

THE LIFE OF DAVID: DISCOVERING GOD'S BEAUTY – MIKE BICKLE

Transcript: 05/22/98

Session 18 The Beauty of Holy Pleasure

INTRODUCTION

We're going to give a brief overview of Psalm 10-17. However, we won't look at more than a few phrases in each one, because there's a storyline being developed here in this very season of David's life. So we'll look at a few verses from each and watch it unfold as we go.

"WHY DO YOU STAND AFAR OFF, O GOD? WHY DO YOU HIDE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE?"

David actually begins this set of psalms in Psalm 9, but we're going to skip Psalm 9. Typically, Psalms 9 and 10 go together, but there's actually literally an unfolding of a storyline in these psalms that occurs in the season when David is being pursued by Saul. He begins with a philosophical question in Psalm 10:1. It's a question that you all have great interest in. It's very philosophical. This is where the storyline begins. It covers this whole period of the Adullam years, this whole seven-year period when David is in favor in Gibeah, falls out of favor, escapes, and then the Lord re-establishes him later. It begins with a philosophical question: "Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? Why do You hide in times of trouble?" (Ps. 10:1).

This was a very important question. This was a new concept to David, that the Lord withheld His presence in different times in David's life. Up until the Gibeah years, all David knew was the presence of the Lord. I don't mean it was at a measure that we want to exaggerate, but he sensed that general presence of the Lord. Then the anointing of the Spirit came on him and heightened his experience in the Lord as the spirit of revelation came upon him, but a new thing had come upon him now. "Why do You hold back your manifest presence?" That's a philosophical question we all ask and we're all troubled with. I just want you to know that the man after God's own heart struggled with God hiding his face. We're going to use the words *face* and *countenance* interchangeably with the phrase "manifest presence." His face or countenance shining on the heart is God's manifest presence. A very clear biblical doctrine is that God hides it; He holds it back purposefully and strategically. Strategically, on purpose, not accidentally, God holds back His manifest presence, or the release of His face shining upon us in a manifest way.

THE TWO MAJOR TIMES OF ATTACK WITHIN THE NATION OF ISRAEL AGAINST DAVID

Actually, there are eight questions in Psalms 10-13. We're won't look at them, all but you can look for the how, why, when, and where. We won't have a chance to develop it all, but I wanted you to know that the man after God's own heart had to ask that question. He answers it here in this psalm, Psalm 10:2-11. He describes evil men. We're going to skip that part. Here in David's context, the evil men are Saul and those in his court who are jealous, who are telling lies. That's what's going on at this stage. Remember that at this stage of his life when David encounters these godless men, it typically means Saul and his cabinet. Later, when David is old, it's Absalom and Absalom's cabinet. Those are the two major times of attack within the nation of Israel against him. Every now and then he's talking about the Philistines, but not very often because he had an anointing to defeat them almost effortlessly. That's a little exaggerated, but he had such an outstanding military record of victories. That was hardly the big issue. It was Saul, his cabinet, and his court on the early end, and Absalom and his court on the back end. Those were two seasons where slanderous evil men seeking to take his life and chasing him everywhere afflicted David. All the "struggle psalms" are typically at one end of David's life or the other. It's typically not the unbelieving nations he's talking about, because again, he had an anointing to take care of them pretty powerfully.

IN BROKENNESS THE LORD GRANTS HUMILITY, WISDOM, AND COMPASSION

In Psalm 10:12, David asks God to arise. His concern is, “Don’t forget me God. I want You to release Your power. I want You to remove the bad guys out of the way, but really what I’m asking for is for Your hand to touch me. I’m struggling. I don’t have the boldness that I had recently had with so little effort. I don’t have this quickening in my spirit that I’m so accustomed to having. When Goliath stands in front of me I feel this boldness screaming out, ‘I can take you out with no problem,’” David would say, “but now I don’t feel that way any longer. What are You doing?”

And God might say, “I’m teaching you humility. I’m causing you to be grateful for My presence. I’m causing you to see your weakness. I’m giving you humility of heart. I’m giving you compassion toward others.” That’s what David discovers in the hiding of God’s face. We wish that it was just one unbroken line of victories: we wake up in the morning, our soul energized with divine life; that’s what we would like, but it doesn’t happen that way because the Lord wants humility, compassion, and wisdom in our hearts. Here’s what I mean by *wisdom*. The illustration I’ve used throughout this course is that when God wants to raise up a military king in Israel, David, He says, “David, as a military king, you have to know the land. You can either go to geography class, or I can put you in the land.” Typically when God raises up someone, he puts them in the land instead of in a classroom. He makes them find out where the hiding places are in their own experiences, so that when they’re in that new position they have intricate understanding and detailed wisdom about victory in that area. So the Lord will cause you to know a struggle so that with detailed understanding you can help another person. At the same time, not only do you have wisdom, but you actually have compassion; you hurt for the person you’re helping. And not only do you have some wisdom and some compassion, you have humility as well. You’re not strutting because you have the answer, because you’ve been wounded by your own self-discovery of failure. So it’s this process of God hiding His manifest presence that allows us to discover the answers to victory and the knowledge of our own weakness so that we have humility. It causes us to feel with empathy and sympathy the pains of others. So the manner in which God does this is really a very masterful concept. We just don’t like it when it’s happening.

THE HELPLESS AND THE FATHERLESS COMMIT THEMSELVES TO GOD

So David says in Psalm 10:12, “Arise, O God.” In verse 13 he asks another question that we’re going to skip: “How can the wicked do this in the light of Your power that’s so obvious?” (paraphrase). He deals with that question a little in this psalm, but he goes on in verse 14: “But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief, to repay it by Your hand. The helpless commits himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless” (v. 14). So David is tapping into the reality of Psalm 139: God sees everything. That was a very essential doctrine to David, that God had full knowledge. There’s a big picture from which God is operating, is the idea. There’s a wise plan and a big picture and God doesn’t overlook anything. That’s what David is saying in verse 14: “You’ve seen. You’ve observed the whole deal. You know what’s going on. There’s a big picture.” David was connected to the reality that there’s a God who sees everything and who has a big plan. That’s what’s going on.

In verse 16 we see another Davidic theme, the theme of God’s sovereignty. “God, You’re in control. You know everything. You’re in control. You know everything. You’re in control. You have mercy when people are weak.” I believe those are the three real favorites of David: “You’re totally in control. You know everything. You’re really kind to people who ask for mercy.” Those are some of the themes that David hits over and over, in which we would do well to be established.

HUMILITY IS IMPARTED THROUGH THE STRUGGLE

Look at what he says in verse 17. Psalm 10:17 answers Psalm 10:1. “Why is it that You hide yourself?” he inquired of God. The reality at the end of the day is that He wants to create humility in a person’s heart. “You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart” (Ps. 10:17). The humility is imparted through the struggle. We’re not born humble; humility is something we grow in, in the midst of the struggle. He says, “I know what You’re doing, O God. You’re preparing hearts; that’s what You’re doing. You’re preparing the heart of the people.” In verse 1 he asks, “O God, why are You hiding Yourself?”

In verse 17, God says, “I’m preparing.”

“Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?”

In verse 14 He says, “I know everything.” In verse 16 He says, “I have total power. But I want you to know I’m preparing hearts.” In Revelation 19:7, it says that on the last day, the bride has prepared herself. She is prepared. The Lord cares about preparing hearts.

Psalm 11 is the next development of the story, so David lays out his doctrine here. The danger is increasing in the court. David is in Gibeath; rumors are starting to increase. More credible men in high places are passing the rumors. David’s friends begin to warn and counsel him that he had better flee from Saul, or he’s going to be killed. I would date Psalm 11 to the time of 1 Samuel 18-20, when the trouble begins to break out intermittently in the court, and David is a little surprised by it. David begins the psalm, “In the Lord I put my trust” (Ps. 11:1). He’s in a real position of confidence. By Psalm 13 he’s in despair, by the way. He’s weakening every time. In fact, with every psalm that goes by, he actually loses some of his sense of victory. “I trust in the Lord.” In other words, “I trust in the God of Psalm 10:16-17. I know that God is king and I know he’s preparing me. I’m not worried about it.” He starts off really strong.

“HOW CAN YOU SAY TO MY SOUL, ‘FLEE AS A BIRD TO YOUR MOUNTAIN?’”

In the next lines, he’s speaking to his friends in the court, because David was part of Saul’s court. He was part of the king’s top leadership. He said, “How can you tell me to flee as a bird to the mountains? You’re telling me to run because Saul has more power than God. I don’t appreciate it” (Ps. 11:1b, paraphrased).

Here’s what they said: “Look, David, the wicked bend their bow, they make their arrow ready on the string that they may shoot secretly the upright at heart” (Ps. 11:2, paraphrased). They said, “Saul has already bent the bow; the arrow is in the bow and he’s about to explode on you. You had better escape like a bird and go hide in the mountains.” David is actually quoting them; he says, “How can you tell me to flee just because Saul is ready to explode and he has secret plots against me?” At this point, it wasn’t fully established that Saul was behind the plots. David’s friends were counseling him and giving him advice.

“IF THE FOUNDATIONS ARE DESTROYED, WHAT CAN THE RIGHTEOUS DO?”

Here’s what David’s friends tell him in verse 3: “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. 11:3). They said, “If Saul is about to explode, the arrow is in the bow and you’re about ready to be secretly killed, David.” Their argument is, “If the top government of the nation is evil, we can’t help you David. If Saul gets you, if he puts you in prison, no one can deliver you, so you had better leave right now.” That’s a true argument by the way. When the foundations, when the pillars of society are destroyed, when righteousness doesn’t exist, the righteous are in a place of difficulty. That’s where persecution breaks forth. So they were

speaking basic wisdom to David. They were saying, “If Saul strikes, we can’t help you, so you had better take off right now.”

David answers in Psalm 11:4. He says, “I know that Saul is reigning in Gibeah; he’s reigning on earth, but God is reigning in heaven.” He says, “There’s a temple, there’s a throne, and God’s eyes see everything.” He says, “I don’t care about Saul. I’m not afraid of Saul.” David is steady right now; he’s really strong. He says, “God is preparing me” (Ps. 10:17, paraphrased). “He’s on His throne. He’s in His temple. His eyes behold everything. Saul can’t get away with anything.”

GOD TESTS THE RIGHTEOUS TO STRENGTHEN THEM IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Then what happens is that for the first time in David’s doctrine, he begins to understand that God tests the righteous, not just the wicked (Ps. 11:5). There are tests. What happened in the cave of Engedi when he had Saul at the end of his spear was a divine test. He’s beginning to understand that God is preparing, not just testing to see, but testing to strengthen them in righteousness. God tests us so that we always have to find comfort in the pressure, right? When the pressure mounts, we search for any means of comfort, but at the end of the day, the only comfort we can get is, “Wait a second, God, You love me. I love You. You’re training me. I only want what You want, therefore I’m settled. I’m happy; I’m successful.” That’s the alignment of heart that gets our soul comforted. That’s how God trains us. Pressure makes us realign ourselves with that reality. “You love me; I love You; therefore I’m successful. I don’t have to be on a throne. You love me. I love You. I’ve already won the issues of life.” It’s that alignment that testing brings us. It’s that muscle we work over and over and over and over. Pressure makes us say that in our soul, because we’re longing for relief and that’s the only relief we can get. “God is real; God has power; God is merciful. God loves me; I know I love God. I’ll only be on the earth for a short while anyway; why am I making these things my number one and God number two? I need to make it the other way around.” That’s the sense in which God’s tests are preparing our hearts. Pain makes us realign our hearts in order to get comfort, because we can’t get comfort any other way. The money isn’t coming in; the honor isn’t coming in. Even when it does come in, it doesn’t really satisfy us and leaves us empty on the inside.

THE SCRUTINIZING, SQUINTING GAZE OF THE ALL-SEEING EYELIDS OF GOD

“God’s eyelids test the sons of men” (Ps. 11:4, paraphrased), and the picture is of a person squinting to scrutinize carefully. That’s the sense of the Hebrew word: the scrutinizing, squinting look. God is carefully looking into the matters of every single man and woman on the earth. Nothing is unnoticed in heaven. He’s observing everything. He has a timetable for every person. The bad guys seem to be getting away with things, but they are on a timetable too. God is scrutinizing. He’s squinting with careful scrutiny at every person’s life with great detail. David says, “I know God isn’t letting anyone off the hook.” His eyelids, His scrutiny, is creating a plan, if you will, to test every human being, the righteous and the wicked. And here David says, “And I’m one of them.”

“LORD, LIFT UP THE LIGHT OF YOUR COUNTEenance UPON US”

He goes on in Psalm 11:7 and says, “God loves the righteous, that’s why He’s testing them, and He will release His countenance upon them” (Ps. 11:7, paraphrased). David was more than fascinated, he was preoccupied with the face and countenance of God, the idea of having the heart that could feel the presence of God. He wanted the countenance of God to be released upon him. You know the verse we’ve been quoting, Psalm 27:4, about beholding the beauty of the Lord. “One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the

house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple” (Ps. 27:4). In verse 8 of that psalm, David says, “I’m in trouble. I’m hurting.”

The Lord says, “Seek My face, David.”

David says, “OK, Lord; Thy face, O God, I will seek” (Ps. 27:8, paraphrased). It’s His countenance and face. God is constantly bringing David back to looking in His face in order find comfort. So David comes back to this. In Psalm 10:1 he says, “Lord, You’re hiding Your face; why?” In Psalm 11:7 he says, “I know You love me. You’re testing me because You love me, but what about Your countenance? I want Your countenance back. I want to feel Your presence again, O Lord. I want Your countenance beholding my heart. I want to feel the manifest presence.”

THE NOOSE TIGHTENS; THE MOMENTUM INCREASES; THE FAITHFUL DISAPPEAR

Now here in Psalm 12, the momentum is building. Saul has become more dangerous than ever. He’s cast a few spears at him. The pressure is increasing. David’s faith is waning a little. Despair has begun to set in, and the plot thickens. Here David no longer possesses the energized faith of Psalm 11.

In Psalm 11 they said to him, “David, you had better flee to the mountains.”

He said, “Why do you tell me to flee to the mountains? I know your arguments are good. If the chief men are bad, everyone is in trouble, but God is on His throne.”

Here he says, “Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases! For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men” (Ps. 12:1). He says, “Here in Saul’s court there aren’t very many righteous men anymore. They’re either being kicked out or they’re resigning or they’re being killed.” He says, “Wait, wait, this is getting serious. Help. There used to be fifty of us that were on fire for the Lord. Now it’s closer to three.” David is becoming concerned by the actions of the men at the top. The numbers are decreasing. “For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.” He’s talking about Saul’s courts specifically right here. So you can sense the despair; you can sense that he’s feeling the pressure. The noose is tightening, so to speak, and the pressure is increasing.

In Psalm 12:2-4 he describes the evil men in Saul’s court. Almost always when he describes evil he talks about these flattering lips. He talks about men who make themselves out to be the victims and the heroes. They’re the men who are always getting the bad deal, and they’re always re-construing everything to make themselves the hero. They’re always the flatterers who deceive, who position things in a manner that’s conducive for their favor, but it’s not honest. That’s how David describes them almost every time. He really makes a point out of pushing that.

GOD MAY NOT CALL WHEN YOU WANT HIM, BUT HE'S ALWAYS RIGHT ON TIME

Now in Psalm 12:5 God speaks to David. He says, “David, you asked Me to arise in Psalm 10:12. Well, I will arise. I will arise, says the Lord.” Here He says, “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now I will arise” (Ps. 12:5). In other words, “I will manifest My power, David, in My timing.” And He did. Remember, David is encircled in the wilderness of Moen, and all of a sudden the Philistines break out. David is hiding in a cave and Saul falls asleep in that cave. Saul is chasing David, and the spirit of prophecy comes on Saul and stops him. Saul has a plot against David, but Jonathan whispers it to David. God says, “David, I’m helping you. I have all these creative ways in which I’m intervening to stir you and let you know what’s going

on.” So the Lord gives a prophetic word to David: “I will arise at just the right time in a creative way. I won’t be one minute late, even if I only arise at five to midnight. Though I will wait until five till twelve, I will arise nonetheless.”

In Psalm 10:12, David said, “Arise, O God! Quit hiding Yourself.” In Psalm 11:7, he said, “I know You love me. Let me have Your countenance.” Now here in Psalm 12:5, God says, “I will arise. I will release My presence to your heart, and I will spare you at five till twelve. And in My sparing I will give you wisdom on how I run My kingdom. I will show you ways of wisdom. I will give you compassion for hurting people. I will give you humility. I will do it in just the right way, David. I will make it as easy as possible to give you as much as I can without hurting you, David. I will arise.”

Arise here means to intervene on David’s behalf, but again, when you read the story, the interventions are such that Saul is about to seize him, and the spirit of prophecy falls all over Saul and he can’t get him, and David is thinking, “Oh, wow.” So don’t imagine that when God arises, that means everything is super-easy from now until the end. That’s not what that means. It means the presence of the Lord is quickened in David’s heart, and it’s a five till twelve deliverance from now until the next time. That’s what happens.

Someone says, “Yes God, if You say You’ll arise, surely You will, but how can I be sure?”

“THE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE... LIKE SILVER TRIED IN A FURNACE OF EARTH”

David speaks up and says, “Let me tell you.” He says, “Men are untrustworthy, but God’s words are like silver that has been tried and purified seven times” (Ps. 12:6, paraphrased). When silver had been placed in the fire, they would melt the silver, the bad stuff would rise to the top, they would scrape it off, the silver became pure, and they did this seven times. It can’t become more purified than that; the seventh time they melt the silver down and scrape the dross off, if you will, the silver is totally purified. David said, “God’s Word is so pure, so 100 percent pure, you can totally trust it. If God says He will arise, He will arise.” That’s what David is saying: “He won’t be late one time. You may think He’s late, but He will be there exactly as He says.” So he’s talking about the Word of the Lord.

Two verses later, David says, “The wicked prowl on every side; when vileness is exalted among the sons of men” (Ps. 12:8). He’s talking about Saul and Saul’s court.

“HOW LONG, O LORD?... HOW LONG WILL YOU HIDE YOUR FACE FROM ME?”

Then in Psalm 13, despair sets in. David is beginning to leave the court and come back. Here in Psalm 13 he has these philosophical questions. In Psalm 10:1 he asked, “Why?” Now in Psalm 13 he adds, “How long?” He says, “OK, I understand why you hold Your self back, to train me and prepare my heart, but how long is this going to go on?” The question goes from “Why” to “How long?” We’ve all asked these questions, haven’t we? We finally understand that God is preparing us in humility (Ps. 10:17). We finally understand that He’s testing us (Ps. 11:5). We say, “We know Your words are pure. We know if You say You’ll arise, You’ll arise. You can’t lie. Your words are totally purified, but now how long is this going to go on?”

Despair is beginning to set in. I would place this psalm at around the time of 1 Samuel 20:3, when David basically says, “I’m going to die. There is but a step between me and death.” Anguish and despair have touched him. Here is what I want you to know: The man who killed Goliath, the man who had the spirit of revelation to

such a degree that he could write Psalm 19 about the heavens, the glory, and the beauty of God, could still have seasons of despair. That's what I'm trying to say here.

“NO ONE DANGLES GRACEFULLY”

“How long, oh Lord?” This doesn't last forever. When you're in it, it seems like it's forever, but it's a very short season in terms of David's seventy years, and God is working humility and gratitude into David's life. “How long will You forget me?” (Ps. 13:1, paraphrased). “Forget me” means essentially, “Let me dangle.” I love what Paul Cain says: “No one dangles gracefully.” He says, “I'm dangling Lord.”

DAVID LEARNS THE DOCTRINES OF GOD IN THE SEMINARY OF ADULLAM

It's like, “What cave do I live in? What's my job? What do I do, anyway?”

Someone says, “Well hey, what kind of job do you have? What do you do for a living?”

“I don't know what I do anymore. I'm dangling, Lord. How long is it going to go on circumstantially? I don't feel You like I'm used to feeling You. How long will that go on? You're hiding Yourself.”

David has just learned doctrine number one: God hides Himself. Doctrine number two: God tests every single person that He loves and prepares. He says, “OK, that sounds right to me,” and God says, “I'm never even five minutes late, David. My words are pure like silver. I will be on time. I will arise.”

David says, “OK.” Now he's feeling the pressure. He never knows, moment by moment, what's happening in this season of his life. “How long will You hide Your face from me?” Again, in Psalm 10 he asked, “Why?” and now in Psalm 13 he asks, “How long?”

TAKING COUNSEL IN OUR OWN SOULS CAN ONLY END IN DISAPPOINTMENT

“How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?” (Ps. 13:2). That's a very important thing. David means taking counsel in his own soul is as opposed to taking counsel from the Word of God. David says, “I'm stuck; I'm stuck in this rut. All I can do is think it through for the one hundred-thousandth time.” He's taking counsel in his own soul. “I'll walk through this scenario one more time...” And David says, “You know what? I only have sorrow in my soul when I try to sort this out.” He says, “Lord, there are too many pieces of information You haven't given me yet. I can't come up with good answers.” Every one of us will try to sort it out in our own souls, but when we take counsel in our own souls, we end up with sorrow. Do you know why? There are a few key pieces of information you don't have. You don't know what's written in the book for you next week or next month or next year. The Lord does. The Lord is weaning David off of taking counsel from his own soul. By the time he gets to Psalm 16, he takes counsel from the Lord instead of his own soul. That's what will happen in Psalm 16:7 in just a moment.

“ENLIGHTEN MY EYES, LEST I SLEEP THE SLEEP OF DEATH”

But here in Psalm 13:3 he says, “Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death” (Ps. 13:3). He says, “I want the spirit of revelation; Lord, give me the spirit of revelation” (see Eph. 1:17). “Give me understanding, not just of the answers. Typically we would say, “Just give me the information about when I'll be happier.” David says, “No, give me a spirit of revelation; just let me see who You are, Lord, and give me crucial information when I need it.” David changed his prayer from, “Lord, just give me all the information I need,” to, “Grant me the spirit of revelation. Open the eyes of my heart so that I

can look at You and see who You are. If You don't, I will sleep the sleep of death." He says, "I am about to die of utter discouragement." Some of you in this room are undoubtedly tempted to sleep the sleep of death. You're about to go down and you've said, "I will never arise again if the Lord doesn't answer me."

But look at what he says, good old David, in Psalm 13:5: "But I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation." He says, "I'm going down, but one thing I have an anchor on: I know at the end of the day that You always show me mercy. You're always kinder than I would have guessed. When it's all said and done, when the pressure is over, when it's in the past, I look back and say, 'That was actually pretty smart.'" He says, "It always looks like mercy when I get some distance from it."

"NO GOOD THING WILL THE LORD UPHOLD FROM THOSE WHO WALK UPRIGHTLY"

So in Psalm 13:5 he says, "I will trust You in mercy on the front end. You always do it." I love how Psalm 84:11 says it. I remember in a season of pain in my life that went on for months, I lived on this verse. "No good thing will the Lord uphold from those who walk uprightly" (Ps. 84:11, paraphrased). If there's something good that God promises, He won't hold it back. If He's holding back, it means the timing is better down the road or He has something better for you. He says, "It's impossible that God would hold back goodness from one of His children." His eyes behold everything, so we know that He knows everything. David says, "Every time a year or two passes, I look back and say, 'Wow. Lord, if you hadn't done that, I would really be in a mess right now. Now I understand it because now I have understanding. I'm with the right people at the right time, and You were merciful to me.'" He says, "Well, now I'm just going to trust in Your mercy on the front end. I'm just going to look at the future like I look at the past. Every time I look at the past in hindsight with 20/20 vision, I will look at the future and trust in mercy. It's a merciful plan. You're always nice to me at the end of the day. It always makes sense later. So by faith I will have rejoicing. I will sing on the front end right now."

Here David is in despair in Psalm 13:1, and in Psalm 13:5-6 he says, "I'm counting on merciful wisdom and merciful dealings. I love You; I love You; I love You. This has to be smart; This has to be something I'll be happy about later." He really, really believed that.

We'll skip Psalm 14 and 15 and go on to Psalm 16 and 17 and read a few key verses as the roller coaster plows on. Now David is really going to anchor into this issue called pleasure, holy pleasure, and this is where he's really going to find the power of his life. He says in Psalm 16:1, "Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust." Again, it's the trouble with Saul. "I don't want Saul to kill me, number one. I want the anointing of God on my heart number two. Preserve my heart, preserve my body, preserve my position, whatever You've called me to be, preserve me." Psalm 16 is depicting the ideal for a believer. It's the ideal. He says, "O my soul, you have said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; my goodness is nothing apart from You'" (Ps. 16:2, paraphrased). His soul used to say, in Psalm 13:2, "How am I going to get out of this one?" He used to take counsel in his soul. Now his soul is saying something different. Now he doesn't think it through time and again, as he did when he took counsel in his soul all day long and he just cried all the time because there were too many missing pieces of information he didn't have. He says in Psalm 13:2 and 5, "My soul now does two things. It says to God, 'You are my God. You are my Lord. You are my captain, my provider, my leader.' So when I say, 'O Lord, this one is too big and too painful,' I add, 'You're the One who will bail me out of this. You are my Lord.' When my soul gets into trouble, I kick right into knowing that You'll provide and You'll direct for me."

David has this humility that's really worked in him because the favor of God has been on him. He learns in reality, "My goodness is nothing apart from You." At the end David says, "Wow."

People would say to David, “You’re the man after God’s own heart. You’re the great worshipping warrior this and that...” and David would say, “Let me tell you: I’m a worshipper and I’m a warrior and I do have a spirit of revelation, but everything given to me was a gift. On the front end I thought I really had something special to offer to God, but on the back end all my goodness has come from him. I did everything possible to blow it except that I came back for mercy every time.” He came to the revelation of his humility.

DAVID DISCOVERS THAT GOD IS HIS PLEASURE, HIS PORTION, AND HIS REWARD

“O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance” (Ps. 16:5-6). In Psalm 16:2 David called God his God, and now in Psalm 16:5 he calls Him not just his provider but also his pleasure, his portion, and his reward. Psalm 16:5 is one of the classic verses of David; one of his great inheritances. If you’re going to know David, you’ll have to know Psalm 16:5: “You are my primary reward. You are my primary pleasure in life. Not my only reward, but my primary reward.” When he says, “You are the portion of my inheritance,” he means, “You’re the main thing I’m living for. Not my anointing, not my prominence, not my financial gain, not my favor with people, not my healing, not any of those things. You Yourself revealing Yourself to my heart and anointing me to love You. You’re my reward at the end of the day, my primary reward.” Again, not his only reward.

He says, “You are my cup.” That was a very key phrase in the ancient world, because they all had to travel and water was so scarce. Water was life. He says, “You’re what I drink when I’m thirsty. You are. You’re my cup.” They didn’t pull over to McDonald’s and get a Diet Coke or something. They would go on long journeys; they had to trust their water bags. These were a very serious part of life in those days. “You’re what I drink when I’m thirsty.”

He says, “You are my lot.” In other words, “You are my inheritance. You’re what I receive, my primary thing.” First he says in Psalm 16:2, “You’re my provider.” Then in Psalm 16:5 he says, “You’re my main pleasure in life. When God reveals God to my heart, that’s when I soar. That’s when I take off.” Then he learns to say Psalm 16:6; he says, “Actually, the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. It’s a good inheritance I have.”

Some people say, “Yes, but you need to be preserved. You’re still out being chased.”

He says, “You know what, when it’s all said and done, the Spirit of God is upon me. God loves me; I love God. He’s watching me. I have a history in God.” The lines he’s talking about are the boundary lines. He says, “The way God has defined life to me, the way life has been ordered.” He says, “Yes it’s true, I’m sleeping in caves, but you know what? There are times when God hides His face, but for the most part I feel God. I feel Him a little, at least. I know the spirit of revelation is on me. I will go to heaven. I’m His.” He says, “It’s really quite pleasant, what You’ve given to me.” David really begins to see the big picture. He says, “The lines have fallen to me in really good places, actually.”

THE LINES HAVE ALREADY FALLEN TO YOU IN PLEASANT PLACES

Beloved you’re one of the few percent of all history that’s born again. Honestly, you’re lovers of God and you’re loved of God. You’ve already got it made. The lines have already fallen to you in good places. One billion times one billion years from now you’ll see that you’re enthroned, embraced, and adorned by the King of Kings. The lines have already fallen to you in pleasant places.

“Well, my car is beat up, my bills are late, and some people are mad at me.”

Yes, I know; I’ve got that same problem. We’re all in that thing together, but let me tell you, the lines have already fallen to you in pleasant places, and David said the reward is really quite good. Even now it’s a good reward. He begins to line himself up in Psalm 16:5-6. He says, “Wait a second, yes, You’ve hidden Your face from me, but not always, just sometimes, just for seasons because You’re preparing my heart. You’re establishing me in humility. You’re showing me in Psalm 16:3 that my goodness comes from You, not that I’m inherently different from anyone else.”

NO ONE CAN TAKE GOD AWAY FROM YOU

Psalm 16:6-7 is essential. That’s where God brings us in pain to line up with God as our primary inheritance. No one can take God from us, no one. They can take your position, they can take your honor, they can take relationships; they cannot take the presence of God from you. They can’t, and only God hides it from us strategically in various seasons. Sometimes He hides it from us just to draw us deeply into Him.

Someone says, “Well, it’s been years and years.”

Yes, but typically what happens when God hides His face for years and years is that we take counsel in our own souls and channel surf from the TV set. The Lord says, “I want you to come to Me, and I’ll lift that in time. I want you to get so desperate, you come to me tenaciously, and then I establish the reality in you.” That’s what He conveys in Psalm 16:7.

David says, “How did I get to this place of understanding, that God is my cup and my reward?” He says, “The Lord has been counseling me; that’s His Word.”

“MY HEART ALSO INSTRUCTS ME IN THE NIGHT SEASONS”

“I will bless the LORD, who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons” (Ps. 16:7). He says, “The Lord is counseling me now, not just my own thought processes.” In Psalm 13:2 he was counseling himself in his own thinking processes, just trying to sort it out, but in Psalm 16:7 God is His counselor. His heart is instructed in the night seasons. That means a number of things. Number one: it means that he would at times stay up late into the night pondering the Word of God. Sometimes he would stay up late through the night, sleepless, wrestling in prayer, and not always just wonderful prayer. Sometimes he would be very disturbed, but he would take it to God. It was through the nights that he would break through and through the nights sometimes God would visit him in dreams and visions of the night. “In the night seasons,” he said, “sometimes I’m captured, sometimes I’m fascinated with the Word, and I would go burn the midnight oil; other times I would do so in anxiety. I wouldn’t just think to myself, I would wrestle with God. I would use it as a time to break through.” At other times the Lord would give to His beloved even in his sleep. Here in Psalm 16:7 God is counseling him now, whereas in Psalm 13:2 he was counseling himself.

“I will bless the LORD, who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons.” The word of the Lord is now. He’s putting his cold heart in front of that burning fire to get his heart warm. God is now his counselor. Psalm 16:7 is the reason why Psalm 16:5 and 6 are happening. In Psalm 16:5-6, he said, “God is my primary reward.” He sees life as pleasant even though he’s a fugitive at this time. He says, “Oh, I’m happy with the Lord.”

“BECAUSE HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, I SHALL NOT BE MOVED”

He sums it all up in Psalm 16:8. He says, “I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” God is starving some people out; they just refuse to put their cold heart in front of the hot flame of the Word. The Lord says, “I will wait you out until I am what you come to for deliverance from pain. You can go to 100 more meetings, you can talk to 100 more people, but at the end of the day I want you to set Me before your heart and I’ll warm your heart.” I see so many people year after year after year still stuck, still stuck. I say, “Quit talking so much, turn off your TV, dust off your Bible, and give the Lord a shot this year. I would think the pain of the last five years would inoculate you from seeking relief in that way. It doesn’t help you. Put your cold heart in front of the fire of His Word and the fire will get into you in time.” Not that everything bad goes away, but it gives and puts you in the way of the Lord.

David found out. He said, “I put the Lord always before me.” Then he really gets excited. He says, “Because the Lord is before me”—and he doesn’t just mean the study of His Word, he means the holding onto His promises; this reality: “The Lord withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly.”

I remember different seasons of my life, and one in particular where the pain was there and I would say, “Lord, if it’s good, you won’t hold it from me.”

The Lord says, “I want you to continually put your heart before Me. Hang onto My promises. Speak them to Me night and day.” So sometimes it’s the written Word and sometimes it’s His promises to your heart in a direct way. You put the Lord directly before you through His written Word, through meditating on it; communing with Him, reading the Word of God, fellowshipping with the Lord, and worshipping in that kind of way. But we also set the Lord before us by putting the specific promises before us, reminding Him of those, and we bring our hearts before His presence again.

David says, “Because the Lord is always before me, I will not be moved. I will not be moved.” He says, “When I get moved, I go right back and set my heart before the Lord again.”

The Lord says, “That’s why I set it up that way, so that you have to come before Me.”

THE INDESCRIBABLE PLEASURE OF GOD REVEALING GOD TO THE HUMAN HEART

Look at what David says in Psalm 16:9. He says, “Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope.” Now look at Psalm 16:11. “You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” This is David discovering. David was the first to articulate that there was pleasure when God reveals God to the human spirit. It’s pleasure. He’s talking about pleasure in this life in the Spirit and he’s talking about pleasure in the age to come. God is the author of natural pleasures, but David is talking about the pleasure of when God reveals God to the human spirit. He says, “It’s pleasurable. The God of pleasure actually releases spiritual enjoyment when we come before him.” He says, “You are my main reward.”

Look again at Psalm 16:6. He says, “The lines are pleasant; the boundary lines You’ve given me to have a spirit of revelation are pleasing. They satisfy me. This is the way that I’m made.” We were made to need God to reveal God to us for us to work right. David was the first writer in Scripture to lay out the issue of divine pleasure being loosed in the soul. One of my favorites is Psalm 36:8. David was speaking again of God revealing God to us. He said, “They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house; You give them

drink from the river of Your pleasures” (Ps. 36:8). “The river of Your pleasure is God revealing God to us.” He says, “Oh, You’re like a river of pleasure when the Word and the Spirit touch my heart.” He says, “Oh, I love it when God reveals God to my heart.” Of course he’s especially talking about the fullness in the age to come, but there are pleasures in this life.

NOT JUST MARVELOUS KINDNESS, BUT KINDNESS THAT MAKES THE HEART MARVEL

In Psalm 16:6 and Psalm 16:11 David tells us it’s good and the inheritance is pleasant. Now in Psalm 17:1-2, he’s praying, and again, it’s the problem of Saul. It’s all about Saul and the court. “Hear a just cause, O Lord, attend to my cry; give ear to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips. Let my vindication come from Your presence; let Your eyes look on the things that are upright” (Ps. 17:1-2). David knows he’s being tested. “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. Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips, I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer” (v. 3-4). He knows it’s a divine testing. He knows that all these issues are about God unveiling His heart to him to prepare him and transform him.

David continues to wrestle in prayer in Psalm 17:6. Then in the next verse he says, “You will give me marvelous kindness” (Ps. 17:7, paraphrased). “When it’s all said and done, it will be marvelous what You show me.” Beloved God has planned a plan for your life where the kindness will cause you to marvel if you’ll throw yourself into Him. It’s not just marvelous kindness, no; it’s kindness that makes the heart marvel. At the end of your life, you’ll look back and say, “My goodness. I’m stunned that God did this for me.” I’m not saying He’s going to make you rich and famous, that’s not what I mean. He is going to expand your spirit. He’s going to give you what many people who have far more than you in the natural couldn’t even imagine could exist. It’s called “marvelous kindness.”

THE APPLE OF HIS EYE AND THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS

In verse 8 David goes on to say, “I will be the apple of Your eye, I know.” He says, “Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings” (Ps. 17:8). “The apple of Your eye” is a very interesting phrase that David actually uses on a number of occasions. The most tender and precious part of our body is the pupil of our eye. God on a number of occasions called Israel “the apple of His eye,” and sometimes He calls individual believers the apple of His eye. It’s a very endearing term, and David knew that God would provide for him and protect him, that he would count him as precious, that He would protect him. David says, “I know that I’m a tender weak one, one who is precious, and You will treat me in this precious and tender way. You’ll treat me like Your favorite one.”

He says, “I know You’ll hide me under the shadow of Your wings.” I think the wings is speaking of the activity of the Holy Spirit. Typically all the commentators say that the hen spreads her wings out and protects the chicks but I believe the wings of God signifies how He protects us by bringing us into the activity of the Holy Spirit. I believe when the wings of God are mentioned, he’s talking about life in the Spirit. You get a man or woman living in the spirit of revelation, living in life in the Holy Spirit, and there’s an automatic protection that takes place.

So David says, “Marvelous kindness, number one. Apple of Your eye, number two. Caught up in the wings of the Holy Spirit, number three.” These are his prayers. He says, “God, I know that You’ll be kind to me. I know that I’m so precious; I’m weak like the pupil of an eye and I’m so fragile, but You will protect me like the apple

of the eye. I'm so dear to You. I'm your favorite," is what David could say, which every believer could say, and then, "You'll catch me up in the activity of the Holy Spirit, the wings of God."

In Psalm 17:9-14 he speaks of an evil that surrounds him. Look at verse 15; we'll end with this. Again he says, "But as for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" (Ps. 17:15). He says it so clearly right here; it's one of the great statements of David. He says, "All the portion of a wicked man is elsewhere, but my portion is God." That's Psalm 16:5, and he's saying it here again in Psalm 17:15. He says, "Everyone wants me to be king. All my men want it, but that's not really what I'm interested in. I want to see Your face, O God." Sounds like Psalm 27:8, doesn't it? "I want to see Your face in righteousness." It sounds like Psalm 27:4: "I want to see Your beauty" (paraphrased). "I want to see Your face in righteousness" is what that means. It doesn't mean, "I want to be righteous and see Your face;" it means, "I want to see Your face in an accurate understanding, according to the rightness of who You are. I want to accurately understand who You are. I want to see the truth about who You are, God." That's what he's saying there. Of course he wants to be righteous, but that's not what he's talking about. He's talking about accurately discerning the personality of God. He says, "When I see who You are, I will be satisfied, because when I see who You are, I will have such pleasure on the inside of me" (Ps. 16:11, paraphrased). "I'll have pleasure and I'll be like You when I see You." This is eternity he's talking about. He's talking about time, too. There's a temporal and there's an eternal aspect of Psalm 17:5, just like there's an eternal and temporal aspect of Psalm 16:11, the pleasures forevermore. He speaks of being satisfied in Psalm 17:5, and of pleasures in Psalm 16:11. God wants to bring us into the river of pleasure; He wants to satisfy us with His face. That's what David was locked into, always beholding the face of the Lord.

Amen. Let's stand.

MINISTRY TIME

Some of you are saying, as David said in Psalm 10:1, "O God, why are You hiding Your face from me? Why are You hiding Your face from me, O God?"

To which God says, as He said in Psalm 10:17, "I'm preparing your heart. I'm humbling you. I'm preparing your heart. I'm humbling you."

In Psalm 11 the men come and say, "David, you had better flee town."

David says, "I don't have to flee. God is in His temple. I'm not afraid of Saul." In Psalm 12, the pressure starts mounting. David says, "Help, Lord. Everyone around me is compromising. No one is taking a stand." Despair sneaks up on him. He says in Psalm 13, "I have sorrow in my heart all day long. How long will this go on? But I trust in Your mercy. I do trust Your mercy. Whenever I look back, it always adds up well."

In Psalm 16 he says, "Preserve me. O God, help me; preserve me" (Ps. 16:1, paraphrased). He says, "You are my God." He says to his soul, "God is my Lord." In verse 5 he says, "Oh, You are my portion, and my reward. Oh, the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places." In verse 7 he says, "I will take counsel with You in Your Word, not in my own reasonings." "I will put You before me at all times" (v. 8, paraphrased). "I am filled with gladness" (v. 9). "I have fullness of joy; there is pleasure in You" (v. 11).

Then in Psalm 17 he says, “Test me, O God. Bring me forth. Bring me through it. Show me marvelous kindness. Let me see that I’m the pupil, I’m the apple of Your eye. Let me see that the wings of God will protect me. O God, I’ll be satisfied. As for me, I will be satisfied when I see Your face. Not when I become king. Not when I’m rich and famous. Those things may happen, but I’ll be fully satisfied when I see Your face in rightness according to truth, according to accuracy. When I awake, I’ll be satisfied when I’m like You.” That’s what the Word of God produced in David.

The Lord is our portion. The Lord is our portion. Beloved, we all take counsel in our own souls, and we have sorrow all the day long. O God, we want to set the Lord before us. “How long, O Lord?”

“I’m preparing your heart,” the Lord says. “Put Me before your heart, not your own reasonings. Make Me your reward; not being king, not being over people. Be satisfied with Me, not with those other things. I have pleasures for you in this age and in the age to come, pleasures forevermore. I can satisfy you with My Spirit, with the wings of My Spirit. Come after Me.”