



Purpose in uncertainty

1. Uncertainty calls for a God-soaked response

2. We can go deeper than an initial response

3. Ending with a song of eternal wonder

A Song for every season Psalm 16-Purpose in uncertainty

Read

- **Psalm 16**

Intro

At first glance it would be reasonable to ask the question – where is the uncertainty in this Psalm written by David? It all sounds so nice and pleasant with lots of joy and gladness – so where is the angst? You could even ask from a place of travail is David just being smug? How does this relate to me when I am going through trials and suffering?

Well as we will see there are certain clues that lead us to the conclusion that David was actually in a place of real need when he wrote this psalm.

1. Uncertainty calls for a God-soaked response

The use of *miktam* in the title tells us he was in trouble

- The first clue is the title a miktam of David's. We have long lost the meaning of this word
- But if we look at the other 6 times that David uses this title in Psalms 56,57,58,59,60 we see in every instance that they are written from a place of real danger, isolation and trouble.
- They are written from a place where David couldn't see away out. Spurgeon and other commentators note that in every miktam David is in real trouble. So, we can assume in Psalm 16 the same applies.

He requests for God to preserve him

- The next clue is that David starts the psalm asking God to protect and preserve him. Have you been in a situation where the only prayer you can come up with is to just cry out to God to protect you?

You won't abandon my soul to the realm of death

- The next clue is that David declares later in the Psalm when he is in the right head space that God will not abandon him to the realm of death. This implies that he was facing a real threat to his life.
- It is noticeable that David does not dwell on uncertainty and his anxiety about his situation. His response is all shaped with an intentional dialogue with God. He puts God first and stands on the confidence that He will not be shaken.



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2. Our four-fold response

Initial Response

- Imagine a normal easter egg with one outer shell of chocolate – hiding within it three other eggs each hidden the on inside the other.
- I once had an easter egg like this, made up of Milk, Dark, White chocolate with a treasure at the center made up of a salted caramel egg dusted with Gold.
- We see in this Psalm David moving through the layers of eggs to the treasure within.
- The outer egg in this Psalm is David finding the resolve not to be shaken. But he doesn't just stop there – he pushed on to find the next egg.
- He is not satisfied with the packaging or just going through the motions he determines to get through to the treasure at the center of every thoughtful faithful journey in the face of uncertainty, danger and travail.
- But is this just positive thinking – mind games? We will see that it is not – He is faithfully standing in the good of the truth that has been revealed in the word about the greatness of God.

Second response -Safe Refuge

- David continues going deeper into the truth of God's victory in his life by declaring that 'In you I take refuge'
- We can declare we will not be shaken – but we must find a safe refuge.
- David is declaring that he wants to claim this refuge in the midst of his trouble
- What do we reach for as your first port of call when you are in trouble?
- For David, at different stages in his life, he has reached for a sword, a sling, a harp, a song, a shield. But he always reached for God first. He reaches out to take God's hand.
- He make a deliberate decision to put God where he can see Him. He reaches for God first and wraps himself up in the reality of God being a real refuge.

Third response -God is our Sovereign Lord

- 'I say you are my LORD'. The capital letters show us David is using the special name YAHWEH to describe God. It is his 'I am' holy name.
- The 'I am' who was the God of Moses, who parted the red sea, who led the people through the wilderness, who overcome all of His peoples issues to settle them in the promised land.



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- David is declaring that 'I am' is his God – that God is his master, his LORD, who rules over David's life.
- Eventually as King David would know the value of good counsellors. But here he declares that he has the best possible councilor in God.
- God could keep us from danger, but usually he chooses to keep us from danger by counselling a way out of the danger or trouble.
- Even in a long dark night of worry David's heart is reminding him of the counsel of his sovereign Lord.

Fourth response – Acknowledging the supreme treasure

- David declares that "You are my Lord" I have no good apart from you.
- Despite all these difficulties I have this amazing treasure. There is nothing better in the whole world than this.
- You can lay out all of the treasures the world can offer on a table in front of David but he would only be interested in the treasure of God's ownership and possession of him.
- Running after pointless things will only lead to a multitude of sorrows.
- David recognise others whose treasure is in God. He acknowledges the other saints who like him who reach out to God as their treasure.
- People don't replace his joy in God – no other people make his joy complete. If David joined our zoom meeting, he would say Look at you I delight in you. Each of you take delight in one another.
- Don't underestimate the delight that you bring to other people. Don't discount yourself –people need your presence to delight in.
- David is reveling in the truth that God holds all things in His hand – he is repeating what Romans 8:26 says – that all things work together for my good.
- What is David seeing when he looks out at his circumstances – it is not pleasant palace gardens, or anything else, even if he is in a dark cave, under threat, he sees the pleasant valley of God's love everywhere where he looks in spite of his circumstance.
- A pleasant place is anywhere where God is.

3. Ending with a song of eternal wonder

Not just a head knowledge

- David's response to uncertainty isn't just a reiteration of head knowledge – it goes to his heart and explodes into his whole being,
- He says he is glad – not even the fear of death can take that away from him.
- His confidence in God's security brings him joy.
- He doesn't land the plane of his thoughts in a measured ending – no – if anything he goes off into space orbit !



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- Spurgeon says the miktam psalms close with songs of assurance that imply eternal joy.
- David's pleasure in God is full and for ever
- In the Westminster Catechism – it says that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever

A prophetic reference to Jesus

- Somehow in seeing that his body would not be taken down to Sheol David is pointing towards Jesus – who was not defeated by death – but defeated death itself.
- David somehow foresaw Jesus coming to give eternal life.
- He did not know how it would happen but he did know it would happen.
- He didn't know how – but we do.
- If David can know this eternal joy – how much more can we?

We can move rapidly from a place of uncertainty and anxiety to one of unshakeable security in God's refuge and peace for us. But to get there involves a journey of reflection leading to an utter celebration in the eternal joy of Jesus victory in our life.