

LEAVING A GODLY HERITAGE TO OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Psalm 16: 1-11 -- Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Memorial Sunday and Memorial Day are times we all ought to pause and thank God over and over for those who have given their lives for the freedom we share in America. So many made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives for us. How easily we sometimes forget the terror that once filled the hearts of those who landed on the strange beaches and islands they had never heard of. We may well forget the blood that was spilled as our troops lay wounded and dying in foxholes. Memorial Day and Memorial Sunday are here again to help us remember Lexington, Concord, Valley Forge, Yorktown, The Battle of New Orleans, Gettysburg, Pearl Harbor, Bataan Normandy, The Battle of the Bulge, North Africa, Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, Pork Chop Hill, Korea, the Battle for the Mekong Delta, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq. It has been well said that “Never in the history of the world has any nation so quickly thrown off its belief system. For hundreds of years, our founders, presidents, and the Supreme Court justices have said, “Ours is a Christian nation.” But today, much of America and thousands of our leaders from the top down have forgotten and many even rejected our heritage. Today with that great statesman of old, Andrew Jackson, I rise up to remind us, “The Almighty Being, God our Father, has kept us in His hands from the infancy of our Republic to this present day.” I encourage us all to go to one of the cemeteries and walk around until you find graves of our soldiers. It won’t take you long. Stop and kneel and pray and thank God for their great sacrifice for us.

Our next psalm in our series today is so appropriate for Memorial Sunday. The Scripture is full of injunctions to parents, specifically to fathers especially to pass on a godly heritage to our children. David’s testimony in verse 5, 6 is precious to hear. “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; You hold my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. Before I turn to our text, Moms and Dads, I want to share five lessons I hope you will jot down which I trust you never forget—lessons to help you pass on a Godly heritage to your children. All five of them start with nothing. (1) Nothing shields our children from the wrong in their years at home more than our balanced, but diligent protection of what they see and hear. (2) Nothing improves our children’s hearing more than praise. (3) Nothing we give our children as parents ever holds a candle to what good gifts the Father gives, and we should model after His giving of His unspeakable gift of His only Son, Jesus. (4) Nothing helps our children learn the Bible as much as identifying with the characters there in our teaching in the home and by the way, even away in the wilderness. (5) Nothing should please us more than seeing that our heritage is living on in our sons and their wives and in our

daughters and their husbands and in our grandchildren. When we release our children and they are conflicted with tears as they come home to visit, and sometimes have to leave us with tears, it should make us give glory to God that the arrows of our quiver that God helped us shoot are hitting the target. We want our children to drive on back home with their spouses and children, but we want them to remember us and miss us and come back to see us, never forgetting the heritage that we bestowed to them.

My youngest son, Nathaniel, who is now the Pastor of Worship in the First Southern Baptist Church in Tempe, Arizona, gave us on December 23, 2010 a gift Jinny and I will never forget. He wrote five songs about his heritage growing up in our home. With guitar, drums, piano, organ, and trumpets, he recorded them for Mom and for me as well as for his brother Aaron, and his five sisters, Amy, Heather, Gretchen, Audrey, and Amanda. What a timely honor these songs have been and Jinny and I play them over and over. He calls the album, “Sunday Morning Blessing.” At the time he wrote the songs, he was living and working in Kansas, married and working in Admissions at Barclay College. His fifth of five songs is called “Sunday Morning Blessing.” Here are part of the words, words reflecting on driving back home after coming home with LeAnn for Christmas. “Lights are fading as I leave my hometown, East on 80, wishing I could turn around, There’s a house on a hill in that Red Desert town where Kentucky Wonder lives with his bride Florida Brown, Past Abe Lincoln feels like roots are pulling from the ground, Hoping somehow they’ll hold on somewhere way deep down. I need that hymnal I grew up with, With the songs about the blood, I need that fire my father preached with, To come on me like a flood, I need that Sunday morning blessing to come and kiss me on the cheek, Jesus, send your living water again, Send it through this dry and bitter creek... Just as our names are carved in trees in that old aspen grove, Carve into our hearts this heritage of love.”

As David penned this psalm that speaks so beautifully of his heritage, he expresses a confident expectation of living eternally with the Lord in a place of joy, founded on the evidence of his deep attachment and knowledge of knowing and loving the Lord personally. This psalm expresses the deep conviction that the one who knows and loves the Lord will not die and be abandoned to the ground; he will not see permanent corruption or perish in the grave forever. As we turn to preach this psalm, four distinct parts of the psalm arrest me and make me say with David, “Yes, the lines have fallen for me in pleasant places, v. 6—Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. These four distinct parts of the psalm are each a slight change in focus as David prays and praises the Lord. What are these four ways of looking in prayer and praise? Are you looking where David is?”

AS YOU PRAY AND PRAISE THE LORD, LOOK UP ABOVE YOUR HEAD! (I.)

This is David's focus in verses 1, 2. David begins this psalm in verse 1 with a petition for preservation combined with a confession of satisfaction in the Lord. I read, "Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge." David is satisfied with the Lord. Are you satisfied with the Lord? David continues the satisfaction in verse 2 saying, "I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you." David's first prayer and praise was up above his head. David had a real, a viable, a reliable, a relational intimacy with God. Few verses of scripture so beautifully speak of the heritage and the reality of David being a man committed to the Lord, trusting in His Word, safe within His hands, and abiding in His love. David is telling us in the words of this song and psalm what the Lord means to him. David's first mention of the Lord in verse 1 is translated "O God." The Hebrew word David uses is El which means "The Strong One." David had truly made the Lord his refuge. David had drawn as close to God as he could. This word about having no good apart from the Lord means "You are my highest treasure. Nothing else can take Your place in my life. No one else can mean to me what You do. David has chosen his company for fellowship and his first choice of fellowship is with the Lord. Repeat v. 1, 2. (Three You's!) Oh, the intimacy of knowing the One Stephen knew and saw up above his head. As Stephen was about to be stoned, Acts 7:54-56 declares, "They were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

When I think about Jesus, and knowing Him, when I think about my own relationship to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, there's an old old Gospel tune I love to hear that comes to mind. Jake Hess and George Younce sing it and it's called "Up Above My Head." It's not a deep deep song—but it's not an empty song either. It's just an awareness that I have a relationship with the Lord of the universe, King Jesus, the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who is seated on His throne—up above my head. And just like David, that intimacy with the Lord, the one up above my head who lives in my heart, it fills my life with music in the air. The old song goes, "Up above my head, there's a music in the air, (3X) And I really do believe, and I really do believe there's a heaven up there. Well, music makes the world go round, that's the way to be happy, that much I've found. Sing a song and be happy and free. So turn around children and follow me. I have a soul that's weary and worn, But I've heard the music since the day I was born, And I remember what the good Lord says, Now I hear His music and its (Up above my head." Beloved, before we can make it in life, we need first of all to look up to Jesus and know that we know that we know Him, the One who fills our life with

song. Refresh the picture of David's look up above His head. Look up to Jesus— Repeat v. 1, 2. Secondly, where should we look as we pray and praise the Lord?

AS YOU PRAY AND PRAISE THE LORD, LOOK AROUND YOU! (II.)

Notice verses 3, 4—David wisely first of all looked at the saints, his brothers and sisters around him. Verse 3 states, “As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent one, in whom is all my delight.” In David's heart and soul, it was those around him who trusted the Lord that in his mind were the nobility of the land, the saints in the land, the excellent ones. This is not by the accident of birth, beloved. If you know Jesus, it is only by the new birth, by having repented, believed and received Jesus into your life. David couldn't help but take pleasure in the saints and in their attitude in life. He delighted in them. The communion of the saints and the godly fellowship we share with each other. Each of the saints David knew were men and women, boys and girls, who like him, could say in verse 2—“You are my Lord, I have no good apart from You.” Beloved, everywhere and at all times, our love for those who love the Lord and our disposition to find our joy in fellowship with them is a primary characteristic of being a saint. I enjoy the song, “I love the thrill that I feel when I get together with God's wonderful people, Love the thrill that I feel when I get together with God's wonderful people, What a sight just to see all the happy faces, Praising God in heavenly places, Love the thrill that I feel when I get together with God's wonderful people.” Worship with them.

But then David looks around some more. Notice what else he sees in verse 4. “The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names of my lips.” From joy and delight in fellowship, David is speaking of a deep aversion and shunning of those who hate the Lord and bow down to other gods. What a strong truth David is declaring in verse 4. He is telling us that sorrow, pain and woe, anguish, and grief multiply for those who run after another god. The literal meaning of run after another god means to woo another god. David tells us he cannot cry out to Chemosh or Molech or Baal or Astaroth. He says, “I cannot pour out my sacrifices with these wicked men to such evil gods which are no gods at all.” David is saying he has a total abhorrence toward the attitudes of those who have forsaken the true God for another god of their own choosing. Even to speak of these people or mention their names on his lips, for David was a contamination. David is saying of these other folks—“Their griefs are many. They have exchanged Jehovah for another.” Weep over them. Pray for them. Forever refuse to pour out your love, beloved, to a strange god—to any god other than the Lord. We sing, “I will not lift my soul to another.” Have a deep aversion for all who worship another. Any so-called charity or love that looks indulgently and has a yen for those practice idolatry knows

nothing of loving the Lord. God is a God whose name is Jealous. He declares to us, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” (Exodus 20: 3) Thirdly, where should we look as we pray and praise the Lord? Look up above your head, look around, &

AS YOU PRAY AND PRAISE THE LORD, LOOK WITHIN YOUR HEART, SOUL, AND SPIRIT. (III.)

Notice verses 5-8. David is looking within himself. He sings, and prays and praises, saying, “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; You hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; Indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.” Here is David, like a bee from the bee-hive burying himself in the pure delights of communion with the Lord. For the believer, the Lord is not just above our head in Glory. He lives within us by the indwelling Holy Spirit. This first phrase, that the Lord is my chosen portion, and my cup, You hold my lot.—All three of these phrases speak of God being our inheritance. The Hebrew word for portion is **manah**. Manah means something weighed out, divided, and given to us as our part or portion. Beloved, the Lord is our portion. The word, my cup, is the Hebrew word **kowc**. Kowc means what holds me together. The word, my lot, is the Hebrew word **gowral**. Gowral means my destiny determined by lot. As lots were used at times in Bible times to determine the will of God, David is saying, “Lord, You are my chosen weighed out and divided portion to me, You are my cup that holds me together, and You are the will of God for me, my destiny determined by the lot in Your hands.

The lines in verse 6 speak of surveyed lines in determining an inheritance. For David, he is praying and praising the Lord and rejoicing that he grew up in a home that knew about Jehovah-jireh. He knew about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had a goodly heritage, like you do too. You were born in America, in a free country. You have heard the true word of the Lord. Don’t forget it. Indeed you and I have a beautiful inheritance. In verse 7, David is blessing the Lord inside his heart—blessing Him for counseling him to serve Him. There is nothing that causes me to bless the Lord more than knowing I know His voice. I know His Word. I know His voice—which I have often heard as He has counseled me in the night and as He is within my heart, my heart counseled by the Lord has instructed me. The literal picture of this Hebrew word heart or reins—**kilyah** is kidney, or my inner being. When God had a hold of David’s heart instructing him in the night, then he was a man after God’s own heart—and his disciplined heart instructed him. And the instruction was—verse 8—“I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.” David is declaring to us that by night as well as by day, in his private devotional times and in his public profession, he

regarded himself as always being in the presence of God. David endeavored to always sense and feel and know that God's focus and His eye was upon him. Beloved, I know no better way to set the Lord before us than to practice His presence—and live always aware and awake to the fact that God sees, He is looking, watching, and smiling when we walk in obedience to His holy Word and to His Spirit's promptings. This matter of "I will not be shaken" in v. 8 speaks of David's answer to fear—always living in total awareness of the presence of the Lord. This matter of being at David's right hand is another way of David saying I have set the Lord in my highest place of honor—which is our right hand. May God help us to always keep the Lord before our eyes, always in the place of highest honor—not to be shaken is not to be dislodged or overthrown. This is security at its best and highest. Fourthly, not only look up above our head, around and within, but

AS YOU PRAY AND PRAISE THE LORD, LOOK BEYOND THIS LIFE TO ALL ETERNITY. (IV.)

Verses 9-11—take us beyond today. "Therefore, my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For You will not abandon my soul to sheol/the grave/ or hell, or let Your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; In Your presence there is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." David's fourfold perspective of looking up above his head, then around him, and within, now leads him to gladly look beyond this life—without fear. His soul is rejoicing, his whole inner being. Glad thoughts are coursing through his veins and heart and mind. David sounds here like the apostle Paul who says in I Thess. 5: 23, "May your spirit and soul and body be preserved and kept blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." David has God in the driver's seat with him and the beautiful consistency of his faith leads him to speak of no power, not even death being stronger than the bond whereby he is tied and glued and united to God eternally. Death and the grave cannot hold him down. His body may rot as Job said his would, but his soul and spirit as well as our souls and spirits in Christ shall never see corruption. Looking past the grave, and only in Christ, can we look past the grave, David looks on to what is in store for the saints of God. Three things are: (1) You make know to me the path of life—which means You, Lord have shown me the path that leads to life and that traveling on that path is true life. You have drawn me, Lord to taste and see and experience the reality of true life in You. (2) The world sees death as life snuffed out like a candle, but like David, we see fullness of joy in God's presence—the secret of our happy lives. (3) At the right hand of God, in readiness for us as we go Home to Him are pleasures forevermore. The word for pleasures is the Hebrew **naiym**. It means delights, raptures, things that can take away our breath with joy. It leaves us breathless in anticipation. If we hold to God, He will take care of us perfectly, lovingly, breathtakingly forever.