

Today we are going to look at Psalm 16. I invite you to take out the Pew Bibles and turn to the Psalm.

Do you know this tune: *"I nothing lack if I am his, and He is mine forever."* It is the conclusion of the first verse from the song, "The King of Love My Shepherd Is."

Psalm 23 and Psalm 16 are part of what is called the Trust Psalms. Singing that tune always puts me in a state of trusting God.

Maybe we all need to be put in that state of trust this morning. It might have been a tough week out there. Some betrayals, some treachery, some duplicity, some unfaithfulness, some disloyalty, some misunderstandings. We might be carrying a whole load of things with us. Life can be tough. We need a center for our trust.

Would you sing the verse with me?

*The King of love, my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never.
I nothing lack if I am his, and He is mine forever.*

What do we trust God for? This morning we remind ourselves of some of the things.

1. We put our trust in God for our Protection. Psalm 16:1 says: *"Keep me safe, O God."*

What are the things you and I need in order to feel safe? Well, we need to know where the next meal is coming from. We need to know where we are going to sleep tonight. We need to know that we will be clothed and warm. We need to know that someone will talk to us.

When you and I were infants, we knew where our next meal would come from. And we knew where we would be sleeping. And we knew we would have clothes to put on. And we knew that someone was going to talk to us.

When we were infants we never worried about these things. The reason we never worried was: we knew we belonged to another. The one we belonged to would take care of us.

Then came the teenage years, when we expressed our desire to be more independent. A very good thing, as long as we remembered that we still have some connections.

Then came the post high school years, and we moved out and we moved on and we moved in somewhere else. We paid our own bills and made our own decisions; we were independent. A very good thing, as long as we recalled that we still have some connections.

Then came the lump in some part of the body. Then the tests showed that something was acting up in our body – blood pressure or cholesterol or blood sugar.

We might have wondered if our health was OK. We felt like we were all alone. We no longer felt safe and secure. We felt like we were on our own – with no connections

I want to remind us today that we still belong to another. Psalm 16:2 says what? *“You are my Master.”* The Bible also says: *“You belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.”* [1 Corinthians 3:23]

What does it mean to belong? How about a Mom example this morning of belonging? See if you can relate to this list. Did your Mom ever say to you:

- Sick people belong in bed.
 - Thank-you notes, thank-you notes, thank-you notes.
 - Get your hair off your face.
 - Stand up straight.
 - If you get a pet, I’ll end up taking care of it.
 - You can’t go outside in that.
 - Whatever you’re doing, stop it.
-

I look at that list and I think, “Mom!” I belonged to that type of understanding of life. I felt protected.

I still belong to God. I know where my next meal is going to come from. I know where I will sleep this night. I know that I will be clothed. And I know that someone will always be there to talk to me.

Even if the coming week is going to be a tough one, I am safe. I trust that God is still connected to me. He has promised that. *“I nothing lack if I am his, and He is mine.”*

We put our trust in God for protection.

2. We put our trust in God for our Portion. Psalm 16:5: *“Lord, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing. You guard all that is mine.”*

In the older Bible translations we have the word “portion.” The NRSV says: *“The LORD is my chosen portion.....”*

I have lived in a home with teenagers for about 12 years now. One learns a lot about “portions” when you have teenagers. I have been fighting for my fair share of the goods for 12 long years! Let me burden you with my burdens for a few moments concerning “portions.”

- When I had no teenagers, my clothes were my own clothes. But for the past 12 years my clothes have been showing up on my teenagers bodies, and in my teenagers rooms.

I went to visit my daughter a few weeks ago, and I brought along my favorite stocking cap – red, tightly woven, says “Midland” on it. You can’t buy one of those anywhere – they are a special edition.

I had my hat when I went to visit my daughter. It remained behind in Eau Claire; a hostage. My daughter needed it for when she goes running – like her other 27 hats wouldn’t cover her head! She swiped it right out of my car. She did say “thanks.”

- When I had no teenagers, there was plenty of food available in our house. I had no trouble maintaining my weight, and even adding to it!

Then I had to start competing for food with the Hungry Four. Sometimes they brought hungry friends with them. For 12 years I would stop into the pizza shop and get 3 or 4 large pizzas to go. I never went home without making a stop at a grocery store.

And I loved every minute of it.

To me that is an example of God sharing his portion with all of us.

- God holds in his hands forgiveness. He does not keep it for himself. When I need a portion of that gift, God gives the gift.
- God holds in his hands counsel. He does not keep it for himself. When I need a portion of wisdom to make it through a troubling time, God gives the gift.
- God holds in his hands strength. He does not keep it all for himself. When I need a portion of strength for journey, God opens his hand and gives the gift.

And God loves every minute of being your God and handing to you your portion of grace.

Next week our Youth Group, in the Spirit of our God, are going to hand out a “portion.” Our Youth Group will be “Shopping for Nokomis” soon. They meet at the K-mart in Moorhead. Dave Steffes, one of the Managers, gets it all lined up for us.

They have so much fun looking for clothes appropriate for a 3 year old boy or a 5 year old girl – they are given a particular child to shop for. Then they all go to Paul and Cindy Linstad’s home and wrap the presents. They keep nothing for themselves that day. And they have a good time.

There is something special about handing out a portion to those in need. That comes from the heart of God. God loves to give you your portion.

When you come to Holy Communion this morning, be bold! Ask God for whatever portion you need this week. Do you need understanding? Do you need compassion? Do you need the gift of laying down your self-pity? Or do you need the gift of strength?

God has your portion. All you need to do is ask. *"I nothing lack if I am his, and He is mine."*

We put our trust in God for protection. We put our trust in God for our portion. And third and last for this morning...

3. We put our trust in God for the Joyful Path. Psalm 16:11: *"You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of Your presence."*

Two friends sent me two e-mail stories this week about paths that we can walk on. The first story was about a blind horse. The owner did not put the blind horse to sleep. Instead, the owner put a bell on another horse that shared the pasture with the blind horse.

The story says: "If you walk by the pasture you see these two friends. The horse with bell checks on her companion. The blind horse listens for the bell, and walks to the sound, trusting that his friend will lead him safely to the barn for the night. The horse with the bell stops along the way, looking back, allowing her friend to keep up."

:Sometimes in life we are the blind horse who needs a friend with a bell. Sometimes we are the horse with the bell, patiently helping out a friend."

That is one way to look at your joyful path this week. Here is another one, from a different e-mail.

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, which she carried on a long pole across her neck. One of the pots at one end of the pole had a crack in it. The other pot was perfect.

At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived half full, which the other was still full..

One day the cracked pot spoke to the woman. "I am ashamed of myself, because of this crack in my side."

The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path? That is because I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them."

Each of us has our own unique flaws. God uses our strengths and weakness to be of service to Him.

The person who sent me that story began it by saying, "From one cracked pot to another!"

We have this joyful path in front of this week. You have already been given protection and your portion. Now it is time to walk on the path.

So, from one cracked pot to another: Go and care for God's world this week. Trust that God will equip you in all ways for this week.

Let us pray: You are here, Lord Jesus. You are here. We trust those words. So in confidence we will live this week. And by your power we will make changes this week to better serve you and our neighbor. And we will remember this:

I nothing lack if I am yours. And you are mine forever.