Psalm 16 – A Psalm of security in God

This morning as we continue our summer series in the Psalms, we will be looking at Psalm 16 together. When I was at Bible College in York, England, as a 17 year old, one of the teachers (Doug Keen), had us meditate on one verse of this Psalm every week for the 11 weeks of the semester (11 weeks; 11 verses). I remember it having quite a profound impact on me then, as taking the time to ponder a verse, and really meditate on it really helps it to sink down deep into your soul! As Martin was talking about last week when he preached on psalm 1 - – I chewed the cud on this Psalm! While that was nearly 10 years ago, that time spent in this Psalm still impacts me, and as I've been pondering it again this week, I've been blessed again by its depth of encouragement.

If you look in your Bibles, you'll see that this Psalms' entitled *'A Miktam of David.'* There's 5 Miktams of David in the Psalms: this one and then 4 others (56-60). So what's a *Miktam*? Well, we're not really sure! There are 4 possibilities. Some people think it means golden*;* like a 'Golden Word,' others think it is related to a word meaning to cover: like this one's a secret! It's also suggested that *Miktam* means mystery poem, could be that! Or there's a possibility a *Miktam* is like an inscribing: an etching! Anyway, nobody knows for sure. So don't lose any sleep over it! You can ask David when you see him in glory!

What we do know is that this is a Psalm about finding security in God. We live in a society that teaches people to find their security in their achievements, in their education, in their career, in their wealth and investments, and many other things. But David explains in this Psalm that trusting in any of these things is setting yourself up for a stressful life, filled with disappointments. Therefore, David declares that he will find his security in God alone. And he can do this for 4 reasons.

Firstly, because God was his refuge – God would always be there when he needed him.
Secondly, because God was his guide, his counselor, his wisdom.
Thirdly, because God was his inheritance – and guaranteed great blessing.
And fourthly, because his joy was secure in God alone.
And the take home point for us from this Psalm this morning, is that we can find our security in God, just like David and experience that same joy he had because Jesus has earned our salvation and he grants us this inheritance.

So let's get to it…

Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
2 I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you."
3 As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all my delight.[b]
4 The sorrows of those who run after[c] another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names on my lips.
5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.
6 The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.
7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.[d]
8 I have set the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being[e] rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.
10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.[f]
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.

So my first point this morning: **God is our refuge**

David says in verse 1, 'Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.' What does the word *refuge* make you think of? Maybe a building with locks on the doors, maybe a thick-walled fortress, or perhaps something as simple as a little hut to keep you dry in a rainstorm like you get here in the mountains. Whatever comes to mind, it's fair to say that a refuge is a safe place that you go to find shelter when you need it.

If anyone ever needed a safe place it was David! He spent half his life on the run from people who wanted to kill him! First King Saul, then foreign kings and leaders, and then even his own son Absalom! David knew his vulnerability, but he also had his safe house - God. God was David's refuge, his safe place.

I wonder what your safe place is? Where do you go in times of trouble, when you need aid, when you want rest, when you need an escape? I think if we were honest we would all be able to say where we go for refuge! It might be TV? Maybe you escape in shows and sitcoms or movies, computer games are another 'safe-place for many people, especially young people. Maybe it's the beauticians

for you ladies…or men!? Some of us shop for retail therapy! The mall is your safe place – where you recover! Where you can buy more stuff and put your hope in new possessions to give you the joy you so desperately desire! Food? Books? Sport? The list goes on! And there's nothing wrong with any of those things! Nothing at all – except maybe computer games – they're lame! But they're all blessings to be enjoyed. However, the problem is, they also act as false refuges!

Listen guys, we are absolutely meant to enjoy shopping, food, sport (except rugby), books, facials and many other things! What I don't want you to take away from this message is "Shopping is sin, Facebook is sin, watching movies is sin. No way! Those things are great - God has given us all these things for our enjoyment, but the problem is us! We get tempted to look for security in these things and we treat them as though they will bring lasting relief, but really they will only be a temporary thing. They are not real refuges from the storms of life. They are bound to let us down, because they wont provide us help in the storm – maybe just a short break from it!

David too, had other possible refuges, but he declares in the first verse, 'Oh God, IN YOU I take refuge. He knew that only God could be a real shelter from the storm. He recognized that God was his only safe place in this unpredictable world. Why is God the only true refuge? Verse 4: because our problems multiply when we attempt to find our security in anything other than him. So how do we make God our refuge? We go to him first. We cast our cares on him. We simply ask Him to be our refuge. Often in the Psalms, David encourages us to, "pour out our hearts to God." That's what David did all the time. He poured out his heart to God about what was going on in his life and asked God to intervene on his behalf. When we turn to God first and go to him for help, we begin to know Him as our refuge. He really enters into the storms and problems of our lives and has the power to do something about them. David truly believed that God was his guide, his counselor, his instructor as well as his refuge. Look at verse 7: I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. This brings us to our 2nd point this morning:

God is our Guide

David went to God with both the big and the small things in his life. He brought everything before the Lord and he was showed what to do. He let God in on everything and God guided him all the way. Did you know that God delights in every detail of your life? (Psalm 37:23) The problem is we don't always discuss our lives with him! We only let him on certain aspects of our life. We don't think he cares about our social life, or what clothes we buy or what we should do with our leisure time, so we don't speak to him about it. Yet there's a real security in making our decisions with God's help and just for the record they nearly always work out better when we get him involved. Isaiah refers to Him as the Wonderful

Counsellor. Don't you want a Wonderful Counsellor counselling you? Give him chance to be involved in your life! We can have his guidance and direction. You will find that God is indeed speaking to you. He may not speak to you in an audible voice – I'm not sure I've ever heard his voice audibly, but you'll know when He's impressing on you certain actions and certain responses. That's what David means when he says his heart instructs him. God counsels us. He doesn't manipulate us or force us – he advises and encourages and if there's one person you want advice from it's God!

'Even in the night seasons', David says, God is there instructing him. Even during those night seasons when things look dark and uncertain, even when you're tossing and turning and can't get to sleep at night because there's so much on your mind, you are not alone. God is right there holding your hand and he will instruct you, he'll carry you, he'll direct you all the way. All we have to do is ask for his All-Wise counsel and he will give it. In the book of James it says 'let him who lacks wisdom ask and it will be given him' (James 1:5). There is nothing too small and nothing to large for King of Kings. Knowing that God is there, right beside him, David can rest secure.

But David also knew that the benefits of looking to God for security go beyond this life. David realizes what a rich and glorious inheritance he has in God. He says in verse 5-6 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. **6** The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. The third thing I want us to think about this morning is our inheritance as children of God.

God is our inheritance

David says he has a beautiful inheritance awaiting him and it's safe because it's not being held by an investment bank, but by God himself. So what is this inheritance? I had to laugh when I read Eugene Peterson's take on this passage, that's the guy who wrote the Message Bible, he says David is saying 'You set me up with a house and yard. And then you made me your heir!' Like the inheritance is a big house and nice garden with a pond and some goldfish! Well that sounds nice, but I think there's more to it than that! In fact I don't think David is referring to property or land at all. What David is talking about is the priceless inheritance God has reserved for his children. It is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. 1 Peter 1:4 (NLT)

The New Testament talks a lot about this inheritance. If you are a Christian, you have been adopted into God's family and as children in God's family we get to share in the family fortune, and it's a pretty big fortune! Yes - everything God has belongs to us (Galatians 4:7). The apostle Paul says, "I want you to realize what a rich and glorious inheritance he has given to his people" (Ephesians 1:18 NLT).

So what are the benefits? Why is this such a beautiful inheritance according to David? Because we are given "the riches ... of his grace ... kindness ... patience ... glory ... wisdom ... power ... and mercy" (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 2:4; 9:23; 11:33; Ephesians 3:16; 2:4). We also inherit eternal life – we get to live with God in heaven forever where everything is perfect! And God puts his Spirit inside us now as a guarantee of all that is to come. That's a beautiful inheritance! That beats any retirement plan out there! God gives the best pensions and you can guarantee they'll never be ruined!

It was for David, and it is the same for us: when you choose the Lord as your portion, he wont let you down! Your eternal inheritance is priceless, permanent, and protected; no one can take it from you. It can't be destroyed by disaster or a failing economy! We just don't realize how rich we are! We are heirs of God through Jesus Christ and if it wasn't for Jesus none of this would be made possible to us.

My last point this morning:

The joy of knowing Christ

As David nears the end of his Psalm he makes an incredible statement. He of course doesn't quite realize that when he says in verse 10 'you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption,' he is of course prophesying about someone else. Who is the holy one who has seen no corruption? We know David did see corruption. David died. His body saw corruption and it's buried in Jerusalem. Therefore he must have been talking about someone else. And Peter explains who that someone else is in Acts chapter 2. David is of course speaking of the Messiah who was not abandoned to the grave nor did his body see corruption. Jesus lived a sinless, spotless life and saw absolutely no corruption, he became a sacrifice for our sins to God the Father paying the price that we deserved to pay and now he is at God's hand welcoming in all who put their trust in what he did 2000 years ago. He was resurrected on the third day and now where is he? He is at the right hand of God. But wait a minute look at verse 11. David tells us what is at the right hand of God – 'pleasures forevermore!' But in Mark in his gospel also tells us what is at the right hand of God: Jesus Christ himself! Could it be that Jesus is literally pleasures forevermore?

What is past the grave? What does the future hold for God's children? David says it holds 3 things. The path of life – eternal life – living with him forever. Lasting joy in God's presence – not a temporal happiness but an everlasting deep seated joy and pleasures forevermore at His right hand in Jesus. This is our inheritance. This is the joy set before us: His presence and his gifts for us to enjoy him forever.

Jesus is our refuge, he's our inheritance and we are heirs of all that belongs to him only because of him. It is all made possible through Jesus. We can be fully secure, not in our own ability or in anything this world can offer us but in what Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross of Calvary. He is all that we need. He is our refuge. He is our inheritance. He is our hope.