
EASTER GUARANTEES THAT THE BEST IS YET TO COME
Sermon for the Resurrection of our Lord 2025
Psalm 16

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon is Psalm 16: ¹ **Protect me, O God! For I have taken refuge in You.**

² **I have been saying to the LORD: “You are my Lord. Without You I have nothing good.”**

³ **As for the holy people who are in the land, they are the excellent people, and all my delight is in them.**

⁴ **Those who run after another god will have many sorrows. I shall not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.**

⁵ **O LORD, You are my allotted portion and my cup. You are firmly holding what has been allotted to me.**

⁶ **The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely, I have a delightful inheritance.**

⁷ **I shall bless the LORD, who has given me advice. Even during the nights my inmost parts teach me.**

⁸ **I have set the LORD before Me constantly. Because He is at My right hand, I shall not stagger.**

⁹ **Therefore, My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices. My body also will dwell securely.** ¹⁰ **For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol or allow Your Faithful One to see decay.**

¹¹ **You make known to Me the path of life. In Your presence there is fullness of joy. At Your right hand there are pleasures for ever.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

“This is the day that the LORD has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24). For Christ is risen! *He is risen indeed! Alleluia!* And because He lives, so shall we!

As we read the psalms, we should recognise that they are Spirit-inspired prayers. In the psalms, God gives us words we can use to talk to Him. Psalm 16, written by David, is a psalm of trust, a confession of faith that helps us voice our faith and trust in the LORD. In this psalm, we hear faith expressing itself, declaring that in a world of trouble, uncertainty, and death, the resurrection of Jesus guarantees that He is our Refuge in life, our Hope in death, and our Joy in eternity.

Behind this psalm of David is some situation of danger. It's not explicitly stated what it is, although we get a few hints as the psalm continues. Anyhow, David begins his psalm *seeking protection*. He writes, "**Protect me, O God! For I have taken refuge in You.**" Whatever it is, David is in trouble and is crying out for help, for a refuge, a place of safety that cannot be shaken.

If anyone ever needed a safe place, it was David! He had 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.

We, too, need protection, security, and assurance as troubling situations come into our lives. People put great effort into security. They build fences and install security cameras around their homes. But there is nothing in this world with a reliable foundation. There is nothing in this world that will last. There is nothing in and of this world that will not be shaken and pass away.

David knew that no one besides the LORD could be a real shelter from the storm. He knew that God was his safe place in an unpredictable world. Likewise, when we pray this psalm for God's protection, *we are guaranteed His refuge*, for today, we know that even death could not disarm Christ. It's a striking phrase that the LORD is our refuge, for a refuge is usually a place, a shelter from danger. For us, as God's people, *our refuge is not primarily a place but a person, the risen Christ*. With much confidence, we can join with David saying to the LORD, "**You are my Lord. Without You I have nothing good.**" The LORD is the supreme good in life.

The Lord promises to be with us always. Obviously, it's no help to have a refuge that *isn't nearby*, and a refuge is only helpful if it's somewhere we can *actually shelter*. This was the huge question Jesus' followers faced as that first Easter morning dawned. How could their Lord be with them now? **But Christ is risen!** And so, we join with King David and pray, **"I shall bless the LORD, who has given me advice. Even during the nights my inmost parts teach me. ⁸ I have set the LORD before Me constantly. Because He is at My right hand, I shall not stagger."** This is familiar language. We usually speak of the LORD's right hand and the trust that one day we shall be there at His side. The LORD is *our* right hand. Christ is risen to be here with us! He is our refuge. He's our right-hand man. Therefore, we **"shall not stagger."**

We sense this, especially in the community of God's people. David writes, **"As for the holy people who are in the land, they are the excellent people, and all my delight is in them."**

During worship in the temple, David received instruction and strength from God. In his time of worship, he found refuge from his troubles. Today—above all days!—we, as God's people, gather together to receive His grace through His Word, *and we are strengthened!* Not only that but especially on this day, *we are assured of Jesus' presence here with us*. Through His resurrection and bodily appearances, Jesus proved that the word and promises of God are true. Thus, like King David, we, too, can pray in confidence that the risen and living Lord is at our right hand, ever-present with us. For at one of those post-Easter appearances, He promised, *"Certainly, I am with you always, until the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:20). His presence is truly all that we need because *He surely lives to give us all we need, even for this life*. Faith finds contentment in this and nothing else. ***In Jesus, risen and living, we have all that's necessary for life and living, even in this uncertain world.*** And so, David says, **"⁵ O LORD, You are my allotted portion and my cup. You are firmly holding what has been allotted to me. ⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely, I have a delightful inheritance."** David reminds us in our self-centred culture that life is not something we achieve but rather something we *receive* as a gracious gift from God. God Himself is the greatest blessing in life, and thanks to Jesus' resurrection, He lives to bless us!

Faith looks to the Lord as the foundation for everything. And since the Lord is risen and living, we know with certainty that He is our refuge in life. He *is* our life!

The Lord is also our hope in death. **“For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol or allow Your Faithful One to see decay”** David writes.

David’s situation as he wrote this psalm was deadly serious. It was clearly life threatening. But there is a tremendous confidence here that even death is no match for the Lord, or that the Lord would not give him up to that place of the dead. Of course that doesn’t mean we’re not going to die at all, but it means that even in death God won’t give up on us. Death is not the end, which is what makes Easter and the reason we celebrate Easter the most significant and life-changing event ever. This is the foundation of our faith. It’s one thing for the Lord to be our refuge in life, but we also die. Death is our common enemy that we all face. Even with all modern medicine, the mortality rate still sits at 100 percent. How can David pray with this confidence that the Lord will not abandon his soul to the grave forever? How can we pray like that—with confidence that when we face death it’s not the end, or when our loved ones die it’s not the end?

This psalm is quoted *twice* in the New Testament; both the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul tell us that this psalm is ultimately about Jesus Christ—that it is about Christ’s death and resurrection—that He is our hope in the face of death.

Listen to these verses from Peter’s sermon on Pentecost: *“Men of Israel, listen to these words! Jesus of Nazareth was a Man whom God commended to you, as you yourselves know, by miracles, wonders and miraculous signs, which God worked among you through Him. ²³ This Man was handed over to you by God’s set plan and foreknowledge, and you, with the hands of wicked men, nailed Him to a cross and put Him to death. ²⁴ Nevertheless, God raised Him and loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible for death to hold Him. ²⁵ For David says about Him: ‘I have continually been foreseeing the Lord before Me. For He is at My right hand, that I may not be shaken.’”* (Acts 2:22-25).

Did you catch Psalm 16 here? Peter says that David prayed this psalm speaking of Jesus. And then Peter goes on, “*Brethren, I can tell you frankly that our ancestor David died and was buried, and his grave is with us to this day.*”³⁰ *Therefore, because David was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him by an oath to cause one of his descendants to sit on his throne,*³¹ *he saw what would come and said concerning the resurrection of the Christ that He was not abandoned to the grave and that His body did not experience decay.*³² *This One, Jesus, God has raised, and of that fact we are all witnesses”* (2:29-32).

Jesus died. As we read in the letter to the Hebrews, He needed to die as that once-for-all sacrifice for your sins and mine.¹ Or, as Paul says in Romans, “*God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Romans 5:8). But death could not hold Him. His Father did not abandon Him in death but raised Him to life. The resurrection of Jesus, as Peter and Paul declared, *is the ultimate fulfilment of this psalm*. Because we have been baptised into Jesus, we are united into His death and resurrection and can live and die in confidence that *God will not abandon us in death*. Christ’s resurrection is the firstfruits, and we are the harvest that shall follow. He is the Head, and we are His body, and where the Head has gone, the body will follow. Thus, He is our hope in death.

And yet, there’s more. Because Jesus lives, He is our joy in eternity. David writes, “**You make known to Me the path of life. In Your presence there is fullness of joy. At Your right hand there are pleasures for ever.**”

Joy in this life can be elusive. Times of joy that we experience don’t last as long as we’d like. But our psalm speaks of a time and place where “**there is fullness of joy.... pleasures for ever.**” It’s not just that our Lord is our refuge in this life or our hope in death, but this is all leading somewhere. There is a goal, a destination for this Christian journey. We are pilgrims in this life traveling home. Throughout the trek, the Lord is there with us, supplying all we need for our bodies and life.

¹ Hebrews 10:10

He's our refuge and strength when we need Him most, and when death comes, He is there with us; His rod and His staff comfort us. He is the Lord and Giver of life and the Conqueror of death, and He has prepared a place for us, that where He is there, we shall also be. By Jesus' resurrection, we have a guaranteed "*inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you*" (1 Peter 1:4).

The sufferings of this life cannot be compared to the glory that awaits us in heaven with Him. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, there is life beyond this life, and beyond death, there is an eternal joy where there will be no more sin, no more sorrow, no more pain or sickness or death, only pleasures forevermore, unending joy in the Lord. Easter guarantees that the best is yet to come. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY

We praise You, O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Your great mercy You have given us new life by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, and have filled us with a sure and living hope. You have changed our night of doubt and sorrow into an eternal day of joy and gladness by rolling the stone from the door of the empty tomb. You have brought immortal life to light by the glad tidings that Christ is risen and has destroyed death's power. You proclaim, to all who live in this world of darkness under the threat of death, the glorious good news that Christ is risen, and that in Him we have a glorious inheritance that can never decay, spoil, or fade away. For all this, we thank You, O God.

We praise You, O Father, for bringing forth Your Son as the first-fruits of a harvest of resurrected believers, and for giving Him the keys of death and hell. In Him, You sow what has been ugly and weak, and raise what is beautiful and strong. Through Him You have removed the sting from our death, and given us victory over the grave. Fill our hearts with the joy and power of His resurrection.

Grant to Your Church and to people everywhere the power of an endless life, that they may offer You endless love and praise. Pour out Your blessing on our homes, and fill them with the living hope of Easter. Empower us to proclaim Christ's victory to all the world, that nations may join the hosts of heaven in songs of triumph.

Keep us safe by Your power, O Lord, that we may never lose this holy faith. Wipe all tears from our eyes. Uphold us in every trouble and trial. Take from us all fear of death. Fill the depths of our souls with the joyous glow of Easter's light. Renew us by the Spirit of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Help us to rejoice in the promise that in Christ an eternal day will come when our weak, mortal bodies will be like this heavenly body. And so, when You call us from this life to Your eternal rest, grant that we may sleep peacefully in Jesus to await the sound of the final trumpet, when we shall be raised never to die again. In the name of our risen and ever-living Lord. Amen.