

The Second Sunday Of Easter (April 19, 2020)

1848

Lesson from Acts: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Service of the Word: p. 38

Epistle: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Text: Psalm 16

Psalm 16

Theme: God Will Not Abandon His Holy One To The Grave.

I. This meant total security for Jesus.

II. This means total security for us.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ Jesus!

Psalm 16 where Jesus says:

Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge. I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing." As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.

LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made 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 have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Lord God, sanctify us by your truth; your word is truth. Amen.

Dear fellow redeemed by the Holy One whom God did not abandon to the grave,

On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter preached a sermon to the crowd in Jerusalem. No doubt there were quite a number of people in that crowd who had also been in the Jerusalem crowd just seven weeks earlier when Jesus was on trial, that crowd that shouted, "Crucify him!" And those who had not participated in the activity of that crowd had by their silence and noninvolvement consented to Jesus' death. How would you have liked to face that Pentecost crowd and preach to them, to tell them that they were wrong for crucifying Jesus, that they were responsible for the death of the Savior of the world? That would be about like waving a red flag in front of a bull.

But Peter, who such a short time before had been so afraid of a servant girl that he denied even knowing his Lord, now was fearless. With great courage, confidence and security he told that crowd, "You, with the help of wicked men, put Jesus to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." [Acts 2:23-24] Then Peter quoted the last part of our Psalm to show the people that already long ago God's word had pointed out that all-important truth: God will not abandon his Holy One to the grave. Where did Peter get such courage, confidence and security to face that

crowd? He got it from his resurrected Lord, from God's holy word, from the Psalm before us this morning: God Will Not Abandon His Holy One To The Grave. This meant total security for Jesus. This means total security for us.

Do we ever feel less secure than we should? Do we find ourselves doubting that the Lord will keep us safe and take care of us? Do we really think he is that careless with us? Do we ever become discouraged and depressed as if to say, "what a crummy deal the Lord has given me this time! What an unfortunate lot I have in life!" Lord, from Psalm 16 drive us from our pathetic lack of trust, and restore to us the peace and joy of your salvation!

King David of the Old Testament, who lived 1000 years before Jesus was born, is the one who penned Psalm 16, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It's a Messianic Psalm. That means that David wrote first not about himself, but about Jesus the promised Savior. So 1000 years later when Peter quoted from the Psalm on the Day of Pentecost, he explained, "Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay." [Acts 2:29-31]

Also the Apostle Paul, on his first missionary journey in Asia Minor, when preaching about Christ's resurrection, quoted Psalm 16: "You will not let your Holy One see decay." And he too then pointed out, "For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay." [Acts 13:35-37]

Clearly, Psalm 16 is about Jesus. Jesus himself is speaking. He is praying to his heavenly Father. We might do well to picture Jesus praying this Psalm on one of those times when we are told that he went away by himself to pray, sometimes spending the entire night in prayer. Have you ever wondered what Jesus prayed all night long? He no doubt prayed the Psalms, or the many other prophetic prayers of the Old Testament written for him to pray. Or we might do even better to picture Jesus praying this Psalm in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before he died. There are many parallels between Psalm 16 and Jesus' prayer that night. Or we might do even better to hear Jesus praying this Psalm from the cross just as he prayed Psalm 22. This Psalm is one of the many timeless prayers of the Savior of the world!

Jesus begins: "Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge. I said to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.' As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips." We immediately sense that Jesus was in trouble or danger that he prayed, "Keep me safe, O God." In his mission as our Savior Jesus was indeed in great trouble and danger, surrounded by wicked men here on earth who would attempt to kill him, and would finally torture and crucify him, snuffing out his very life. Yet Jesus did not despair. He remained secure, totally secure in the hands of his loving heavenly Father. He knew that God would save him, no matter what, that finally God would not abandon him to the grave. He knew that God is good. Everything good is from God, and apart from God there is no good thing. Therefore Jesus completely dedicated himself to his Father's will, even though that meant suffering and dying. "You

are my Lord," Jesus said to his heavenly Father.

Jesus also expressed his great love for God's people. The saints, those who place their trust in God for the forgiveness and salvation which Jesus would willingly win for them through his suffering and death -- "They are my delight," Jesus says. On the other hand, Jesus wants nothing to do with those who serve other gods. He wants nothing to do with their worship, their "libations of blood," nor will he even take their names on his lips. Satan had once tried to strike up a deal with Jesus. He showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, all their splendor and glory, all their idolatry, and said, "All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me." But Jesus replied, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Jesus was totally committed to doing things God's way, even though that meant for him the cross.

Jesus continues on in his prayer: "LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance." When God gave the Israelites the land of Canaan, the land was divided up between the tribes, and then further divided among the families of the tribes. The boundary lines were set down, and each family received its inheritance, whether it was a good chunk of land or not so good. Jesus did not have a piece of land that was granted to him. Instead he received the inheritance of being the Savior of the world. That was his lot, and he delighted in that lot. "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places." he said, "Surely I have a delightful inheritance." "LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup." In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus also spoke of his God-given assignment as a "cup", the cup of his suffering and death. He prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." [Luke 22:42] In one sense it was a bitter cup. Surely Jesus did not enjoy being mocked, being whipped, being condemned and being crucified. Hanging on the cross was not a good time. But in another sense, Jesus was very much content and willing, and even happy to drink that cup. Why? Simply because it was the will of his heavenly Father. And Jesus rejoiced to drink that cup for our sake, to win our forgiveness and salvation. Isn't that tremendous -- Jesus rejoiced to be my Savior. He looked upon it as a privilege to come to this earth, suffer my woes and die for me.

Isn't it amazing how content Jesus was during his life here on earth. He didn't complain. He wasn't gloomy. He didn't struggle against hardships. Instead he willingly accepted hardships. He was calm, content and filled with a joyous confidence. In Jesus we find security at its best. He was content to be arrested, content to be condemned, content to hang on a cross. In contentment he said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Then he died in the total security that God would not abandon him to the grave.

Notice Jesus' total security in the psalm: "I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." There the Psalm ends, rather abruptly. But after a climax like that, what more can be said? Eternal joy and pleasures in the presence of the heavenly Father awaited Jesus, because God would not, God could not, abandon his Holy One to the grave.

Jesus' body did not see decay. On that Easter morning the women went to the

tomb with their spices to anoint Jesus' body to slow down the decaying process. But their spices were all for nothing. Before they even got to use them, Jesus had risen.

The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead assures us that Jesus has carried out our redemption. All of our sins; all the sins of the whole world were placed on Jesus on the cross. He suffered and died to pay the horrible price for those sins. But on Easter morning Jesus was raised to life as the Holy One. All the sins of the world that were placed on him on the cross were gone. He had paid the price for them all. If there were even one sin that Jesus' suffering did not pay for, he would not have risen from the dead. Jesus' resurrection proclaims that we are justified before God. "He was raised again for our justification." Through Jesus, we too are God's holy ones. There we have the blessed assurance that God will not abandon us to the grave. Jesus has promised, "Because I live, you also will live." God will not abandon his Holy One to the grave. That means total security for us!

People buy life insurance for security, so they have the assurance that if something should happen to them, their loved ones will be provided for. The only problem with life insurance is that you have to die to collect it, and then it doesn't do you personally a whole lot of good. That's the problem with every type of earthly security -- it's only good for this life, and totally worthless after you die. And how can we be secure during our life if we're not secure for all eternity after we die?

Jesus' resurrection gives us that security, eternal security. By fulfilling the words of this Psalm, Jesus made it possible for us to make it our own prayer too. Because of Jesus' resurrection, in every situation in our life, we can confidently pray to our all-powerful and all-gracious God: "Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge. I said to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.'" No matter what our circumstances are, no matter how great our troubles appear, we know that Jesus has given us eternal salvation. Therefore we can say with contentment: "LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance." Even at death, in Christ we remain secure, because he will keep our bodies safe in peaceful rest in the grave until he appears to call them to life again. "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave.... You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

Amen.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. Amen.