

So how are things in your life at the moment? Given that rarely is everything great and perfect all at the same time as you look at your life overall how does it seem? Not too bad not too shabby, which is what my son uses to describe a pretty good day?

As you think of work, of your home, your relationships, your health, how do you feel? As you think of the week ahead, the year ahead are you positive?

I would imagine that, while we might moan about a few things, many of us are British after all, for most of us most of life is not too bad not too shabby. It is OK. It is good even.

We may feel happy, content and secure in our life.

I say all this because, as I read the Psalm for today, Psalm 16, I get the impression that this was where the Psalmist was at.

Now some writers may disagree. We are not sure what the word 'miktam' means. There are other Psalms with the same heading which come from points in David's life where all was not good and so they link this Psalm with those. However, it seems to me a just a cursory reading suggests that life was good and looking ahead the Psalmist saw good things.

V6 "The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance" suggests he was pretty content. Then v9 "Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure," suggests he was happy and secure. Also v11 "you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" seem to say that things were going well for him and he saw the future in a positive light.

When life is good then what? A couple of weeks ago, as I introduced the verse for the year, Rev 3:20 "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me", I said that the problem for the church in Laodicea to whom Jesus was speaking was that they saw their lives as being pretty good, "You say I am rich, I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing" was Jesus comment on them in Rev 3:17. They were comfortable, cocooned, complacent. That is the problem for all of us when things are going well that we grow complacent in our faith. We don't need anything!

However, here in Psalm 16 we see something different and I think it has something to say to those of us for whom life is good. If life is not good then let me encourage you to go back to what we were hearing last week from Psalm 6 with Tim Hedgecock.

For the Psalmist many things were good so how did he view his life?

1. The Psalmist's perspective v2

"I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing." (Psalm 16:2)

There are two things that I just want us to note from this verse which I think sets the scene for the rest of the Psalm.

a. relationship and b. dependency

a. Relationship – David says not you are the Lord but you are my Lord. That speaks of a relationship with God. It is not unusual to read or sing Psalm 23 at funerals and often when I introduce the Psalm I mention that it speaks of relationship in the personal pronouns, “The Lord is **my** shepherd **I** will not be in want”. Here David says “you are my Lord” a sense of relationship. This is the heart of the Psalm the rest it would seem stems out of this basic and central point that David knew God as his God, someone who was on his side whom he could call on for help, whom he gladly served and sought to honour. But as we look at it the relationship is not like a servant with a master it is more like the child who clings to a parent and says “my Mummy!” That leads us to the second thing to note which is

b. dependency because just as a child is dependent upon their parents so David recognises his dependency, “apart from you I have no good thing”. What an amazing statement that is. It was possible that at that point David was King with so much going for him but see how he views it, “apart from you I have no good thing”. Not many children would say to their parents “all the good things I have come from you” but this is what David as a child of God says to his Lord that all that I have that is good is down to you. Just take a moment to reflect on that. All the good things you have come from God. Is that how you see it?

In the next verses we see this thought expanded as we see some of the good things that God has blessed David with.

2. The blessings of God v3-11

We don't see the whole of life described for us by David but we do see four good things that God has blessed him with and which we might also recognise in our own lives

a. people v3, “I say of the saints who are in the land, “They are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.” He looked at those around him who were walking God's way and saw them as God's blessing to him and his response was to delight in them. This is what God does and has done since the beginning, he has set us in a people. In Jesus God brings us into his family. It is a family like no other of different ages, backgrounds and cultures. It is a family given to us by God.

When Peter said to Jesus “We have left everything to follow you” (Mark 10:28) Jesus reply was “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields” (Mark 10:29-30). That is the truth. The church becomes our family and we have brothers and sisters given to us by God in the family of the church. We have people we can

share with, who support us, encourage us and so on. Our church family is a blessing given to us by God in which we are to delight. So take a moment and recognise your church family for us here at Christ Church or, if you are a visitor or listening to this on download, the church family where you are and see them as your people your family and thank God for them.

b. possessions v 5-6, “Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.”

Isn't that a graphic statement and can't we in many ways relate to it? I hope we can.

David recognises that all he had has come from God and it is all good. “Lord you have assigned my portion”. The things he has, the situation he is in are as a result of God's action.

I love the expression “the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places”. This speaks of land and property but I think we can see it much wider in terms of the ways God gives us so many good things in life. I can honestly say that when I walk in through the doors of Christ Church on a Sunday morning into the tower and then into the welcome area I think how blessed I am to be here. As I reflect upon being part of this church and upon the house I am privileged to live in yes I do say “the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places”.

I wonder as you think of what you have what comes to your mind? So often we can be tempted to think I'd like bigger, better and so on. David here encourages us to take this different attitude where we recognise all we have comes from God and to delight in what God has given us rather than fret about what we don't have. That applies to so many things in life, our work, our relationships, our possessions and so on. David's view is “Lord, you have assigned me my portion” and that for him was sufficient and in that he delighted and the same should be for us.

c. peace v7-8. There has been a lot on the radio recently about how much sleep people get. I am sure many of us have had those nights when our minds are in turmoil and sleep deserts us. Here David says “even at night my heart instructs me” (v7). God gave him peace of mind. “I have set the Lord always before me” (v8) and “I praise the Lord who counsels me” (v7).

What David seems to be saying is that God was at the forefront of his thinking and that shaped his thoughts. In Romans 8:11 we read “If God is for us who can be against us?” What David was saying was that God had taught him, often through bitter experience, that he is God and he is in control. So in the dark moments of the night, when fears and anxieties might threaten to swamp him, his heart centred on God instructed him that is it reminded him of who is God, of how God had dealt faithfully with him, kept him, provided for him and so on. God's nature and providence was the cord, the thread which brought him peace and security when his fears and concerns threatened to overwhelm him. God in the night gave him peace.

When our daughter Anna was little, I do hope she doesn't hear this, she used to have a strip of pink ribbon that she took to bed with her every night. It is common sort of thing with many children, a comforter. With it she slept soundly but if she awoke and couldn't find it she couldn't sleep.

God's goodness and presence was David's comforter it gave him peace even in the night. The reality of God in his heart was his comfort blanket. It gave him peace of mind. Can you identify with that? Could you next time your head is full of anxiety at night remind yourself that "the Lord is my Lord"?

d. prospects v9-11. Just look with me at v11 "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand"

David looked forward and saw joy ahead even though he didn't know the future any more than we do. But he knew that God had set him on the path of life and that in the immediate future, during his continued life on earth, God would be with him and ultimately he would know eternity with God. These good prospects God had given him.

How much more is that true for us as we follow Jesus Christ? Jesus said "I am the way the truth and the life" (John 14:6). By his grace our feet are set on the way of life. He promised that in him we would have abundant life (John 10:10). We know that we have his presence with us and that one day we will be with him in eternity. In Christ our prospects are amazing. There is so much to look forward to and it is all God given. But there is a warning back in v2 "apart from you I have no good thing." Apart from God we do not have these prospects. If we have not known God as our God through our lives we should not be surprised if he doesn't know us as his people, his children, at the end of our lives. God wants us to be able to say "you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand". He wants it so much that he sent his only Son Jesus to die so that we might be restored to him as his children and know his delight in us and his presence with us now and into eternity.

In Jesus we can know that our eternal future is secure and God our Father wants us to know that. I hope we can see just how many blessings David saw that God had given to him and I hope we can reflect on that and see just how many good things God has blessed us with and that those things will cause us delight and lead us to praise and rejoice in God. But there is one other thing we should note

3. David's security v1

David had all these good things, the people around him, the possessions he delighted in, the peace of mind he enjoyed and the prospects he looked forward to and what did he do in the light of this? As we have seen in Laodicea they said "we have everything we need" and it led to a lukewarm attitude towards Jesus. Or we can think of the rich man who built bigger barns to keep his crops in and his attitude "you have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy, eat drink and be merry" (Luke 12:19).

In David we find a different attitude because, as we see in v1, he came to God for his security. His security was not to be found in the good things he had but in the good God who gave him those things, "for in you I take refuge."

Yes he had many good things in which he took delight but his security was in God and God alone.

This attitude had been forged in situations of adversity. There had been times when David had been in exile cut off from the people of God. He'd had plenty of times when he'd had no possessions, not even enough food to eat and his portion was not pleasant. There had been times when his peace of mind was threatened, not least by Saul's attempts to capture and kill him and when the future looked bleak. In all these God had been his refuge and now when things were good why should it be any different? Friends if things are good for you let me encourage you to use that to draw you closer to God rather than it making you complacent and lukewarm towards him.

So how are things in your life at the moment? Are they not too bad not too shabby? I hope they are and I hope that as you reflect on that you will rejoice in your relationship with those words "you are my Lord". I hope that you will recognise that all that you have that is good has come from God's gracious hand "apart from you I have no good thing" and that you will return day by day to God and find in him your security for each new day and for your eternal future "you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand"