

Introduction: Shelter in Place

Welcome and thank you for joining us for worship this Sunday. We continue our study of the Psalms this morning with Psalm 16. And I would invite you to turn to Psalm 16 in your Bibles. I am so very grateful to the Lord and to all the staff and pastors at Rivermont who have made it possible for us to continue to be united as a worshipping body of Christ even when we are separated physically. We are called to worship in Spirit and in truth. And while the current situation mitigates our ability to meet corporately, we will make every effort to maintain the loving fellowship of God's people and to facilitate Spirit filled and gospel centered worship.

Verse 1 of Psalm 16 says,

“Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.”

What does it mean to take refuge in the Lord? We are familiar with the term refugee as someone who is running from persecution, or famine, or war. A refugee is someone who is seeking shelter and deliverance from hardship and struggle. And verse 1 is a refugee prayer. It is the prayer of a person who needs shelter from the storm, who needs protection from their enemy, who needs deliverance from their troubles.

Over the last few weeks we have all become familiar with the phrase “shelter in place.” This is why we are having to do worship over the internet, because we have all been called to avoid large gatherings and to shelter in place. This is why many of you are working from home. This is why students will not be

returning to class tomorrow morning. This is why some have begun to hoard basic supplies. In an act of national unity and care for our most vulnerable populations we have all put our lives on hold and heeded the call to shelter in place.

Now we are not sure how long this sheltering will last. We are praying that the Lord would end the spread of this virus quickly. Yet we trust his timing and his purposes, knowing that he is in control and that he is good. And so, each of us will continue to do our part to see this virus come to an end.

Yet during this time we should not just sit on the couch binge watching Netflix or playing on our Play Station. We shouldn't be continually watching the news or scrolling Facebook. We need to have direction to our time of sheltering. We need to find purpose and meaning. We need to know how we might find shelter in the Lord even as we have been called to shelter in place.

And what we will see in our Psalm for this morning is that we are all called to find shelter in the Lord by committing to Him, by being content with Him, and by being confident in Him. That is if we would take refuge in the Lord during this unique time in our life, we must commit our way to the Lord, with confidence in Jesus Christ that we will be saved from our enemy.

[Hear now the Word of the Lord from Psalm 16... The grass withers and the flower fades but the word of the Lord lasts forever.

Prayer: *Guide us, O God, by Your Word and Spirit, that in Your light we may see light, in Your truth find freedom, and in Your will discover Your peace: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*]

Point One: To Find Shelter in the Lord we must Commit to Him Alone (verses 2-4)

The first thing that we see in our text is that if we would find shelter in the Lord during this time, we must *commit* to Him alone.

Many of you I am sure have played more board games over the last week than you have in a while. And if you have new version of Monopoly you will see that there is a new “Chance” card, called the “Cash Grab.” I am not a fan. You are to take all the \$100 bills in the bank. Throw them up in the air. And then everyone grabs as many as they can before they hit the ground. I hate this because, first it makes a huge mess. Second, people rarely get any money out of the exercise. You throw all the money up and you try to grab it and it flies away. There are just too many bills flying around to commit to just one. And so, what seems to promise a windfall of cash, usually ends up in nothing but a big mess.

Over the next several weeks you will be restricted with what you can do, but you can commit yourself to those things that are most important to you. But if you do not commit to one thing this time will become a big mess. Look at verses 2 of our text. And see how the Psalmist calls us to commit to the Lord alone,

“I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” (Psalm 16:2 ESV)

If you would find shelter in this time you must commit to the Lord as your Lord. Take this time to rededicate yourself to reading God’s word, to prayer, and to worship. This may be a unique time in your life when you can pause and find extended time for the spiritual disciplines. I would encourage you commit to reading God’s Word. Commit to growing in your prayer life. Commit to weekly worship even though it is in a manner that we are not familiar with. Over the next few weeks the Pastors and the Elders of Rivermont will be seeking ways to resource you grow in this time. Take advantage of this unique situation to zero in on this one commitment, your commitment to the Lord.

Now we also see that to find shelter in the Lord in this time we must commit to God’s people. Look at verse 3,

“As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight.” (Psalm 16:3 ESV)

To commit to the Lord is to also commit to his people. Now in any other time I would say, this means you need to be committed to coming to church and Sunday School and corporate prayer. But we are going to have to be creative and proactive in this time to maintain our community. Yet we have opportunities unlike any other generation to stay connected to one another even when we must shelter in place. Over the next couple of weeks Rivermont will be moving to create online forums for sermon discussion groups, for prayer groups, and for other online fellowship opportunities. We have purchased a

platform called Zoom that is very intuitive to use for such meetings. Now, I know there are some of you who are not excited about using the internet. But in this time if you would find shelter in the Lord you must commit to find your delight in the people of God in the ways that are available. (email about joining a Zoom group)

We must commit to the Lord; we must commit to his people. And in verse 4 we see that we must commit to exclusivity. Look at that verse,

“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.” (Psalm 16:4 ESV)

To commit to the Lord means that you will not commit to other idols in this time. People are very fearful right now. And this fear is revealing the idols of our hearts. Whether it is our wealth that we have seen rapidly dwindle, or our freedom that has rapidly been restricted, our self-reliance which has been revealed as an illusion, or our control which is gone.

The money has been thrown into the air as it were and if you go grabbing after all these different gods you will end up with a big mess. For the sorrows of those who run after other gods will be multiplied in this time. But if you commit yourself to the Lord alone as your shelter, he will preserve you.

Point Two: To Find Shelter in the Lord we must be Content in Him Alone (verses 5-6)

The next thing that we see in our Psalm for this morning is that if we would find shelter in the Lord in this time, we must be content in Him alone. To be content is to be satisfied with your situation. With what you have been given.

I know that with the quarantine there are many who are missing out on special occasions and events. I think of all the seniors who may not have a graduation ceremony, all of the sports teams whose seasons have been canceled. Beyond that there are those who have lost jobs or are fearful of such job loss. There are those who are scrambling to find childcare. And those who find themselves isolated and alone. And it is difficult to see how we might be content in such a situation.

Yet what we find in Psalm 16 is an encouragement to find our contentment not in our outward circumstances that are ever changing but, in the Lord, alone. Look at verses 5 and 6,

“The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.” (Psalm 16:5–6 ESV)

When God’s people came to receive the promise land of Israel lots were cast to determine who would receive what portion of land. It was as if there were a lottery and depending on which lot was cast your tribe or family would receive the corresponding plot of land.

As you can imagine there were portions of land that were more or less desirable. There would have been estates that were well watered and some that were not. There would have been places

that had good soil and others that had rocky soil. And yet each tribe was called upon to trust the providence of the Lord to provide for them an inheritance that was good. To be content and satisfied with what the Lord had determined was good for them.

And if we would find shelter in the Lord in this time, we must be willing to accept the lot that he has determined for us in this time. We must be willing to trust and with thanksgiving remember all that we have been given in Christ. I am sure that each of you have a mental list of the things that you have lost in the last few weeks. Yet we must be willing to give thanks for all that we have received.

For all those who have chosen the Lord as your portion you have been given a wonderful inheritance. And the ability to be content with whatever the Lord gives. For as Peter writes that our inheritance,

...is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials... (1 Peter 1:4–6 ESV)

Whatever trials come our way we who have come to the Lord Jesus in faith can rejoice because our inheritance, our portion, our lot in this life and the to come is indeed beautiful.

For the Lord alone is the only thing in all the world that can satisfy our souls.

Point Three: To Find Shelter in the Lord we must be Confident in Him Alone (verses 7-10)

In these uncertain times we are called to find shelter in the Lord by committing to him, by being content in him, and finally we will see that if we would find shelter in the Lord we must be confident in him alone. Look at verse 7 of your text,

“I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.” (Psalm 16:7 ESV)

In point one we saw that we must commit to the Lord and his word. And here in verse 7 we see that we must have confidence in the counsel God gives us in his word. We must follow his word in this time. It seems that things have changed so much in the last few weeks, but his word has not changed. The Lord Jesus has said,

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” (Matthew 24:35 ESV)

The Lord gives his people counsel in his word. If we would know his sheltering presence in this time we must put our confidence in his word. That it will not change. That his promise to watch over you and protect and preserve you remains.

We must also be confident in his presence. Look at verse 8,

“I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.” (Psalm 16:8 ESV)

It is important for us to understand what the Psalmist means when he says that he sets the Lord ever before him. As we know the Lord is present with his people always. But it takes faith for us to see him everywhere. It takes faith to believe that wherever you go he is there. To remember that the Lord is with you at work and at home. He is with you when you are with other Christians and he is with you when you are by yourself. But his presence is easy to forget. But he is with you even now as you gather to worship at home by yourself or with your family. He is with you and therefore you need not fear.

And the final thing that we see is that if we would find shelter in the Lord, we must have confidence in his deliverance. Look at verses 9-10,

“Therefore, my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.”(Psalm 16:9–10 ESV)

The most important way that we take shelter in the Lord is by having confidence in his saving power through Jesus Christ. King David, as the author of this Psalm, had confidence that the Lord would not bring him to an untimely death, that he would find deliverance from his enemies. But the promise of verse 10 is too great to have been fulfilled in David.

The Apostle Peter recognized this truth and in his sermon on Pentecost quoted Psalm 16 and then explained,

Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 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. (Acts 2:29–32 ESV)

Verse 10 of our Psalm therefore is a prophecy fulfilled in Jesus Christ. For by his resurrection from the dead he was freed from the decaying power of death. And all who have been joined to him by faith will receive the promised deliverance.

By his death on the cross Jesus has cleansed his people from their sin and by his resurrection from the grave he has set his people free from death. For on the day of his return all those joined to him through faith will rise to eternal life.

And this is how we take shelter in the Lord by having confidence in the resurrection from the dead. First, in Christ's resurrection that has won our freedom from death, and second our own resurrection that will come on the day of his return.

For through Jesus Christ we can have great confidence that we will not be abandoned to death. I know there are many of you listening who are very vulnerable to this Coronavirus. You are

over 65 or you have underlying health conditions. Yet you need not fear. For Christ has overcome death. It will have no victory. And though we will all face the grave one day we do not face it without hope. For we will not be abandoned.

To shelter in the Lord, we must have confidence in his word, in his presence, and ultimately in his salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Conclusion: Whatever My Situation

The book of Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul while in was in a Roman prison. During this time, he could have become discouraged. He was cut off from his calling to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. He was unsure of his future and when and if he would be released. Yet the book of Philippians is filled with some of the most joy-filled encouragement. Joy that is not rooted in situation but rooted in the work of Jesus Christ. In the final chapter of Philippians Paul says,

“I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:10–13 ESV)

As we face an unknown period of isolation and social distancing, as we face a period of economic uncertainty and fear, as we face a time of disease and hardship, whatever the situation we can have great confidence in the Lord for through Jesus Christ he has delivered us and given us the strength to endure all things.

Even as the final verse of our Psalm teaches us,

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:11 ESV)