

The Lord Governs My Good and Is My Good

by John Piper

This sermon delves into Psalms 16, highlighting the experience of David and the future hope of South City's Church to keep God as their ultimate focus. It emphasizes the need to preserve faith in God, acknowledge Him as the source of all good, and trust in His promises of eternal joy and salvation through Christ.

Scripture: Psalms 16:1, Psalms 16:2, Psalms 16:4, Psalms 16:5, Psalms 16:7, Psalms 16:11, Acts 2:31, Romans 3:25

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Description

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Transcript

Father, I need your help. We need your help as we walk through this magnificent word, Psalm 16, together. Grant, I pray, that we would experience what David was experiencing and more.

And grant, I pray, that South City's Church would see her future here. And that you would grant this church to put you always before them. That you would stand at their right hand, and that they would never be shaken.

I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. So David cries out in verse 1. If you don't have your Bibles open, reopen them.

Because we're going to go verse by verse through this, and I want you to see it for yourself, the greatness of what is here. He cries out, preserve me, O God. Save me, keep me, hold on to me.

Don't let me go. I wonder if you pray that way. If you don't pray that way, you're not thinking clearly.

We need God to keep us every day, all day. You cannot do this without him. You can't remain a believer without God's preserving grace.

Keep me, hold me, preserve me. Now, what is he asking God to preserve him from? That's going to come. We'll see it in just a minute.

But first, let's just keep going. Verse 2. I say to the Lord, You are my Lord. I have no good apart from you.

You are my Lord. You are my good. You govern.

That's Lord. You govern all the good that comes to me, and you are the good that comes to me. I have other lords.

I have other authorities in my life I have to come to terms with, but none of those lords, none of those authorities come close to your authority. You are my Lord. You are the authority over all authorities.

If there's another authority, it gets its authority from you. You are my Lord, and you are my good. I have other goods in my life, but if I taste none of God in any good that this world offers, it's not good.

It is not good if there's none of you as the good in it. I have no good apart from you. You are my Lord.

You are my good. Verse 3, As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. Hmm.

So Lord, I began with verse 2 to say, I have no good apart from you, so that when I say all my delight is in your people, you would not think me an idolater. You alone are my greatest good, my delight, my greatest delight. When I look around the world, or this room, and I see people who delight in you above all else, they are my delight because you are their delight.

I'm not speaking double talk between verses 2 and 3. I'm not contradicting myself. What delights me about your people is that you are their delight. You are my good, and I have no good apart from you.

If there's none of you in this people, I want nothing of this people. Verse 4, The sorrows of those who run after another God multiply. Their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out, or take their names upon my lips.

What happens when you choose another God besides the true God? Another ultimate good, another Lord, another delight, another treasure. What happens? What happens is multiplied sorrows. That's what happens.

The sorrows of those who run after another God multiply. So David has already found his good. He's already found his delight.

He's already found his treasure. He's not on a search anymore. Are you? I'm just wondering.

David's quest is over. Is yours? It's over. I have found him.

I have found my good. I have found my Lord. I have found my delight.

I have found my treasure. It's over. I'm not running anymore after anything else.

There's nothing but trouble there. I have no good apart from you. The Lord is my good.

I'm not shopping around. My quest is over. So he responds to temptation and you will have it this afternoon.

And tomorrow you'll you'll have the temptation. Here's another God. Here's another good.

Here's another delight. Here's another treasure. And his response is, I won't even drink it.

I won't even take the name on my lips. You see that there in verse 4? Their drink offerings of blood. I'm not going to pour out.

I won't take their name. These alternative delights, these alternative gods, these alternative goods. I'm not touching them.

I'm not even going to get close or talk about them. I have found the all-satisfying treasure. Why would I want multiplied sorrows? Now, I think verse 4 is what he was being asked to preserve, to be preserved from in verse 1. I asked that question.

What when he says, preserve me, preserve me, O God. What's he being asked to be preserved from? And the answer is verse 4. Preserve me, O God. I take refuge in you.

I'm flying to you as my good. I'm flying to you as my treasure. I'm flying to you as my delight.

I am flying to you. Preserve me from being drawn away to these other gods. Preserve me from failing to be satisfied in you this morning.

I wonder if you pray like that. I wonder if you fight like that. That's just about all I do.

Now, I don't know your conception I mean, I think I do. This is still, I think I still know you a little bit. I think you know.

This is the battle of the Christian life, to have God as our good, to have God as our delight, to have God as our treasure. And the world is saying, no, I'm better. I'm better.

So what else is there to do but fight? Verse 4 is what he's pleading. Preserve me, O God. Don't let me be drawn away to these other gods.

Psalms 90, verse 14, is on my lips just about every morning. Satisfy me in the morning with your steadfast love. Is that your steady prayer? Satisfy me in the morning with your steadfast love.

Your steadfast love is better than life. Oh, don't let me be more satisfied with anything else than with you. That's the battle.

Verse 1 cries out for preservation. Verse 4 states the danger. Verse 5. Lord is my chosen portion.

The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup. You hold my lot. Now, I think verse 5 is virtually identical to verse 2. I say to the Lord, you are my Lord.

I have no good apart from you. So I think in verse 5, you hold my lot corresponds to you are my Lord and the Lord is my chosen portion and my cup, in verse 5, corresponds to I have no good apart from you. So now think about this with me, see if you agree that those are parallel and similar, very similar.

What does it mean that the Lord holds David's lot? What does it mean to hold somebody's lot? The next verse, verse 6, David refers to his inheritance. I have a beautiful inheritance. Now, inheritances were often distributed by lot among family members and among tribes.

Numbers 26, numbers 33, 36, Joshua 14. Like straws, you know, you draw straws. That's the, you recognize that, you don't understand the word lot.

I mean, you wouldn't use the word lot. Let's draw lots. We said let's draw straws.

You got the short straw, you got the long straw, you know what this means. That's, that's what a lot is and he says, God holds my lot. Jeremiah 1325 says, this is your lot.

The portion that I have measured out to you declares the Lord. We still have the phrase your lot in life. That's an odd phrase, your lot in life.

What's your lot in life? You don't mean like I have an acre. I have an acre. No, you, you don't mean that.

You mean what's your situation, your circumstance? That's what God holds. You hold my lot. You decide my fortune.

You set my circumstances. You decide my place, my times, my inheritance. You govern my life, which is why I say it's parallel to verse 2. You're my Lord.

So it means to be Lord of my life. You're my Lord. You govern my life.

You hold my lot. You allot my inheritance. I'm in your hands.

You're my Lord. And you are my portion in verse 5. My cup corresponds to you are my good in verse 2. And verse 6 simply spells out the nature of the lot. What is David's lot? The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. The lines, the borders of my life that God has given me are beautiful. My future with him as my inheritance is a beautiful inheritance.

Okay, let's step back from verses 1 to 6. We've walked through verses 1 to 6. Let's step back and say, what's the point? What's the big statement? What is he trying to get across in verses 1 to 6? And I think the answer is, I could use the words of verse 2 or the words of verse 5. The answer is, you are my Lord and you are my good. God holds my lot. God is my lot.

God decides my fortune. God is my fortune. God allots my inheritance.

God is my inheritance. God governs my life. God is my life.

That's the point. He says it in verses 2 and 3. I think it's a picture of the structure here. Verse 6 is 1, 6. Verses 2 and 3 state it one way.

He's my Lord. He's my good. Verses 5 and 6 state it another way.

He holds my lot. He is my cup and my portion. And in the middle is, don't choose another God.

Look at this. How could you choose another God? It makes crazy sense. That's the way it's structured.

And so preserve me, O God. Please preserve me from that insane choice of going after other gods when he's my Lord and my good. He's my lot holder and my lot itself.

That's the structure of verses 1 to 6. So preserve me. Preserve me, O God. You have shown so much of yourself to me.

Don't let me become insane. Sin is insane, you know. It is insane.

And that's the point of verse 4. Multiplied sorrows. Why would you go there and people go there every day? When he turns now in verse 7 and says I bless the Lord who gives me counsel. In the night also my heart instructs me.

I think what he's saying is this. God by his counsel is the one who has shown me all of this about himself. I didn't think this up.

God has come to me by his counsel and made plain to me. He's my Lord. He's my good.

He holds my lot. He is my portion. God is the one who night and day has shown me these things.

I think that's the point of verse 7. I wonder Christian, son of God, child of God, daughter of God. I wonder what your heart says to you at night. And if you're a child of God, wonder the things your heart says to you when you wake up at 3 o'clock.

And if you're like me, you have one of these clocks that shine on the ceiling. You can see what time it is without moving your head and neck crazy. Nice little red 303.

Does your heart say to you God is my life. God holds my life. Like I didn't make my heart beat for the last three hours.

I mean, it didn't sink in. You don't make your heart beat? God does. He holds you in being.

And if you have a mustard seed of faith at 3 a.m., God gave it to you. God's sustained you. He preserved you.

That's what the child of God says from his kidneys. Why did you say kidneys? Because that's the Hebrew word behind heart. I just I just thought I'd clue you in.

It's not heart, it's kidneys. Meaning it just comes from deep inside of you. God is my good.

God is my life. God is my portion. God holds me in his hand while I'm sleeping.

That's what the child of God says at night. And that's from God. That's God's counsel doing that.

You're not making that up. God does that for you. And then to give a counterpart, I mean picture verse 7 as the counterpart, to the the negative of verse 1. Verse 1 says, don't let anything take you away from me as my portion, as my God, my good, my treasure, my delight.

Don't let anything replace you. The positive counterpart is, oh I bless you that you're answering that prayer. Here I am at 3 a.m., and I'm still a believer.

I'm still loving you and trusting you and clinging to you with my fingernails. Yes, I am. You have answered verse 1, and I'm blessing you.

I'm blessing you at 3 o'clock in the morning that you're still my God. That's what God makes known by his counsel. Now let's let's jump out of order here for a minute.

While we're on verse 7, which is about God by his counsel informing David's mind of these glorious things, let's jump to the next verse that speaks of God making known, and that's verse 11. We'll come back to 9 and 10 in a minute, 8, 9, and 10. Verse 11 continues the thought of what God makes known to David, his counsel.

And verse 11, as you know, is as good as it can get. 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 verse 7, the Lord makes known by his counsel these things that we've been opening in verses 1 to 6. And now in verse 11, that reaches its climax. This is as high as it gets, or as deep as it gets, or as wide as it gets.

When you read verse 11, don't you want to say, well, no wonder verse 2 says, I have no good apart from you. No wonder verse 3 says, I delight in God's people because they delight in you. No wonder in verses 5 and 6, he says, God is my chosen portion and my cup.

Where else could you find fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore? Now I assume this is rehearsal and repetition for Bethlehem, South City's church. This is repetition, but it is glorious to repeat. Is there anything fuller than full? Say the word.

That's right. No, about three of you are awake. That's not fair.

You're just afraid you might get the wrong answer. Is anything fuller than full? No. Is anything longer than forever? No.

Okay, good. This is easy. This is not rocket science.

This is just glory. I mean, nobody, just mark it, this is not overstatement. Nobody, anywhere in the world, can offer you anything better than verse 11.

Nobody! Because nothing is even conceivable better than verse 11. Because nothing is fuller than full or longer than forever. And full means fully satisfying.

And the pleasures, I remember when I was a little nine-year-old, I would go up on the roof. We had a spiral stairway leading to the roof. And I would lie down and look at the stars, and I would be scared of eternity because it seemed boring.

It's gonna get old. I don't care what it is. It's gonna get old.

Forever is going to be boring. And then you grow up, and you read verse 11. And verse 11 says, it's not gonna get boring.

God is God. You know what? My phone is telling me that I fell down. I'm okay.

I did not fall down. Did you hear it? This has happened twice in my life. I'm preaching and they think I fall down.

I'm not falling down. I'm standing up. I'm preaching.

Good grief. Apple. Now where was I? Yeah, nothing is longer than forever and nothing is fuller than full.

Oh, yeah, the nine-year-old. Boring. Got it.

Almost lost it. It's not going to be boring because when it says pleasures forevermore, it doesn't mean they feel good for about a thousand years, and then they don't feel good anymore. If you think that God is incapable of making you happy forever, you don't know God.

Infinite means infinite, right? He is infinitely full. That means there is no way to exhaust the kindness that he intends to show upon you. So all that to say verse 11 is as good as it gets.

And that is part of the counsel that God has delivered, made known to David. You have made known to me the path of life. God's gift of life is the gift of himself.

His presence, his right hand, his life. This is God. If my right hand are pleasures forevermore, joy that is full.

Now, if that's true, and it is, David does what every reasonable person would do, and I hope you're reasonable. He does verse 8. So back up now to verse 8. I have set the Lord always before me, because he's at my right hand. I will never be shaken.

Shaken from my delight in God, shaken from my faith, shaken from my cherishing God above all things. I will not be shaken from this because I keep him always before me. I keep him at my right hand.

Before right hand. What does that mean? He's before me and he's here. He's before me and he's here.

What does that mean? You know, God is non-spatial, right? He's a spirit. He doesn't have dimensions. So you can't locate him.

In space. So these are metaphors, right? Before and right hand. What are they trying to say? What are the metaphors trying to say? That's what metaphors do.

They say something. And what the before means is he's not behind me where I can't see him. I keep him right out there as my good and my delight and my cup and my portion and my inheritance.

That's what he is all day long to me. You're my good. You're my portion.

You're my inheritance. Those aren't. You are.

Okay, so you can see him. He's always visible by his word in your mind preaching to you the reality of who God is right there in front of you. Now the right hand is close.

The hands are close. You can't make your hand go farther than that. That's close.

And it's your right hand, not your left hand. It's the honored close place. So as you walk through the day, he's before you.

I see him. I'm keeping him conscious in my mind, and he's honored and cherished and loved in a place of honor. At my right hand.

That's the way you walk through your days. That's the way you live the Christian life, right? You're gonna get up tomorrow morning. You're gonna put him right there before you by his word.

You're gonna reach out and take him and keep him right there in the treasured, cherished, honored position of your right hand, and you move through life. That's where you live life. If you know, verse 11, if you know, verses 1 to 6, and when you live like that, when God is before you, and he's at your right hand, that's the answer to the prayer of verse 1. Preserve me.

Because if another thing, if God starts to fade away, and out there's a new car, or some relationship, or some treasure, or some health, or something that is starting to be more precious to you than God, verse 1 is not being answered. And the cry is, keep yourself before me. Preserve that view.

Ever in view, ever cherished. Now, we come to verse 9. With this confidence that he's never going to be shaken, he's never going to be shaken, he says, therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices. My flesh will also dwell secure.

So in this life, there is gladness, and there is rejoicing. Very great at times. And that's a foretaste of verse 11, right? Verse 11 says our joy is going to be full, and our pleasures are going to be forever.

And right now in this life, your joy is seldom full. That's just, you've got to, you've got to learn how to live with this. You've got to learn how to fight for this.

We live in an embattled, your, your body is going to die if Jesus doesn't come back, and your, your faith is going to be embattled to the last day. Just before he died, Paul said, I have, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course.

I have kept the faith right to the end. I don't ever expect it to go away. I'm an old man, and I expect to fight on until I breathe no more.

There will be no coasting. You coast, you die. So we will fight on, and yet in this life, verse 9, my heart is glad.

My whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure. In other words, his confidence is building to the point where he says, not even death is going to interrupt my joy.

My flesh will dwell secure, and we want to say, I want to say, come on, David. You're not God. You will die.

They will put you in a hole, and you will rot. Your flesh will decay. You will.

What are you talking about? And then David gives the jaw-dropping explanation of verse 10. You see the four at the beginning of the verse? So my flesh, it's not going to be, death's not going to have the last word here. For you, O God, you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, the place of the dead, or let your Holy One see, not even see, corruption.

David, there's a pit waiting for you. Every person who dies is thrown into this pit, and in that pit you decay. You decay.

You see corruption. And right at this point, the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul in Acts 2 and Acts 13 read verse 10, and they say, this is the Messiah. This is Jesus Christ in verse 10.

That's what they say. Whose flesh did not see corruption. Now, how did they see that? How did Peter and Paul see that in this text? Would you have seen it? So if you want to look at it with me, this is Acts chapter 2 verses 29 to 32.

You don't need to turn there, but if you'd like to, I'm going to read it in two stages. And what Peter says is amazing, because he didn't just say this is Jesus. He says why he thinks this is Jesus.

This is Acts 2 29. Brothers, I may say to you with confidence. Now, he has just quoted Psalm 16, 8 to 10.

He's going to unpack it and explain the imputations for the Jewish crowd whom he wants to persuade is the Messiah. I mean, Jesus is the Messiah. Brothers, I 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. There it is over there. He decayed.

He saw corruption. It's right there. Just open it.

Verse 30, here comes the explanation. Being therefore a prophet, David the prophet, and secondly, knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne. Now stop right there.

What in the world? What's he saying? Why is he telling us this? How is this helping us grasp how he saw Jesus in verse 10? He's pointing out. David knows something. What does he know? He knows God took an oath and swore to him what? I'm gonna read it to you.

This is 1 Chronicles chapter 17 verse 12. Here's what God says to David. When your days are fulfilled, notice you're gonna die, King of Israel.

When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his throne forever. David knows this. He knows I'm not the Messiah.

I am David, a son of David is coming. I know this. God told me this.

And the difference between me and him is he reigns forever. I don't. I decay.

He will not see corruption. He's bigger, better, longer than I am. So as David is writing verse 16, he's conscious that all of his glorious experience of God that we've been talking about for the last 30 minutes, all of this glorious experience of God is a mere prefiguration, right? He's a forerunner.

He's a forerunner. He's not the son of David who reigns forever. He's a David who is wanting it, hoping it, pointing to it, and he's less, and he's going to be so much more.

He's aware of this. And as he writes, he's being caught up in the tremendous confidence. You know, it's Advent season, right? It's Advent.

So it's Christmas. And you know these beautiful Christmas words. Gabriel comes to Mary, and what does he say to her? This child will be called the son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

David knew this about his son. He didn't know when, he didn't know who, he didn't know how, he just knew he's coming, and he's going to be infinitely greater than I am. And if I am to be rescued from death, which verse 11 certainly signifies, my pleasures at God's right hand are forever.

Death will not end my relation to God. If that's true of me, what could be greater? Well, what could be greater is he never even sees corruption. And that's the second half of verse 10, and that's what Peter saw, and that's what Paul saw, and they saw David on the wings of the spirit of prophecy reach the apex of his own hope and go beyond it.

And they said, that's Messiah. That's prophecy. Here's the rest of what Peter says.

This is Acts chapter 2 verses 31 and 32. Peter says, David foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. David spoke about the Messiah when he said, he won't even see corruption.

Keeps going. This Jesus, God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. So Peter, thank you Peter, is not just saying, it's Jesus.

He's explaining amazingly how he drew down that conviction from what he knows that David knows about the son of David from the promise that God had made to him. So David, like all true prophets, is being carried along. His spirit is rising.

God will preserve him. God is his Lord. God is his delight.

God is his portion. God is his inheritance. God will give him pleasures forevermore, and death itself will not be the last word.

God will not abandon him to Sheol. And at that point, the spirit of prophecy takes over, and he says, and your son is going to be greater than all that. He will not even see corruption.

So, dear South Cities Church, how are you going to embrace the reality of Psalm 16 in view of verse 10? This is my closing counsel to you, and my prayer for you as a church, your 11-day-old church, sort of. My closing counsel is, first, let's put it negatively, if David is wrong, if David is wrong in verse 10, and he's not a prefiguration, he's not a forerunner of a son of David who would rise from the dead, then you can kiss Psalm 16 goodbye, church. You can kiss it goodbye.

You can close your Bibles and kiss everything I've said for the last whatever long I've been preaching. It's over. It's over.

Because, and the reason I say that is, every blessing, and this psalm is just about as great as it gets, I think, every blessing, God, my good, God, my Lord, God, my delight, God, my portion, God, my cup, God, my inheritance, God, my fullness of joy, God, my pleasures forevermore, all those blessings are promised to sinners. I mean, David was a sinner, an adulterer, a murderer. How in the world can he claim these things for himself? And how can you and me? How can we? And the answer is, this son of David purchased them.

He died for the sins of Old Testament saints and the sins of New Testament saints. That's what Romans 3 25 says. David's sins are covered by the blood of Jesus.

My sins and your sins are covered by the blood of Jesus, if we trust in Jesus. Therefore, there's forgiveness in the blood, and there's a future in the resurrection. And therefore, Psalm 16 is yours, South Cities Church.

It's yours, because of Christ. Verse 10 is true. He did die.

He did rise. His flesh did not see corruption. And therefore, you can bank on these promises.

So, what should you do? You should set him always before you. You should keep him as your right hand. And if you do, and if your good pastor does, and you have a good pastor, you have a good pastoral team here.

You have a good council of elders here. If they and you keep God in Christ clearly before them as their treasure, and their good, and their Lord, and their inheritance, and their cup, and their portion. And God cherished, and loved, and honored at their right hand.

This church will not be moved away from Christ. Away from salvation. Away from the Bible.

It will be strong till he comes. Let's pray. So, there it is, Lord.

A great salvation wrought in Christ, tasted by David, and now enjoyed in Christ by us. Oh God, grant a great faithfulness to this church. May you be their good, their Lord, their delight, their portion, their cup, their inheritance, their pleasures forevermore.

God grant, I pray, that there would be no turning to the right or to the left. Preserve us, oh God, for we take refuge in you.

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