

5. Psalm 15-17

September 20, 2007

The three chapters we are going to study tonight are so practical for our walk with Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Psalm 15 - The people who abide with God

This chapter teaches us about abiding in the presence of God. The word 'tabernacle' is the same word 'dwell' in Greek when we study the Book of John chapter 1.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

It is really fascinating to learn this kind of deep spiritual connection. The word 'dwell' has more meaning than just living in the same location. It means that we may live in safety and security under the Lord's cover and protection.

This psalm explains who is worthy to be a "guest" of the Lord. The psalmist shows the flawless character of one who is fit to worship in the Lord's sanctuary.

John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

A. WHO CAN ABIDE IN GOD'S TABERNACLE?

Psalm 15:1-5 A Psalm of David. Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? 2 He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; 3 He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; 4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5 He who does not put out his money at usury, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

V1's question was a spiritual one: who can draw near to God and worship in His dwelling place? All of us have been born with sinful nature. None of us should be allowed to be in the presence of the Lord if it was not by the grace of God.

By the way, where is the 'holy hill'? There is only one holy hill. The Bible calls it Zion, which is in the City of David of the land of Israel.

From v2-5 we find the answer of the question from v1. The metaphor of the "walk" is used throughout the Bible for one's pattern of life and conduct. A blameless person lives in obedience to God and maintains a life of integrity.

Whenever we get sidetracked from our walk with the Lord, we find ourselves on a direct path to backsliding. I said this to many people, "Stay close to Jesus and you don't ever have to wonder if you are going to backslide."

V2 and 3 give us a series of nice contrasts of what to do and what not to do as believers of Jesus Christ.

In our contemporary culture the opposite is often true. The vile person is honored, and the godly man is despised. Righteous living should be more than lip service. It should produce the results that non-believers can clearly see in our lives.

B. APPLICATIONS

- 1) When we are disobedient to the Lord, we don't have the intimacy with the Lord once we enjoyed. The first step is a confession of our sin, the second a true repentance and third running back to the Lord.
- 2) Righteous living should be more than lip service. It should produce the results that non-believers can clearly see in our lives.

Psalm 16 - The resurrection of the Messiah

Psalms 16 through 24 form another segment that belongs together. In our song-books today songs of like themes are grouped together – songs of praise, songs of repentance, etc. This is how the Psalms are arranged like songbook. The theme of these nine psalms is the prophecy of Christ blended with the prophecy of the faithful remnant.

Psalm 16 gives us a celebration of the joy of fellowship that David realized comes from faith in the Lord and a song of resurrection. This is the third messianic psalm after Psalm 2 & 8.

This psalm is called a "Michtam of David." The word 'Michtam' is of uncertain origin. Martin Luther translated it as "a golden jewel," which I think is close to the actual meaning. Psalms 56 through 60 are also called Michtam psalms.

A. YOU ARE MY PORTION AND MY CUP

Psalm 16:1-7 A Michtam of David. Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. 2 O my soul, you have said to the Lord, "You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You." 3 As for the saints who are on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." 4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips. 5 O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. 6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance. 7 I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

V1 seems to summarize the entire Psalm 16.

I really like the way David describes his feeling toward God in v2 – "You are my Lord." I remember when my daughter Michelle was two or three years old. She used to come to me and crawl up on my lap and put her little arms around my neck and said, "My dada." My heart just melted.

Have you ever told the Lord that lately? He is longing to have that personal and intimate relationship with us.

V4 teaches us that anyone who goes after anyone or anything other than one true God will have sorrows after sorrows.

I am sure that you have noticed that “god” is in italics in most Bibles because the word was supplied by the translators. It means that they “hasten after another” whom they think is God.

We all believe in something or someone. Even atheists believe in their own twisted logic that there is no God. To them that is their religion.

We are not relying on God’s raw power even though His power can not be matched with anything in the universe. Rather we are relying on the faithfulness and love of God for our protection.

In v5, we find that David compared the Lord to a portion allotted to him by inheritance. The Lord was all he needed to satisfy his heart in life.

What is the difference between a “portion” and a “cup”? My portion is what belongs to me – whether I enjoy it or not – it’s mine. My cup is what I actually appropriate and make it as my own.

Jesus had to take His cup in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was made for Him by Him from the before the beginning. That is why He came to the earth, but as a human He didn’t want to take it and as the Son of God He didn’t want the separation from the Father due to all the sins of the mankind even though it was temporary.

B. ANOTHER MESSIANIC PROPHECY

Psalm 16:8-10 I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. 10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Verses 8-11 were cited by Peter on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:25-28 and Psalm 16:10b was quoted by Paul at Antioch in Acts 13:35-37 in reference to Christ’s resurrection.

The words of David are typological and they transcended his own experience and became historically true in Christ. Preservation from the decaying Sheol is the idea behind both David’s and Jesus’ experiences, but with David it came through a deliverance from death, whereas with Jesus it came through a resurrection from death.

Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

This messianic Psalm describes the life of Christ in v8, the death of Christ in v9, the resurrection of Christ in v10 and the ascension of Christ in v11.

C. APPLICATIONS

1) Some of God’s work in our lives may not make sense in our lifetime, but they are designated by Him to bring maturity to our spiritual life. That is part of the process of filling our cups.

2) We are not relying on God’s raw power even though His power can not be matched with anything in the universe. Rather we are relying on the faithfulness and love of God for our protection.

Psalm 17 - God, our Protector, Sustainer and Lord

In this psalm David was surrounded by the soldiers of king Saul in the wilderness. He prayed to be kept from the evil world that hunted him as he looked to a glorious future in the Lord's presence.

This psalm not only reveals David's trust in God, but also is a prayer for us today when we find ourselves in similar situations of trial, anxiety, or danger. As we study this psalm, we need to keep in mind that we are in a new series that speaks of Christ in prophecy. After all, this is a HIM book. It is all about Him.

A. HEAR MY CRY O LORD

Psalm 17:1-7 A Prayer of David. Hear a just cause, O Lord, Attend to my cry; Give ear to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips. 2 Let my vindication come from Your presence; Let Your eyes look on the things that are upright. 3 You have tested my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me and have found nothing; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. 4 Concerning the works of men, By the word of Your lips, I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer. 5 Uphold my steps in Your paths, That my footsteps may not slip. 6 I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, and hear my speech. 7 Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand, O You who save those who trust in You From those who rise up against them.

David was willing for the Lord to balance off his life. I'd say that he was brave. I don't know about you, but I am not asking for justice from God. Rather I am asking for mercy, because I know that I am a sinner. What most of us need from Him is mercy.

Does it mean that David thought that he was perfect and did not sin? I don't think so. But he knew that God would forgive him from his sins. It is his confidence in God's forgiveness we should learn. Many believers in Christ hold onto the guilt even though they sincerely confess their sins to the Lord. They need to move on and never to repeat the same sin again. But in many cases, they think that God wouldn't forgive them for what they have done. When we think like that, it is like we are insisting that God is a liar and cannot forgive our sins. He ain't a liar and can forgive all of our sins.

B. A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION FROM THE ENEMY

Psalm 17:8-15 Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings, 9 From the wicked who oppress me, From my deadly enemies who surround me. 10 They have closed up their fat hearts; With their mouths they speak proudly. 11 They have now surrounded us in our steps; They have set their eyes, crouching down to the earth, 12 As a lion is eager to tear his prey, And like a young lion lurking in secret places. 13 Arise, O Lord, Confront him, cast him down; Deliver my life from the wicked with Your sword, 14 With Your hand from men, O Lord, From men of the world who have their portion in this life, And whose belly You fill with Your hidden treasure. They are satisfied with children, And leave the rest of their possession for their babes. 15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

I just love the way David describe the relationship between God and him. In v8, it says, "the apple of Your eye". It literally means "little man of his eye" referring to the pupil, a delicate part of the eye that is essential for vision and that must be protected at all costs.

"Hide me under the shadow of Your wings" means that David was asking the Lord to put him behind God's mighty power.

Since David's enemy king Saul was relentlessly pursuing him all over like a lion after its prey, his prayer was urgent and intense.

After his earnest prayer, David affirmed himself with the promises of God in v15. You don't find any so-called gods allow this kind of intimacy between gods and their followers other than our God.

What a psalm to help those who are in trouble today – especially when we find we have enemies who are trying to destroy us. All of us who stand for God have enemies – ultimately they are against God and He will take care of them in person in His time. They seem to be a part of the Christian's life.

C. APPLICATIONS

1) We need to remember that the Lord protects His children. Nothing comes against us unless it is approved by Him. No trial and test are more than we can handle, because they are customized for us by Him.

2) We need to remember that when we come to the Lord with true repentance in our hearts, our sins will be forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ and we can find peace and rest in Him.