

A faithful Servant and His Faithful Lord

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- [0 : 00] I take refuge. I say to the Lord, you are my Lord. Apart from you, I have no good thing. I say of the holy people who are in the land, they are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.
- Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips. Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup.
- You make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the Lord who counsels me. Even at night, my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the Lord.
- With him at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices. My body will also rest secure. Because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful ones see decay.
- You make known to me the path of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Great. Well, lovely to see you all this evening.
- [1 : 19] And thank you to the musicians and Martin for leading, and Heather for reading so well. Where's Heather? Thank you so much. It was great reading. Fantastic. It would be a help to me if you kept your Bibles open on Psalm 16.
- That would be enormously encouraging, and we'll whiz through this Psalm, and we can go out and enjoy some of the sunshine later. But before we do that, let me pray for us. Father, we thank you for your word.
- Lord, we think of that glorious future that awaits us. Eternal pleasures at your right hand. Help us to meditate on that now.
- Forgive me when I get things wrong. Help us to remember those things that will encourage us and keep us safe in you. In Jesus' name, amen.
- Amen. Great. And we're continuing this evening to look at the question that was raised in the start of last week's Psalm, Psalm 15. And you'll remember the question there.
- [2 : 24] Psalm 15, verse 1. That is, That is, Who is the person who can dwell in God's presence and not be shaken?
- Remember how Matt helpfully pointed out for us that to not be shaken is to have a resurrection hope. That is, That is, A hope of life after death.
- You see, Death is the great enemy of the Christian life. The devil is the destroyer who desires nothing better than to see your damnation and your death.
- But how different that is to how the world sees death. So we remember that poem by Henry Scott Holland, which goes, Death, death is nothing at all.
- I've only slipped away to the next room. And you can only say that if you aren't dead. For the Christian, death is the enemy.
- [3 : 39] You see, death, dying, is the most unnatural thing in the world. To die is outrageous. The fact that we all do it doesn't make it any less outrageous.

So, for some of us who were here when I got ordained, you might have met my uncle. And my uncle had an older brother, John. And John was the success in the family.

He got a great job in a great area of the world, living in the vineyards of the Cape Province, nestled in the mountains. He married the girl of his dreams.

They had five children. And one day, they were having lunch on their back porch on a Sunday afternoon. Fine wine, wonderful food, glorious summer sunshine.

And they decided after lunch, what they were going to do was, they were going to take a walk, very natural, after walk lunch, up the hill into the mountains. And as they were going on this walk, there was a tricky bit to traverse.

[4 : 39] And one of the adults helped one of the children up and passed it, passed them to my uncle John. And John stepped back off the mountain.

Death is outrageous. It had no place being there on that Sunday afternoon. But the great promise and hope of the Christian life is life.

You see, Jesus said, I have come that they may have life to the full. And again, now this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

And this is the great hope of the psalmist in the psalm that we've read this evening, Psalm 16. So Psalm 16, verse 10, the psalmist's hope is to not be abandoned to the realm of the dead.

And again in verse 11, but to know the path of life. Now before we go on to look at the psalm more closely, we need to address the elephant in the room.

[5 : 50] And that's the great cloud that's hanging over at the start of the psalm. I wonder if you noticed it. You see, this is a psalm of great assurance and confidence. But it starts with a very inexplicable plea.

So I wonder if you'll look down and read verse 1. Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. Which begs the question, what is it that David is seeking refuge from?

What is it that David is seeking safety from? See, the rest of the psalm is very confident. And we see that confidence in the faithfulness of the servant, verse 1 to 7.

And then secondly, in the faithful Lord, verse 8 to 11. So firstly, the faithful servant, verse 1 to 7. Let's look down and read verse 2.

I say to the Lord, You are my Lord. Apart from you, I have no good thing. You see, the psalmist, God's servant, is utterly committed to God.

[6 : 59] And this verse really highlights two great temptations for us. Namely, firstly, that we're happy to call God good. And we lust after His good gifts.

Food, money, power, sex, status. We dream endlessly about these. But we reject God as Lord or Master of those gifts and over us as His creatures.

Or secondly, the second great temptation for us is that we're happy to call God Lord or Master. Yes, Lord. You're Lord. But we're not happy to call God good.

So we serve Him half-heartedly. We say, Oh yes, He's God. But He doesn't deserve my allegiance. And we grumble against Him. We perhaps intellectually accede to Him. We say, Yes, there is a God.

But we're not going to serve Him because He is not good. Friends, to think of God as anything other than good is to think of God as something less than God.

[8 : 03] You see, God's goodness is what makes God God. So recently, we did this trip to Uganda. And the Ugandans, they had this great, great little chant.

Maybe we'll try to get it here at St. Silas sometime. I won't do it. I won't get you guys to do it tonight. So I would go, God is good. You guys go all the time.

And then I'd go, and all the time. And you'd go, God is good. And that is His nature. Wow! God is good in His very nature.

And because He is good in His nature, we can be confident of two things. that He only ordains good things. He rules the world in a way that is good.

And He only gives good gifts. No matter how hard and confusing and contradictory this might be for us. If God does not give it, then it is not good for us.

[9 : 06] So one of my heroes, I haven't told Martin this, one of the reasons why I took the job at St. Silas was because one of my great heroes is a chap called John G. Patton. And Patton was a, he was a missionary with a Glasgow City mission.

He did this great work evangelizing kids and school children, adults in Glasgow. And at the height of this work, he walked away from it and he became a missionary in what is today Vanuatu in the South Pacific.

And he meets this beautiful girl, he marries her, they go to the South Pacific, and no sooner do they get there than his wife dies. And the baby they have dies.

And this is Patton's reflection on that. He goes, Our short, united life had been cloudless and happy. I felt her loss beyond all conception or description in that dark land.

He's evangelizing cannibals. It was very difficult to be resigned, left alone, in sorrowful circumstances, but feeling immovably assured that my God and Father was too wise and loving to err in anything that he does or permits.

[10 : 24] You see, God's greatest gift is life. Don't waste it by thinking that God is not God, that he is not Lord, or that he is not good.

Now next, we see that because David delights in God, he delights in God's people. You see, to dwell with God, to dwell in God's presence, is to dwell with God's people.

So we read in verse 3, I say of the holy people who are in the land, they are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.

You see, friends, it's very easy to think, well, why bother with church? But here are two things. God loves his church. As we gather here, God loves his children.

And therefore, David loves God's church. God loves, David loves God's family. The second thing is, God is invisible. There are two ways you might have seen God, that you can see God.

[11 : 38] The one is to go back into a time machine, a TARDIS, back 2,000 years ago, and see Jesus walking in the hills of Judea. The other is when you and I, as Christians, love one another, we make God visible to a watching world.

You see, the faithful servant loves God's church and his people no matter how difficult it is. And next, we see that the faithful one, the faithful servant, is one who is committed to God exclusively.

And this is perhaps a struggle for us, isn't it? If we're honest, isn't it? So we say, yes, I'm committed to God, but I'm also going to try and find my meaning and satisfaction and security in other bits.

Perhaps one of the secular gods of Glasgow. So we think of materialism. I've been in Glasgow and in the West End two weeks now. And there's one thing that I've noticed about Glasgow and the West End is that you guys have got more bespoke barbershops than I've seen anywhere.

I've never seen so many fresh fades as I've seen in the West End. Life in the West End is very, very good. Or you might follow the LGBTI gender agenda that how we get meaning in life is our self-expression.

[12 : 58] So we say things like, let's be inclusive. Just express yourself. You see, these gods are all very attractive. They're very enticing. If I follow these popular gods, then my job prospects will be better.

I can sleep with whoever I like. My social status will be better. But what does David say? Verse 4. Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.

So yes, these gods give gifts, but they're not the sort of gifts that you or I would ever want. you see, the gift they give is death.

More and more suffering which leads to death. But is this what David is seeking safety from? Are these little gods the thing that David is seeking refuge from?

Perhaps. Maybe. But we see that the faithful servant on the other hand, on the other hand to the syncretists who follow these little gods, is someone who is faithful to God.

[14 : 08] So verse 4 carries on, I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips. You see, unlike those who follow these gods, the faithful servant is one who is happy in God.

Look down and read verse 5 and 6. Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup. You make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

Surely, I have a delightful inheritance and why is David so happy? It's not because God gives good gifts, although he does give good gifts, but because God is the best gift himself.

He is the gift that David wants and that David desires. So both internally in his emotions and externally in his circumstances, David is satisfied and content in God.

and he is so enthralled with God that as he sits on his throne in Jerusalem, he cannot help but reflect and go, wow, God is so amazing, so awesome.

[15 : 21] Forget all the gifts, all the little goodies. All I want is God. So, friends, I don't know what your heartaches are, your struggles, your desires, your anxieties, the things that are going to keep you awake at night.

But do you know that God is for you? That to you, you one day, like David, will sit on God's throne with great David's greatest son, King Jesus.

And you too will marvel and be blown away at the great mercy and kindness and glory of God. So, what's it going to look like to have God as an inheritance?

Verse 7, I will praise the Lord who counsels me. So, here's a massive mystery in the song that God is so big, he is so infinite, he's so huge and yet he makes himself knowable to us.

He speaks to us like an adult lists or talks baby talk to a baby. God speaks to us and tells us what he does, who he is.

[16 : 35] And how does God counsel David? By his book, through prayer. So, the faithful servant is one who treasures up the words, Lord's, God's great promises in his heart.

And next, verse 7 goes on, even at night my heart instructs me. He treasures up those promises and he measures his own heart against those promises. He looks at the book, he looks at his heart, he looks at his book, he looks at the heart, she looks at the book, she looks at her heart and she compares them and she asks herself the hard questions.

The psalmist asks himself the hard questions. So friends, how's your walk with the Lord? Is there something you need to confess or ask forgiveness for?

Is there something you need to stop doing or something that you need to start doing? And we see that the faithful servant is committed to God and happy in God because they know that the Lord is faithful.

Verse 8 to 11. So David declares in verse 8, I keep my eyes on the Lord always, always on the Lord. With him at my right hand I will not be shaken.

[17 : 46] And because the Lord is faithful, David is confident that his prayer of safety in verse 1 will be heard and answered and that he will not be shaken.

And therefore it's no wonder that he's filled with gladness. Verse 9. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices and his body what's more can be confident too.

My body also will rest secure. So the faithful servant is so confident in his faithful Lord because they know that even though they die they are safe.

Verse 10. Because you'll not abandon me to the realm of the dead nor will you let your see nor will you let your faithful ones see decay.

That is for the one who loves God who is 100% committed to God who delights in God's people God is so committed to them so faithful to them that though they die were that possible for the faithful servants their bodies will not rot but rather they will go directly into the presence of God.

[18 : 58] You make known to me the path of life you will fill me with joy in your presence with eternal pleasures at your right hand. This is the good gift that God promises that only God can give eternal life.

pleasures undreamt of in God's presence forever. God is his own best gift. So but we're still left with a struggle aren't we?

What is it that David was seeking safety from? What was going to rob him of God's greatest gift? What was going to lead him not to life but to death outside of God's presence forever?

So Romans 6 23 says for the wages of sin is death. David was seeking refuge and safety from sin.

You see friends David knew that he was a sinner. He knew that he was not the faithful servant. He knew that he was not perfectly faithful to God. He knew that he didn't love God.

[20 : 14] He didn't love God's people perfectly. He didn't love God's word perfectly as he should. And instead of being the faithful servants in many ways he was unfaithful and he knew that the sinner's destiny is death.

But friends let me tell you about someone who was faithful to God always. even though it was hard for him even to the point of death. Someone who always loved God's people.

Someone who always loved God's word. Someone who always loved God perfectly. Someone who is utterly sinless. And that person that God was Jesus.

You see David put no confidence in himself. He knew what he was like and he was sick of it. He knew that he was an adulterer. He knew that he was a murderer.

He knew that he was a sinner in many more ways. And he knew his destiny death. And so instead he entrusted himself entirely to Jesus.

[21 : 27] Verse 1 Keep me safe oh my God for in you I take refuge. So in Acts Luke quotes Paul the apostle Paul which cites this verse and he states so it is stated elsewhere you will not let your holy one see decay no when David had served God's purpose in his own generation he fell asleep and he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed but the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay therefore my friends I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin see friends Jesus the son of God although he was sinless was executed on a Roman cross 2,000 years ago and when he died on that cross he died the death that you and I deserve for our sins for our rejection of God that we might have

God's greatest gift eternal life so here's my question to us as we gathered here this evening is that do we know this and do we believe this if you don't if you have any questions speak to someone speak to Martin speak to Emily speak to myself speak to a friend who have confidence does know the Lord and ask them how you can know God too don't waste your life don't waste God's greatest gift so Romans 6 23 ends for the wages of sinners death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord Father we thank you for this enormous great gift we thank you for eternal pleasures at your right hand we're sorry for the many ways that we let you down and we thank you for Jesus for dying on that cross for us please help us to serve and love you fully in every way in Jesus name Amen Amen come to