

1.26.25

Fullness of Joy Psalm 16.1-11**Doug Scalise, Brewster Baptist Church**

As we started a new year this January, we began a series in worship called **Beginning Again with God**. We've heard from Psalms and Proverbs about how in a relationship with God we find peace and rest, deliverance from fear, and a refuge in times of trouble. Today, we turn to Psalm 16 which like Psalms 4 and 11 also refers to taking refuge in God, and it reveals another key benefit of having a personal relationship with God and that is **joy**.

I've heard from many people this week for whom joy is not one of the top emotions that they're feeling right now. People who are in physical pain or grieving. People whose key relationships are not what they'd like them to be or should be. People with financial challenges. People who spend too much time on social media or the internet and it's having a negative impact. People who are unhappy with where our nation is morally, ethically, politically, socially, or economically. Then there are people who have lost their homes to a fire, war, or other disaster. There are a lot of unhappy people at this present moment. I'm not here to say that you should be happy about any of those things that may be impacting you however directly or indirectly, but I am here to say that God desires for you and for me to experience joy in this life, and that joy is not dependent solely on our circumstances. Happiness is not the same thing as joy. Happiness is largely impacted by what happens to us. Joy is something deeper at a level that is beyond our circumstances.

We find happiness and even joy in things like the people we love, or good health, or a pet that provides companionship, or the shelter and comfort of where we live or in meaningful experiences we share with people we care about and who care about us. We're grateful for the joy those people, creatures, and things provide, but none of them are permanent. Thankfully, the Bible teaches that it's possible to experience a deeper joy, one that's not temporary, fleeting, or impermanent, but deep, lasting, and eternal. **That joy is found in a relationship with God that persists and endures through the chaos, constant changes, and uncertainties of life.**

That's what Psalm 16 is about, how living with the assurance of God's presence, brings ultimate joy and security. Psalm 16 is attributed to David, and it focuses on the joy that comes from dwelling in God's presence. In a world often consumed by fleeting happiness, **Psalm 16 offers an eternal perspective on joy—a joy rooted in our relationship with God.**

Psalm 16 Song of Trust and Security in God. A Miktam of David.

- 1 **Protect 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 holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight.
- 4 Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips.
- 5 **The LORD** is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.
- 6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
I have a goodly heritage.
- 7 I bless **the LORD** who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.
- 8 I keep **the LORD** always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
- 9 Therefore **my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.**
- 10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.
- 11 You show me the path of life. **In your presence there is fullness of joy;**
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Today, we'll explore three key themes in this psalm:

1. **The Source of True Joy**
2. **The Security of Joy in God**
3. **The Satisfaction of Joy in God's Presence**

1. The Source of True Joy

The source of True Joy is a vital relationship with God. David begins with a declaration of dependence on God: *“Protect me, O God, **for in you I take refuge**”* (v. 1). This sets the tone for the entire psalm. David acknowledges that God is the source of his life, joy, and protection. David’s joy is rooted in God and not in material possessions, human relationships, or personal achievements. All those things are temporary and fleeting. **All our material possessions**, no matter how lovely, valuable, or precious they may be to us or how happy they make us, every single one of them will eventually belong to someone else or will be thrown away and trashed. **All our human relationships**, even the ones that provide us the most happiness and joy will end. It’s the nature of life on this planet that everyone and every living thing we love including ourselves is mortal and will eventually die. We need to learn to accept that and to live with gratitude for the time we have. **Whatever success we’re blessed to achieve** is likely to be forgotten within 50 years of our death. For example, in our attic there’s an old suitcase that has certificates and awards my grandfather received including a key to the city of Lowell, Massachusetts. As Nicky Gumbel noted in a devotion this past week, it’s a big honor to be given the key to a city. Yet 46 years later, there are very few people in Lowell who would remember my grandfather or even know he existed, even though he had a significant impact on that city for more than three decades. The source of True Joy is not found in material possessions, human relationships, or personal achievements, but in God.

David’s words in verse 2 reveal the heart of his joy: “I say to the LORD, *“You are my Lord; **I have no good apart from you.**”* This is a profound statement. It reminds us that true joy is not found in the absence of troubles but in the presence of God. We can ask ourselves if we could make a similar declaration, *“I have no good apart from you.”* David’s delight extends beyond his personal relationship with God to include *“the saints in the land”* (v. 3). Our delight as far as people should be in those who are holy and noble and who set an example worth following and emulating. The joy David finds in the community of believers foreshadows our fellowship with other Christians which is a vital

source of encouragement and joy. God designed us to live in community, rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep (Romans 12:15).

Contrast this joy, mutual encouragement, support, and compassion with verse 4, where David warns against idolatry: *“The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply.”* While idols promise happiness, they deliver heartache. Idolatry—whether it’s the pursuit of power, money, status, or pleasure—leads to multiplied sorrows. David’s rejection of idolatry underscores his commitment to finding joy in the true and living God. There’s a reason the first two commandments in the Ten Commandments are (Exodus 20:3-4), *“You shall have no other gods before me. 4 You shall not make for yourself an idol.”* Sadly, idolatry is alive and well even in the 21st century. David recognizes the futility and suffering that come from pursuing false idols. In our context, these “other gods” might not be literal idols, but could be anything we prioritize above our relationship with God—career, wealth, relationships, political power, or even our own desires. Where are you seeking joy today? Don’t fall into the trap of seeking joy in fleeting pleasures, worldly power, or success. Anchor your life in God, the true source of joy, and the only unchanging source of goodness and delight.

2. The Security of Joy in God

In verses 5-8, David highlights **the security of Joy** that comes from trusting in God. He uses vivid imagery to describe his confidence: *“The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. 6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.”* The imagery of a “portion,” “cup,” “lot,” and “lines” speaks to the security and satisfaction David finds in his relationship with God. He feels blessed and fortunate for all the Lord has done for him. I’ve felt a connection to Psalm 16 since I was a young man because my life experience has been like what the Psalm expresses. I’ve been blessed to know and have a relationship with God from my earliest memories that has guided and shaped the course and direction of my life. I was blessed to have two parents who loved me taught me that God loved me too. I didn’t grow up in poverty, or in a land wracked and ruined by war. I’ve been blessed to live in “pleasant places” and to have a goodly heritage in the faith. Those of us who are blessed this way have a sacred duty to help those who have not had our experience of

joy in God and what the Lord has provided. Unlike earthly treasures that can fade or be stolen, the inheritance God provides is eternal and unshakable.

David's joy is further bolstered by God's guidance: *"I bless **the LORD** who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me"* (v. 7). This speaks to the close relationship between David and God. In the quiet moments of the night, David's heart is aligned with God's will, bringing him peace and joy. Often, it's when we've finally shut down, put away or turned off all our screens and we're finally quiet in our bed, that God's still, small voice can get through to us. If you ask the Lord for guidance, I believe God will give it. David trusts God because he knows the Lord is with him.

Verse 8 is a declaration of unwavering trust: *"I keep **the LORD** always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."* When God is our focus, we can face life's challenges with calmness and confidence. God's presence brings us needed stability, no matter the circumstances. Do you feel secure in your relationship with God? Are you trusting God to provide your portion and hold your lot? Reflect on the ways God has guided and protected you, and let this assurance deepen your joy.

After we discover **The Source of True Joy and The Security of Joy in God, we get to experience The Satisfaction of Joy in God's Presence.** The climax of Psalm 16 is found in verses 9-11, where David expresses the fullness of joy that comes from a life lived in close relationship with God: ***"9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. 10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. 11 You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore."***

God's presence impacts every aspect of David's life. It affects David's emotions ("my heart is glad"), his soul ("my soul rejoices"), and even his physical being ("my body also rests secure"). This joy and security stem from David's confidence in God's faithfulness, even in the face of death. While David may have been thinking of God's protection in this life, as Christians we can see in these words a foreshadowing of the resurrection of Jesus. The apostle Peter quotes this passage in Acts 2:25-28, during his

message on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit comes upon Jesus' followers and Peter applies Psalm 16 it to Jesus Christ and His resurrection.

Finally, we come to our key verse: ***"In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore."*** This is the point of everything David's been saying. The ultimate source of joy and pleasure is not found in circumstances, achievements, or even other people—it's found in the presence of God. This assurance of victory over death is a cornerstone of our Christian faith and a profound source of joy. This is the ultimate promise for believers. True joy is found not in the temporary pleasures of this world but in the everlasting presence of God. Heaven is not merely a place of rest but a place of unending delight in communion with our Creator.

How much are you living in the fullness of joy that comes from God's presence? Take time to meditate on God's promises and dwell in God's presence through God's word, prayer, and worship. There's a relationship between David keeping the Lord always before him and the joy he experiences as a result. Let the reality of eternity shape your perspective and fill you with unshakable joy. Joy is a choice, regardless of what's happening in our lives. Joy is also a gift from God, through the Spirit and a fruit of the Spirit as we live in communion with God.

Psalm 16 is a powerful reminder that true joy is found in God alone. Jesus describes this feeling in **Matthew 13:44**, *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; **then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.**"* When you discover you're invited to be part of the kingdom of heaven, that's a treasure that fills your heart and soul with joy.

Henri Nouwen wrote in his book, *Here and Now*, *"Joy is essential to the spiritual life. Jesus reveals to us God's love so that his joy may become ours and that our joy may become complete. Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing—sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death—can take that love away. Joy is not the same as happiness. We can be unhappy about many things, but joy can still be there because it comes from the knowledge of God's love for us. . . . Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and*

keep choosing it every day. It is a choice based on the knowledge that we belong to God and have found in God our refuge and our safety and that nothing, not even death, can take God away from us.”

One day, ultimately, if we have placed our faith and trust in Christ and sought to live as his disciple, we will experience the fullness of joy in God’s presence where there is no ore sorrow, worry, doubt, or fear. In the fullness of joy there will be abundant life, peace, freedom, and love. As we trust in God, we can experience the fullness of joy in the Lord’s presence, both now and forevermore.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of Your presence and the joy that comes from knowing You. Help us to anchor our lives in You, trusting in Your provision and guidance. Teach us to delight in Your goodness and find our security in Your unchanging promises. May our hearts overflow with the fullness of joy that comes from walking in Your ways. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Blessing: **Psalm 43:4** says, *“Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy.”* Jesus declared, *“I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.”* John 15:11

*God of truth, I ask that I may receive so that my “**joy may be complete.**” Until then let my mind meditate on it, let my tongue speak of it, let my heart love it, let my mouth preach it. Let my soul hunger for it, let my flesh thirst for it, my whole being desire it, until I enter into the ‘**joy of the Lord,**’ who is God, Three in One, ‘blessed forever. Amen.’*

Anselm, Proslogion (Saint Anselm of Canterbury was born around 1033–34 in Aosta, Italy and died on April 21, 1109. He was an Italian-born theologian and philosopher who served as the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109)

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. David begins by asking God to "protect" or "preserve" him and declares that he has no good apart from God. What does this tell us about David's relationship with God? How does this verse challenge us to evaluate the sources of security in our own lives?
2. In verse 2, David says, *"I have no good apart from you."* What does this mean for our daily lives? How can we cultivate this attitude?
3. How does David describe his relationship with *"the saints in the land"*? What does this reveal about the importance of godly community within the church?
4. What does verse 4 teach us about avoiding idolatry or misplaced devotion in our lives? What are some "other gods" people chase today?
5. What does it mean to "set the Lord always before me" (verse 8)? How can we practically do this in our daily routines?
6. How does this psalm point to the resurrection of Jesus Christ? (Consider Acts 2:25-28 where Peter quotes from this psalm)
7. Verse 11 speaks of the "path of life" and "fullness of joy" in God's presence. How have you experienced joy in your relationship with God? What does this tell us about eternal life?