

Psalm 16:1-11 (ESV) ¹ Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. ²I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” ³As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. ⁴The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. ⁵The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. ⁶The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. ⁷I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. ⁸I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. ¹⁰For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. ¹¹ You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Verse 1. Psalm 16:1 (NLT2) ¹*Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge.* Eugene Peterson in the Message Bible puts it this way. *“Keep me safe O God, I’ve run for dear life to You.”* I hear one huge message from God in my Bible reading these days and it is this. “Stop.” Yes, I see in my Bible readings a huge stop sign. “Be still and know that I am God.” Several years ago I did a funeral for a very dear friend, Rick Meckler. He was a person for whom I could let it fly and he still loved me. This was his biggest pet peeve in life. “Pastor, I hate it when people fail to come to a complete stop at stop signs.” This is commonly called California Stops. “A California stop occurs when a driver rolls through that stop sign without fully getting to stop the vehicle. A complete stop is when the speedometer reads zero, and there is no momentum at all, while in a California stop the vehicle moves at an average speed of less than five miles per hour. California stops are also referred to as rolling stops.” I found this quote on the Internet, so it has to be true.

Friends the time has come in our lives for us to make a complete stop in front of God. We are all going down the tollway at 80 miles per hour and God has put out his sign for us to see, “Rest area Ahead.” “God is waiting for you.” When you pull in God asks you to come to a complete stop. God has much to say to you and every word is worth listening to. For over 20 years you have heard it said, “Please be growing in the Lord now because the day is coming when you are going to need a stronger faith.” “Don’t put off growing in your knowledge and

experience of God because you do not want your faith falling short when the tough times come and yes, those tough times have arrived.” You have also heard it said that spiritual growth takes time, and you cannot make up for no growth in a five-minute conversation with a more mature Christian. We are in tough times, and I do not see them lifting any time soon. Tough times demands a tough faith, Christians in full time ministry are dropping like flies. I read of suicides almost weekly of pastors who are quite well known nationally. I read of new books coming out written by Christian professionals, “Why I became an atheist.” Friends, I want to stay in the race until I cross the finish line and not wimp out. I don’t want to drop out of the race because my faith is so weak that I can no longer endure living in a fallen world.

Friends, we have a safe place. Better yet, we have a safe Person we can go to every single day that has everything that we need. We have a hiding place, a place a refuge, where we are completely loved unconditionally, and God invites us to stop at His rest stop and be refueled, refreshed, renewed, restored so we can stay in the race until the day God brings us home. I don’t want any of us quitting or running out of gas. God’s Word, God’s Holy Word has everything you need to restore your soul. You will only find this when you come to a complete stop and listen to Your creator who knows exactly what you need to hear.

Believe it or not I am actually listening to Jeremiah these days. Please don’t tell Bob Yarbrough or Bill Shields. God has a great word or words for us in Jeremiah. Jeremiah’s heart is breaking because he sees God’s people in complete rebellion against God and the nation is suffering terribly because the people refused to stop and listen to God and repent. God says in Jeremiah, “Oh, why have they provoked my anger with their carved idols and their worthless foreign gods” says the Lord (Jeremiah 8:19b). They worshipped false gods, idols, made out of wood. The false prophets were telling them peace is on the way when it was God’s judgment on the way. The false prophets were looking into a tunnel and saw a light and said that light is

God's blessing coming our way. Jeremiah saw the same light at the end of time tunnel coming and he knew it was a train about to run them down because God's patience had been spent. God gave time for the people to repent but that time was spent. This broke Jeremiahs' heart. It also broke God's heart for God never delights in the suffering of His people. No good parent enjoys disciplining a child, causing a child to suffer. Any parent that enjoys disciplining a child ought not be a parent. God's discipline comes out of pure and holy love to get our lives on the right track and to avoid the coming wreck.

My grandfather was hit by a train. He lived to tell the story. That one train wreck changed our lives forever. The lessons we learned from that wreck have stayed with us and God brought good out of it. God's discipline comes to individuals, and it comes to nations. Please, pull over at the rest area and stop. God has so much in store for you and it is all good. Everything that is good in your life comes from God. **Verse 2** ²¹I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you." Out of his goodness God will speak to you and God will put people around you in the rest area that can help build you up in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our faith becomes stronger as we take the Word of God into our lives and live out what the word says. Our faith is also strengthened with the help of our Chrisitan friends sharing their God stories, what God is teaching them. Please come to a complete stop. The days are going to grow more evil until God says no more. The train is still coming down the tracks. You can no longer ignore God and get away with it. God refuses to be mocked. God's patience is growing thin. Jeremiah is a great place to stop, a resting place that will feed your soul and refuel your tanks.

Verse 3 ³As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." Friends, God has His ways of bringing saints into our lives that are full of the light of Christ. The Bible tells us that God sees every believer as a saint. That is our identity in God's

eyes. We are called saints. We may not act like a saint but that we are because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. Every one of us have Christian saints in our lives that God has used to change us for the better. Think to yourself. “Who is one believer in Christ who has had the most impact on my life for the good?” I have several come to mind. No, they were not perfect. They had feet of clay. But they had a way of living for God and their lives showed it. Yes, the Bible tells us as believers in Christ, we are saints. I can hear someone’s thoughts right now, “Pastor I ain’t no saint.” God says you are if you have received the Lord Jesus.

Luther reminds us that we are simultaneously saints and sinners. Both are true. The good news is when we spend time in God’s rest stop, it tends to help our behavior to be more of a saint than a sinner.

Verse 4 “⁴The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.” Every false god, every false religion, every cult that people fall for only adds to their grief and in the end leads to complete destruction. I think of the 17 missionaries kidnapped in Haiti. I think of the 70 to 100 Coptic Christians kidnapped in Nigeria at Emmanuel Baptist Church. It seems like it is open season on Christians in the Muslim world and China. All this persecution comes from people following false gods, involving themselves in false religions, and committing terrible bloody atrocities against the people of God. The Bible is so clear that in heaven the martyrs will be especially glorified for giving their lives up for Jesus. **Revelation 7:14-15 (NLT2)** “¹⁴Then he said to me, “These are the ones who died in the great tribulation. They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white. ¹⁵“That is why they stand in front of God’s throne and serve him day and night in his Temple. And he who sits on the throne will give them shelter.”

Verse 5-6, ⁵The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. ⁶The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. When God's people took over the Promise Land, each tribe was given a specific plot of land as an inheritance. The priests and Levites were not given such an inheritance, a portion of land. God was their portion. God was their inheritance. The priests and Levites had to depend on God for their security and safety. "David is claiming the same relationship with God. True safety and security do not come from property and possessions [and a 401k retirement plan], but from knowing God and living in God's Presence. David is blessed with God Himself. God Himself is Davids' inheritance. God gives many precious blessings to His people, but what makes them truly good is having God Himself. Friends, the greatest blessing we have is God Himself. And if we do not have God no other gift means anything. God Himself is the one great blessing that makes all the things He gives worthwhile (This paragraph are the insights of James Johnston found in The Psalms, Volume 1. R. Kent Hughes Editor, pg. 179). I know from personal experience that an overwhelming sense of God's Presence in our lives that God gives according to His timing makes living in a fallen world worth it.

Verses 7-9 ⁷I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. ⁸I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my body also dwells secure." David's confidence in God is so great because he has spent his entire life seeking the greatness of God. He never put off growing in God. God was his entire life. In the midst of suffering David always overcame finding his safety, his refuge in God. David spent time in God's rest area, the green pastures, to feed upon who God is. Even in the middle of the night his heart and mind were open to God's wisdom.

Verse 10 ¹⁰For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol or let your holy one see corruption.” The Lord God revealed to David that his throne will last forever through the coming Messiah. The Messiah would die but then be raised to life. David is foretelling the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We know this to be true because David died, and his body rotted in the grave. David in this verse is speaking of what will happen to the Messiah who saves us from our sins and lives eternally. David predicts Easter Sunday.

Verse 11 ¹¹You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Please pull into God’s rest area and come to a complete stop. God will give you direction, fill you with joy, and give to you a pleasure of living in this world that only the Christians can experience. At God’s right hand are pleasures forevermore.

When we get to the end of our lives, if we have been seeking God, resting in God, finding God as our safe place, it means we have grown old gracefully. The opposite is to grow old bitterly and just be a plain old poop, mad at the world and everyone else for not doing what you want them to do. As your faith grows your best days in Christ are always in front of you. Your faith in Christ pays great dividends, especially at the end. Never ignore God for one day. In the end you will know all of God’s benefits, pleasures forevermore. Amen and Amen.