lives.

He's not to be supplementary in our lives. The Lord is to be first. The Lord is to be foremost. We're to put the Lord first in everything. He's to be, we are to set the Lord always before us.

[ 24 : 07 ] You know, that's why Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Set the Lord always before you. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and thieves cannot break in and steal.

You know, in Christ, this is the wonder of it, in Christ we have a divine provision. We have an inheritance. Incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.

All the blessings and all the benefits of our inheritance, they have been gifted and guaranteed. So my Christian friend, your inheritance tonight is guaranteed.

It's an absolute guarantee. And Paul says, it is guaranteed to you because it has been signed and sealed to you by the Holy Spirit.

Paul says in Ephesians chapter 1, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it. Until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory.

[ 25 : 20 ] You know, I believe that when David sent the Lord before him in this Easter hymn, he had that image of the children of Israel.

He was thinking back to that moment when the children of Israel were standing on the banks of the river Jordan. And as we mentioned this morning, there were about three million of them.

Three million people came out of Egypt and they went through the wilderness and they're now standing at the banks of the river Jordan. They're ready to cross that final river out of the wilderness and into the promised land.

They're crossing into their inheritance, into their allotted provision and portion of land from the Lord. Because that's what it's like for the Christian, isn't it? That's what it's like for the Christian as they come to the end of their pilgrim's progress in this world.

That's what it was like for Christian in the pilgrim's progress. You remember in the pilgrim's progress when Christian and hopeful were within sight of the gate to the celestial city.

[ 26 : 30 ] And there was this great river before them, the river of death. And there was no bridge to cross over it. And the river, we're told, was very deep.

The shining ones were standing on the other side and they were calling to Christian and hopeful and they were saying, you must go through the river or you cannot enter in at the gate. You must go through the river or you cannot enter in at the gate.

And with that, Christian and hopeful, they sought to pass through the river of death. But they could only do so, Bunyan tells us, by claiming and confessing the promise of Jesus in Isaiah 43.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

And through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. You know, what a divine protection. What a divine provision. What a divine promise. That when we cross our final river, the river of death, Jesus is our portion.

[ 27 : 41 ] He's our inheritance. He's pleasant. As David says, He is precious. He's beautiful and bountiful. He is gracious and glorious.

And for that reason, says David, He is my only hope in life and in death. He's my only hope and in life in life and in death.

And it's all because of the resurrection. That's what we're seeing here. We've been reminded and reassured this evening that in Christ, we can make the claim and confession of David's Easter hymn because we have a divine protection.

He's keeping us. We have a divine provision. We have an inheritance. But lastly, we see a divine promise. A divine promise of resurrection.

That's what we see lastly. A divine promise. Look at verse 9. David says, Therefore, therefore my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices.

[ 28 : 43 ] My flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to the grave 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. You know, we can be sure and certain that Psalm 16 is an Easter hymn because it presents to us one of the oldest and yet one of the most obvious prophecies about the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And I say that it was obvious because as we read earlier from Acts chapter 2, Peter's first sermon. Now you remember Peter, he had denied Jesus. Jesus had restored him.

And Peter's first sermon after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost was from Psalm 16. The first thing Peter preaches about is from Psalm 16, this Easter hymn.

Because when the Holy Spirit came upon the church at Pentecost, Peter stood up and preached the gospel with power. And in his first sermon, Peter knew immediately that the whole of Christianity, it stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[ 30 : 03 ] But having experienced the power of the resurrection and having encountered even the person of the resurrection, Jesus Christ, Peter knew. Peter knew that Jesus not only claimed to be the Son of God and the Savior of sinners, Peter knew that Jesus backed up that claim by rising from the dead.

Which is why when Peter was given this opportunity to preach about the resurrection of Jesus, he goes straight to the Old Testament, he goes straight to the book of Psalms, and he goes straight to Psalm 16, this Easter hymn, and he says to the crowds before him, Brothers, brothers, I can say with confidence and with authority that David, King David, both died and was buried and his tomb is still with us to this very day.

But David was a prophet. David was a prophet who foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of Christ, that Jesus Christ would not be abandoned to the grave and his flesh would not see corruption.

And Peter says, this Jesus, this Jesus is the one whom God raised up and of that we are all witnesses. witnesses. Of that, he says, we are all witnesses.

You see, my friend, this Easter hymn not only contains a divine prophecy, it also contains a divine promise that through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, this is the wonder, the grave has been conquered.

[ 31 : 46 ] Although we view the grave as cold and callous, although we view the grave as something painful and personal, the resurrection of Jesus Christ assures us that the grave is conquered, death is defeated, and life and even immortality has been brought to light through the gospel.

My friend, this Easter hymn is reminding us and reassuring you that in Christ, in Christ, and only in Christ, that you have a divine protection, a divine provision, and a divine promise.

And it's a divine protection, provision, and promise that whatever sins are in your life, whatever sicknesses are in your cup, whatever sufferings are in your experience, whatever sorrows come into your home and into your family, your only hope in life and in death is that your grave belongs to Jesus.

your grave belongs to Jesus. That's what we're taught in the catechism. And I hope we all know that catechism.

I hope you know it. I hope you live it. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and they do immediately pass into glory.

[ 33 : 15 ] And their bodies, their bodies, still being united to Christ, they fall asleep in Jesus. They rest in their graves until the resurrection.

My friend, our only hope in life and in death is that our grave belongs to Jesus. Because in this life, nothing else matters.

And that's what David came to discover. I have no good apart from you. Nothing else matters apart from the fact that our grave belongs to Jesus. So does your grave belong to Jesus?

Might not be something you think about. You might think about other people's graves. You might stand over other people's graves. But does your grave belong to Jesus?

I'm sure many of you have your plot set out. But does your grave belong to Jesus? What is your only hope in life and death? Christ our hope in life and death.

[ 34 : 23 ] Christ our hope in life and death. Do you know, that's the title of a Keith and Kirsten Getty song. Christ our hope in life and death.

It's a beautiful song. Beautiful lyrics which affirm and assure us that our only hope in life and death is that our grave belongs to Jesus.

Now look up the song on YouTube. Ask Alexa when you go home. Ask Alexa to play you Christ our hope in life and death by Keith and Kirsten Getty and listen to the lyrics.

Because the song opens with this question. The most important question. The song opens with the lyric What is our hope in life and death?

Christ alone. Christ alone. What is our only confidence? That our souls to Him belong. belong. And then it asks who holds our days within His hand?

[ 35 : 27 ] What comes to us apart from His command? And what will keep us to the end? The love of Christ in which we stand.

And then there's this chorus. Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death. My friend can you make that claim and confession?

Because that's David's claim. That's David's confession in this Easter hymn of Psalm 16. Now and ever we confess Christ our hope in life and death.

Well may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord our gracious God may give thanks to Thee for that wonderful reminder and reassurance that in this life although we face so much difficulty so much heartache and so much sorrow we bless Thee Lord that all that matters and when we are reminded of it all that does matter is that our souls to Him belong.

O we thank Thee and we praise Thee for the wonder of the Gospel for the beauty of the resurrection the assurance that Christ gives to us in life and in death and Lord we pray that each and every one of us would be able to confess that Christ is our hope our only hope in life and death.

[ 37 : 01 ] Lord bless us we pray bless us in the week that lies ahead a week where we will gather with those who are mourning those who are crying those who are sorrowing but we bless and praise Thee that as Thy people we do not mourn as those without hope because in Christ we have a hope that is sure and steadfast a hope that is the anchor of our soul a hope that goes beyond the veil of this world into eternity.

Keep us then we pray by Thy grace and by Thy power go before us we ask for we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening by singing the closing words of Psalm 16.

Psalm 16 in the Sing Psalms version on page 17 Psalm 16 we're singing from verse 8 down to the end of the Psalm Psalm 16 in verse 8 Before me constantly I set the Lord alone because He is at my right hand I'll not be overthrown therefore my heart is glad my tongue with joy will sing my body too will rest secure in hope unwavering down to the end of the Psalm of Psalm 16 to God's praise.

before me constantly I set the Lord the Lord because He is at my right hand I'll love the Lord overflows therefore my heart is glad my tongue with joy will sing my body too will rest secure in hope unwavering for you will not allow my soul in death to save nor will you to be your holy one to see the tombs decay you have made known to me the path of life divine divine bliss shall I know while you're right and joy from your face will shine the grace of the Lord

Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore Amen so do you have answers for me you've got them all Jonathan yeah okay question one what kind of hymn is Psalm 16 an Easter hymn yeah it's an Easter hymn so it's all about the resurrection of Jesus question two what kind of language does David use in verse 6 inheritance yes he's talking about his future inheritance because he trusts in Jesus and what are tonight's headings yeah what's divine protection divine provision isn't it and the last one divine promise good man well done