

2019 – Psalm 16

**You will make known to me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy;
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.**

“There is a story about a schoolboy who was asked what he thought God was like. He replied that, as far as he could make out, God was ‘the sort of person who is always snooping around to see if anyone is enjoying himself and then trying to stop it’.” C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

2 Tim 3:1 ... in the last days ... 2 men will be ... 4 ... lovers of pleasure **rather** than lovers of God

- But is there a way we love both God and pleasure?

Psalm 16

1 <<A Mikhtam of David.>> Preserve me, O God, for **I take refuge in You.**

2 I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; **I have no good besides You.**"

3 As for the saints who are in the earth, They are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.

4 The sorrows of those who have bartered for another god will be multiplied; I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, Nor will I take their names upon my lips.

- A stark contrast in our choice

5 **The LORD** is the portion of **my inheritance** and **my cup**; You support **my lot.**

6 The lines have fallen to me in **pleasant** places; Indeed, my heritage is **beautiful** to me.

- The Lord Himself is our inheritance and also holds it for us. It is like a beautiful land with borders including all the features and fruitfulness we could hope for.

7 **I will bless the LORD who has counseled me;** Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.

8 I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

- His counsel guides and protects our heart ... to what end? (vs 11)

9 Therefore **my heart is glad** and **my glory rejoices**; My flesh also will dwell securely.

- What is my glory (honor, splendor, fame)?
 - o Approval from God Himself: “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful ...”

10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

- We are an eternal soul. Our neighbor is an eternal soul as well.
 - o What is the value of an eternal soul, and effort spent improving its eternal state?

11 You will make known to me **the path of life**; In Your presence is **fullness of joy**; In Your right hand there are **pleasures forever.**

- God wants us to have the fullest and longest pleasure, found only in Him through Jesus Christ.
- It is our duty to pursue pleasure in God.

Eternal rewards

1 Cor 3:11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if **any man builds** on the foundation with **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw**, 13 **each man's work will become evident**; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, **he will receive a reward**. 15 If any man's work is burned up, **he will suffer loss**; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which **the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me** on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

C.S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory

"If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased."

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant." ... "no one can enter heaven except as a child; and nothing is so obvious in a child—not in a conceited child, but in a good child—as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised."

Value of the individual eternal soul – ours and our neighbor's

Matt 25:23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' ... 31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Pleasure in God

- What are longings He gives us that can never be satisfied or fully experienced here?
 - o Beauty, deep relationships, heroism, full understanding
- Why did He give us longings that earth cannot fulfill?

Php 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

I turn next to the idea of glory. There is no getting away from the fact that this idea is very prominent in the New Testament and in early Christian writings. Salvation is constantly associated with palms, crowns, white robes, thrones, and splendour like the sun and stars. All this makes no immediate appeal to me at all, and in that respect I fancy I am a typical modern. Glory suggests two ideas to me, of which one seems wicked and the other ridiculous. Either glory means to me fame, or it means luminosity. As for the first, since to be famous means to be better known than other people, the desire for fame appears to me as a competitive passion and therefore of hell rather than heaven. As for the second, who wishes to become a kind of living electric light bulb?

When I began to look into this matter I was shocked to find such different Christians as Milton, Johnson and Thomas Aquinas taking heavenly glory quite frankly in the sense of fame or good report. But not fame conferred by our fellow creatures—fame with God, approval or (I might say) “appreciation” by God. And then, when I had thought it over, I saw that this view was scriptural; nothing can eliminate from the parable the divine accolade, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” With that, a good deal of what I had been thinking all my life fell down like a house of cards. I suddenly remembered that no one can enter heaven except as a child; and nothing is so obvious in a child—not in a conceited child, but in a good child—as its great and undisguised pleasure in being praised. Not only in a child, either, but even in a dog or a horse. Apparently what I had mistaken for humility had, all these years, prevented me from understanding what is in fact the humblest, the most childlike, the most creaturely of pleasures—nay, the specific pleasure of the inferior: the pleasure a beast before men, a child before its father, a pupil before his teacher, a creature before its Creator. I am not forgetting how horribly this most innocent desire is parodied in our human ambitions, or how very quickly, in my own experience, the lawful pleasure of praise from those whom it was my duty to please turns into the deadly poison of self-admiration. But I thought I could detect a moment—a very, very short moment—before this happened, during which the satisfaction of having pleased those whom I rightly loved and rightly feared was pure. And that is enough to raise our thoughts to what may happen when the redeemed soul, beyond all hope and nearly beyond belief, learns at last that she has pleased Him whom she was created to please. There will be no room for vanity then. She will be free from the miserable illusion that it is her doing. With no taint of what we should now call self-approval she will most innocently rejoice in the thing that God has made her to be, and the moment which heals her old inferiority complex for ever will also drown her pride deeper than Prospero’s book. Perfect humility dispenses with modesty. If God is satisfied with the work, the work may be satisfied with itself; “it is not for her to bandy compliments with her Sovereign.” I can imagine someone saying that he dislikes my idea of heaven as a place where we are patted on the back. But proud misunderstanding is behind that dislike. In the end that Face which is the delight or the terror of the universe must be turned upon each of us either with one expression or with the other, either conferring glory inexpressible or inflicting shame that can never be cured or disguised. I read in a periodical the other day that the fundamental thing is how we think of God. By God Himself, it is not! How God thinks of us is not only more important, but infinitely more important. Indeed, how we think of Him is of no importance except in so far as it is related to how He thinks of us. It is written that we shall “stand before” Him, shall appear, shall be inspected. The promise of glory is the promise, almost incredible and only possible by the work of Christ, that some of us, that any of us who really chooses, shall actually survive that examination, shall find approval, shall please God. To please God ... to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness ... to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is.