

## Shine!

On Sunday, Pastor David invited us to consider what Psalm 16 teaches us about how to find true happiness.

1. Warm-up question: What's something simple that makes you happy?
2. Before we dig into our Scripture, let's think a little bit about happiness.
  - a. How would you define happiness?
  - b. At the start of his sermon, David asked us how we would finish this sentence: "If X would happen, I would achieve happiness." What is X for you? In other words, what is something that you're tempted to think will bring you happiness that really won't?
3. Read Psalm 16 from the Message Bible (text attached as p. 3). In verse 9, King David says, "I am happy from the inside out and from the outside in." That, in turn, raises the question, "How did David get to be so happy?" The rest of Psalm 16 answers that question. In verse 2, David says, "I say to God, be my Lord." In other words, David's happiness seems to have been anchored in his decision to consciously and deliberately invite God to be a defining presence in his life.
  - a. As best you understand, what does it mean to "invite God into our lives"? On a practical level, how do we do that?
  - b. Pastor David said that we need to "keep choosing God again and again and again." What do you think he meant? Do you agree or disagree?
4. Pastor David suggested that the rest of Psalm 16 offers several clues for how we can (a) consciously increase the presence of God in our life, so that (b) we can experience genuine happiness. Clue No. 1 is found in verse 3, where David says, "These God-chosen lives all around – what splendid friends they make!" In other words, having wonderful spiritual friends increases God's presence in our life and thus contributes to our overall happiness.
  - a. Who is someone in your life that fits the description of a wonderful spiritual friend? What makes that person such a wonderful spiritual friend?
  - b. Our Oasis Group offers us a great opportunity to build spiritual friendships and grow our happiness. Do you feel that participating in our Oasis Group has made you a happier person? If so, how?
5. Clue No. 2 for inviting more of God into our life and growing our happiness is found in verse 4, which says, "Don't just go shopping for a god. Gods are not for sale. I swear I'll never treat god-names like brand-names."

- a. What do you hear that verse saying? What does it say to you?
  - b. Although in our world today, we're not likely to choose a literal false idol to be our God, we often do succumb to the temptation to worship things and stuff as the key to happiness. In your own life, what do you find to be the most tempting "God substitute"?
  - c. How do we know when we're getting too consumer oriented? What are the warning signs that we're placing too much emphasis on things that don't bring true happiness?
6. Clue No. 3 for inviting more of God into our life and growing our happiness is found in verse 7, which says, "The wise counsel God gives when I'm awake is confirmed by my sleeping heart. Day and night I stick with God."
- a. What is the best way for you personally to access and internalize God's wise counsel in your life?
  - b. Pastor David explained that, in the original Hebrew, verse 7 literally says, "The wise counsel God gives when I'm awake is confirmed by my sleeping *kidneys*." In David's time, they spoke of their kidneys like we speak of our hearts today, as being the source of deep emotion and conscience. King David was internalizing so much of God's wisdom during his waking hours, that wisdom continued settling deep into his consciousness even while sleeping. Do you feel you're putting enough of God's counsel into your heart during your waking hours to deeply affect your subconscious self, even when you sleep? Explain your answer.
  - c. Aristotle said, "We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think," and "happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue." In ordinary times and even in the toughest times, if we *choose* to think about and embrace virtue – love, kindness, faith, forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, and acceptance – instead of anger, fear, doubt, and bitterness, our happiness will blossom. Do you buy that? If so, on a practical level, how do we get our minds to focus on positive virtues, instead of a bunch of negative stuff?
  - d. Pastor David ended his sermon by telling the story of a dear spiritual friend, Bea Salis. Bea has experienced extraordinary hardship in life – an abusive husband, divorce, financial disaster, a daughter who was raped, and a son who became a quadriplegic and eventually took his life. Despite all that, Bea has been careful to cultivate God's presence in her life, and to let's God's wisdom and virtue shape her heart and actions. When her husband hung up a taunting poster that said, "I can't make it on my own," she changed it to read, "I can make it on my own." Despite all her hardship, Bea has lived a beautiful, happy, and deeply meaningful life. Tell us about someone in your own experience who has modeled what it means to *choose* to be happy. What have you learned from that person?

# Psalm 16 The Message (MSG)

## A David Song

16<sup>1-2</sup> Keep me safe, O God,  
I've run for dear life to you.  
I say to GOD, "Be my Lord!"  
Without you, nothing makes sense.

<sup>3</sup> And these God-chosen lives all around—  
what splendid friends they make!

<sup>4</sup> Don't just go shopping for a god.  
Gods are not for sale.  
I swear I'll never treat god-names  
like brand-names.

<sup>5-6</sup> My choice is you, GOD, first and only.  
And now I find I'm *your* choice!  
You set me up with a house and yard.  
And then you made me your heir!

<sup>7-8</sup> The wise counsel GOD gives when I'm awake  
is confirmed by my sleeping heart.  
Day and night I'll stick with GOD;  
I've got a good thing going and I'm not letting go.

<sup>9-10</sup> I'm happy from the inside out,  
and from the outside in, I'm firmly formed.  
You canceled my ticket to hell—  
that's not my destination!

<sup>11</sup> Now you've got my feet on the life path,  
all radiant from the shining of your face.  
Ever since you took my hand,  
I'm on the right way.