

Psalm 16 Matt Taylor 3rd May 2026

15 years ago, a little girl grew up to fulfil every girl's dream. 15 years ago last Wednesday, Kate became Princess Catherine. She got married to William and as William struggled to put the ring on her finger, he said these words. "All my worldly goods with thee I share." All that he had, he gave to her. Not quite pauper to princess, but commoner to princess. One with her prince, she became a royal. Everything changed. Her longings, her desires, her future, all changed in a moment because of the one she was united to.

A couple of weeks ago, Dave started the 3-2-1 course. It's a course we're running on a Thursday evening for those looking into Christian things. It's called 3-2-1 because that's the structure it follows. The threeness of God, the twoness of humanity, and so be one with Jesus. That's the invitation. Because Jesus is our King, but also who longs to be our Bridegroom. and invites us to be united to him so that all that is his can become ours. He longs to share all that he has with us. And so his father becomes our father. His spirit, our spirit, his victory, our victory. We're invited to be one with him.

And our oneness with Jesus is key to understanding Psalm 16. Look with me to the beginning of the Psalm. Like many in this first book of the Psalter, it's a Psalm penned by David. And at the end, David has confidence in life. So verse 10, he says, you'll not abandon me to the realm of the dead. I will not see decay. You make known to me the path of life, joy in your presence, eternal pleasures. David has a confidence of everlasting life.

And yet, as we heard in our second reading, as Peter preached Psalm 16 to those gathered in Jerusalem 50 days after that first Easter, he said, hey guys, you know David had that confidence in life? But David is dead and buried. Look, we all know that. I could take you on a tour of his tomb just this day. How does David have this confidence of life?

Well, Peter argues that David penned Psalm 16 prophetically as a prophet. His experience was real, but it was a type of the one to come. His son, who

God had promised would be on his throne forever. And so David was speaking, not just of himself, but he was speaking of Jesus. The one who had died, but whose body didn't see decay. No, he rose again, for death could not hold him.

See, Psalm 16 could only really be true for David because he was one with Jesus. And here's the wonderful thing for us this morning. Those words of life at the end of the Psalm can be ours, can be true for each of us today if we like Jesus, sorry, we like David, be one with Jesus. See, this psalm is Jesus's song. And all that is his, he longs to share with us this morning.

And we're going to be going through with three Ds. Firstly, dependence. Secondly, desire. And thirdly, destiny. Dependence, desire and destiny.

So firstly, Jesus's dependence. is our dependence. Look with me to verse 1. Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. Keep me safe.

Now this Psalm, as you'll notice from the superscription, is a miktam. A footnote tells us it's a literary or musical term, but there's a lot of debate about what a miktam is. Now there are a number of Psalms called miktams and the rest of them are all grouped together in Psalms 56 to 60. So Psalm 16 is a bit of an outlier. And what unites the others together if they're all Psalms of David of times when he was in trouble? So maybe it is a miktam is a psalm, is a song for troubled days.

Someone says that the Hebrew word miktam is similar to the word for covering. And they like to imagine, and I can see some sense in this, David saying this psalm in times where he can only just utter it covering his lips. He has to say it secretly because his trouble is so hard. Psalm 16 is a psalm for troubled times.

Which begs the question, when we face troubled times, what gets us through? What gets us through when times are tough? What got Jesus through was his dependence on his Father. See, Jesus took on a human nature, endured sufferings of this world. And what got him through? His dependence on his Father.

And one with him, our dependence, his dependence becomes our dependence. And so as we go through all the sufferings of this world in troubled times, we can fire up that prayer in verse one. Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge.

And boy, aren't there troubled times in our world. We're in the doctor's waiting room, unsure about the news that's going to come through the door. keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. Or maybe it's that moment where we've received a phone call and our stomach has just fallen out of our trousers. Just our aching heart about what the news we've received. We can fire up Psalm 16, verse 1. Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge.

Or maybe it's this term, we've got the exam season coming round. And we know the stress it's going to be to walk through the exam season. And maybe make Psalm 16, verse 1, your psalm for this time. Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge.

You see, Jesus's dependence on the Lord modelled for us as he went up to the mountainside day by day, At times, probably covering his mouth to pray when confronted with the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, that dependence can become our dependence. See, our safety in life and death depends upon the protection of the Lord our God. Jesus's dependence is our dependence.

But secondly, Jesus's desire is our desire. Have a look with me to verse 2. The Lord receives all his loyalty. I say to the Lord, you are my Lord. That second use of the word Lord is master. And the first use, I say to the Lord, is the covenant name of God himself, Yahweh. So he's saying, God, you are my master, you're my boss, you're the one who I obey. his loyalty, but also his total commitment. Apart from you, I have no good thing. All his good is bound up in his God. There is nothing worthwhile to be found anywhere else.

He receives all his loyalty. And don't we see this in Jesus, in his earthly life? desiring with every fibre of his earthly nature, every moment of his time on earth, to do the will of his Father, to do his work. And wonderfully one with Jesus, this exclusive loyalty to the Lord rises in our hearts. So we can declare

with our lips, You are my Lord, apart from you I have no good thing. And that becomes increasingly true in our hearts as well. That we start to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

But alongside a love for the Lord also comes a love for his people. Do you notice that in verse 3? I say of the holy ones who are in the land, They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight. See, Jesus didn't surround himself with the rich and famous of Jerusalem of his time. No, who was it that he said were his mothers and brothers and sisters? whoever does my will. He sought and honoured not the great of his day, but those who were in the people of God by faith.

And maybe it is this morning that we're not much in the eyes of the world. We walk down the streets of Buxton and actually instead of people doffing their cap to us, They cross the street to get out of our way. We're not much in the eyes of the world. We're shunned, excluded, avoid it. Yet if we're one with Jesus, he looks at us this morning and he values us. Notice the word in verse 3, they're the noble ones in whom is all my delight. Jesus delights in you.

And one with Christ that changes our desires too. Who is it that we esteem? Who is it that we long to be with? Not the people whose chat is great through their intellectual ability or their funny jokes. Not what we can get out of other people. No, it is their relationship to the Lord, will long to be around God's people, committing to gather together Sunday by Sunday, a gathering midweek too, will just love to be with God's people, for they are the noble ones in whom is all our delights.

I find this challenging, this verse, how we speak about other Christians, with whom we may disagree, but do we value them as Jesus values them. They are the noblest ones in whom is all my delight.

The Psalm keeps going and a love of good Lord, a love of his people, but a rejection of other gods. I guess verse 4, this is the flip side of verse 2. A loyalty to God in heart, mind, strength and soul will mean we won't chase after other gods.

And that was true of Princess Catherine, wasn't it? Being one with Prince William, get the right prince. Being one with him means it's excluded to all others. She'll be faithful to him alone. She won't be looking, she won't be on any of those apps or seeking after another. She's one with her husband.

You see, by nature, as humans, we all run after other gods, don't we? Whether it's success, family, beauty, freedom, money, pleasure, we run after them. But David says here, those who run after those gods will suffer more and more. You see, they don't deliver on the promises that they make.

I think one of the most insightful comments I've ever heard on this idea has actually come from a late American academic called David Foster Wallace, who is an American unreligious man, and he gave a commencement speech in the early 2000s when he said this.

He said, anything you worship will eat you alive. If you worship money and things, if they're the way you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough. Never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your own body and beauty and sexual allure. You'll always feel ugly. And when time in age starts showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally plant you. Worship power. You'll end up feeling weak and afraid. You need ever more power over others to numb your fear. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart. You'll end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out.

You see, Jesus, he refused the shortcut to the good place. See, when Jesus was tempted by Satan, he was offered the splendour and authority of this world. not by God, but by the evil one. And he refused to serve him, to take up his name upon his lips. And Jesus endured to receive his kingdom, not by the shortcut, but by the suffering of the cross.

And Jesus's invitation is to be one with him, to turn away from other gods, and to be faithful to our Lord. To turn away from selfish ambition, sexual immorality, covetousness, witchcraft, tax evasion. To be faithful to our Lord.

There was a period of my life in the kind of early mid 20s when I was consumed by the desire to get a wife. And this thing, I was just about, I need to get married, I need to get married, I need to get married. Relationships became the thing that was all-consuming in my mind. And then I came to Psalm 16 and verse 2. And realising that in Yahweh the Lord my God, actually I had everything that I needed. I didn't need a wife to be complete. I didn't need marriage to be satisfied. No, I had everything in Jesus. Being one with my Lord, my desires were increasingly shaped to know that I'm content to have everything in him.

And the Lord receives his loyalty, verses 2 to 4. But also the Lord shapes his wants. And in verses 5 to 7, we see the land come into view. You see, as God's people entered into the Promised Land, the land was divided up among the people by tribes, clans and families by lots. Each family, clan, tribe was to have their portion of the land. It was assigned to them, mapped out for them by boundary lines. All that was except for the tribe of Levi. They didn't have an inheritance among the land. Why? Because the Lord himself was to be their inheritance. They were to be a testimony to the rest of the tribes that actually this land in the Middle East today wasn't the end. It was looking forward to relationship with the Lord forever.

And just like them, Jesus came to earth. He didn't have a portion of this land. Foxes had their holes, he said. Birds of the air have their nests. But the Son of Man, nowhere to lay his head. No, he was the King of Heaven. He was clear where he came from and where he was going.

And Jesus desires for us too, not to live for this world, but for the one to come. See, all around us may be buying their forever homes, storing up treasures on earth, but moss come in and destroy, don't they? This world does not last forever. Jesus says, no, store up your treasure in heaven. And that is where our inheritance is, in Christ.

Our wants, the land, our wants The law, verse 7, I will praise the Lord who counsels me, even at night my heart instructs me. The psalmist here, David

here is describing the Psalm 1 kind of person, who doesn't receive counsel from the wicked, but from the Lord in his word, soaking up the wisdom by day so that by night his heart is so full of God's word, his wisdom, that it gives him instruction. Jesus is desire, his wants, will become our wants. To feed on God's word, our counsel from his scriptures, not our kind of phone feeds of the world.

Jesus' desire becomes our desire in our wants. But also, finally, verse 8, in our vision. I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

We can imagine this scene, can't we? Boy meets girl. And they're hanging out at a friend's, a mutual friend's party. And the guy thinks the evening's going, wow, he's had lots of great little interactions with her. And then the next day, the photos arrive, they drop on Facebook or Instagram, and the game is given away. For there are photos of him in the kitchen, eyes fixed on her. There's photos in the garden over the barbecue, his eyes fixed on her. They're having a conversation in the lounge as they're playing a game. It's clear to everybody. He has his eyes set on one person alone.

And that is what is said on the desire of Jesus. He lived only to please his Father. His eyes were longing and only set on him, and that should be said true of us, his people. that we are so consumed with the Lord that our eyes are always set on him. And with him at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. A commitment to the Lord that brings confidence of life. Jesus had that confidence. He knew he would die, but he also knew he would rise again. Brothers and sisters, let us set the Lord always before us.

So thirdly and finally, Jesus's destiny is our destiny, verses 9 to 11. See, Jesus's resurrection is secure. It was his confident destiny. And that too can become ours. Because it is Jesus's dependence and desire that secures our destiny.

Unlike David's tomb that was sealed with a body inside, Jesus's tomb, those 40 days after his resurrection as Peter preached to the crowds in Jerusalem, Jesus's tomb was unsealed. There was no body in it. because Jesus had risen

and ascended to the right hand of the Father. He was not abandoned to the realm of the dead. His body did not see decay.

And because Jesus' resurrection was for real and forever, that secures our hope of resurrection too. That we too can look forward to a for real and forever resurrection, not based on anything we've done, but because of Jesus. And verse 9, this resurrection hope is something to rejoice in, to be glad about with our whole bodies.

Did you know death has been defeated? Even if, like guys, get this, if you walk out today and a bus hits you down and you die, that is not the end. If you're one with Christ, your body will not see decay. God will not abandon you to the realm of the dead. We believe in the resurrection of the body.

And those resurrection rewards are ours too. Verse 11, you make known to me the path of life. Jesus makes known to us the path of life. There's a line in the 3-2-1 course. and that Jesus is not our coach shouting advice from the sidelines, saying, hey, that's the path to life. Follow that. If you have that dependence, you've had that desire, then you can have this destiny.

No, Jesus isn't a coach pointing us to the path of life. No, he's our champion who wins for us life. It is his deep dependence, his desire that wins for us that sure destiny. He's our champion saying, I am the way. I am the path of life. Jesus makes known to us the path of life.

He also gives us joy in our Father's presence now. You know, there are some people for whom it is just a joy to be around. They say, can I come and visit you? And you're like, yes, I'll move anything. I just love being around you. And that sense, we have that little foretaste in our human relationships, that is what it is with the Lord. To find joy in his presence. That's how he created the world back in Genesis 1 and 2. And that is what we're going to. And we can have a foretaste of that now in this life. One with Jesus, we have joy in the Father's presence.

But also we have eternal pleasures at our Father's right hands. God is no spoilsport. We've all tasted pleasures, haven't we? Food, weather, delights here on earth. Times that by infinity. And that will be ours in the new creation. And again, we can have a foretaste of these pleasures now. One with the Lord Jesus. These pleasures are ours.

there is no better good out there in the world, apart from being one with our Lord. Even when we're faced with the worst adversity today, those moments where we barely pray but for covering our lips. We can pray Psalm 16, keep me safe my God, for in you I take refuge. with that sure and certain hope that we'll see the Lord face to face in the place of life, enjoying his presence with eternal pleasures at his right hand.

Let me lead us in a prayer. Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. Father, thank you so much that we can call you, Father, one with the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you so much that you've poured out your Spirit in us, that Spirit of Christ. Please, would you make us increasingly dependent upon you, transform our desires that we would long to be loyal to you. And please, we pray, would you give us a sure and certain hope of the resurrection of our bodies to come, that we would know joy in your presence and eternal pleasures at your right hand, for your glory's sake. Amen.