

Counting the Saints as Glorious

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[0:00] Turn with me this morning to Psalm 16. This is just a single message. Pastor Aaron will continue the study next week on how people change.

! But as he's in Lakeshore this morning, we have this one lesson. And we're turning to a single text. I don't believe we'll take the time to read the entire chapter.

Psalm 16 and verse 3 is our text. Many of these verses are familiar to you. And it is a Psalm of David.

And our text for this morning is verse 3 then. As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.

Birds of a feather flock together. We are known by the company that we keep. And in this verse, it's as if David surveys the whole landscape of his world.

[1:14] And it's full of all sorts of people. And think with me what, as king, he's king. And as king, he has access to people that you and I would never have access to.

And he has access to the wealthy, to the well-cultured and sophisticated, the powerful, those with royal blood flowing through their veins.

The most talented of men were in his service. And on and on. But running the whole gamut of people, he comes to this conclusion here in verse 3.

That as for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight. The saints.

These are the choicest friends I have. These are the best people to belong to. And so we notice that David is drawn to people of holiness, to the saints.

[2:13] The Roman Catholics have turned the word saint into something that is completely unbiblical. A saint is, as the word means in the Hebrew and in the Greek, a holy one.

A sanctified one. And we're sanctified by Christ's blood and by his Holy Spirit. And so in this life, the writers of the epistles, and especially Paul, can write to the saints who are at Philippi, and the saints who are at Ephesus, and so on.

A saint is a holy one. And David's delight is in the saints. Not those just in name, holy in name, but those holy in character.

Now how would I know if this is true of me? How would I know if I count the saints as the most glorious ones in all the earth? Could you tell me?

I want to examine myself and see if what's true of David here is true of me. How would I know that? Dennis? You delight in the saints themselves.

[3:29] And that's my question coming back to you is, how would I know if I'm doing that? How would I know if I really count the saints as the most glorious ones in all the earth? You delight in them.

Okay? Jim? Okay? We live with people in the world. We get an idea of what they have to offer to us.

We'd have to know the people in the world. Sharon? Or the saints as well. Sharon? You'd prefer their company. There? There? There?

There's a lot of joy. Hmm. Excellent. By who you look up to and would like to be like and count your heroes. Dale? Okay?

You would share the same delight in the Lord. Jim? All right? You'd be stirring up each other to love and good deeds. That very passage in Hebrew says we don't forsake the assembling of ourselves together as some are in the habit of doing.

[4:28] So that's another mark. Do we love the assembling? The times when the saints gather. That tells us if we count them as the glorious ones. Yes.

Do we share their burdens? You could probably take all the memory verses that we just memorized, the one anotherings, and say, is that happening with us and our fellow Christians? Are we loving one another? Are we praying for one another? Are we stirring each other up to love and good deeds and so on? Bearing one another's burdens.

Bearing one another's burdens.

North and east of the Mississippi. And the email was entitled, all caps, WISH YOU WERE HERE IN PHOENIX. And there's a picture of this pastor reclining on a lounge chair by his swimming pool, in his swimming trunks and sunglasses.

[5:58] The sun's reflecting off of his well-oiled body. And he's got a volume of John Owen on the stand beside him, as well as a glass of iced tea. And he's just grinning like a possum.

And the message reads, To all my frozen, chosen brothers in Christ. I just want you to know that I'm thinking of you and wish you could all be with me in Phoenix.

May the Lord bless you and keep you warm. Pastor John Gerizzo. Now it's such kind emails as these that makes me know that he considers me as one of the glorious ones in whom is all his delight.

He's thinking of me. He's wishing I could be with him and enjoy his pleasures. And so I see this love that God has put in the heart of his people for other children of God.

Well, Spurgeon, in his commentary on the Psalms, has at the end of each psalm what he calls hints to the village preacher.

[7:11] And these were men with scant training. Perhaps one-talent men who may not have had a lot of commentaries to peruse and needed a bit of help in learning how to take from the scriptures an outline and to preach it to their village.

And so he gave these hints, just brief outlines that village preachers could pick up and use and fill out in their sermons. And so I'm going to use Spurgeon's hints this morning as launching pads for our lesson.

He's got four points. The first is why other Christians should be objects of our delight. Why should they be the objects of our delight?

We've all got the same father. Excellent. Excellent. While we're on that, let's think about all the other similarities that we have with the other Christians.

Not all of them. We'd be here all day. But what are some of the more dominant things that ought to cause us to delight in one another because we have certain things in common? What things do we have in common that should draw us together in our affections?

[8:34] Yes, Becky? Excellent. We all have the same struggles. Jim?

We all have the same hope. Hmm. Excellent. Jeanette? We're experiencing the same love.

What else do we share with each other? Chuck? The same what?

The same commands of God. We have the same book, don't we? We're all reading out of the same book to feed our souls. We love the same law. The same gospel.

What else do we share? All right. We're on the same narrow road. It's a lonely road, isn't it? The world's not there. There's only a few on that narrow road, Jesus says.

[9:36] And so those few become precious to us. It gets lonely on that narrow road. Remember the joy in Pilgrim's Progress when Christian meets up with Hopeful.

He's got a companion now to travel on this narrow road that leads to heaven. He doesn't have to go it alone. That means that he doesn't have to be alone in the giant, in the castle of the dungeon of giant despair.

And his wife, Gloom. That means when we get into depressing, gloomy, despairing circumstances, we don't have to go through that alone. We've got each other. And that makes us dear to each other.

A friend loves at all times. A brother is born for adversity. We're not alone in adversity. We're not alone in our temptations.

We're not alone in our falls. When we fall into sin, we're not alone. Ecclesiastes says two are better than one because they have a good return for their work.

[10:38] If one falls down, he has his friend to help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one. To help him up. And we have each other to profit from in our spiritual discourse along the way.

That's what you see there in Pilgrim's Progress. They're sharing their spiritual experiences. What happened to you in the slough of Despond? How did you get on when you met Lady Wanton?

What happened here and there? And they're sharing out of their experience their walk with Christ to their great encouragement. Proverbs 27.9 says, And so we are able to counsel one another. Talk with one another. And that is pleasant. The wise man says. It's pleasurable. It's enjoyable. So we delight in the people of God who are with us on this narrow road to heaven.

All right? We're talking about the things we have in common. What else do we have in common that makes us precious to one another? A couple things there. We're brothers and sisters.

[12:03] And we'll talk more about that in a moment. But our future. We share the same heavenly prospect, don't we? We're going to be with each other forever and ever.

That should cause us to take delight in each other now. Even those that we may find hard to deal with now.

To remind ourselves we're going to be worshiping the same Savior forever and ever. Together.

What else do we have in common? What about that throne of grace you go to?

Your brothers and sisters all go to that same throne of grace and find help there. Same place.

Same great enemies. There's something about war that makes soldiers dear to one another.

Call it spirit decor or something like that. A camaraderie. Just because the same enemy is shooting at them.

[13:04] And that experience of having the same enemy binds them together. So it is with the Christians in this life. We have the same enemies of the world. The flesh and the devil.

And that makes us precious to one another. Well, many similarities. Many things that we share in common.

We have the same great interest. The same priority in life. We want to see the kingdom of God advanced. We want to see God glorified. We all have that same number one priority for why I am alive.

Why I breathe and live today. Why I go to work. Why I do family life. Why I do church. Why I do recreation. I am seeking to glorify God.

And that's a tremendously unifying factor in our lives. It draws us all together. From whatever we're doing out there. We've got all of this. We've all of us got the same goal in life.

[14:05] The honor of God. You know, you see this commonality of interest. Drawing people together. You've got Corvette clubs.

What binds them together? They've all got Corvettes. You've got motorcycle clubs. You've got all sorts of clubs. And the thing that binds them together is they have the same interest.

And, well, here we are as saints. And we have the same interest. And that will make us precious to one another. These are no small commonalities that should bind our hearts together in a camaraderie unmatched in this world.

So, the things that we have in common are things that should make us precious to each other.

We've had it mentioned a couple of times.

We should consider each other the excellent ones in the earth in whom our delight is because we're brothers and sisters in Christ. We belong to the same family of God.

[15:19] You've heard the statement, perhaps, blood runs deep. What does that mean?

Somebody says that in conversation, in commenting upon a scene or a conversation that you've had and they say, you know, blood runs deep.

What do we mean by that? Is that just one of those colloquialisms we all say and nobody knows what it means? Chuck knows what it means. Okay. Right or wrong.

I mean, it can be right or wrong. Blood runs deep. We have a preference to those that share the same blood with us.

Our instinctive loyalty or preference to family. And that's not only true in the human side. It's true in the spiritual side.

The blood runs deep. Remember the time when Jesus was ministering so fervently that he didn't even have time to eat or drink. And his mother and brothers became concerned for him.

[16:26] They thought he'd flipped and lost his mind. And so they come to take him home and get him some rest and food and all the rest. And somebody came and they couldn't get into the place where he was.

The press of people were all around. So someone came and said, Jesus, your mother and brothers are standing outside wanting to see you. And you remember his response pointing to his disciples who were all around him there.

He said, who are my mother and my brothers? But these who hear God's word and put them into practice.

These are my mother and my brothers. This is my family right here. Spiritual brothers are counted as more delightful than physical brothers.

It's not saying he neglected to honor his mother and father and his brothers. But he's telling us that it's a greater thing to be related by spiritual birth than it is to be related by physical birth.

[17 : 36] And we must remember that we are all brothers of the same elder brother. As it's been said, we have the same father in heaven. We've all come from the same womb, as it were, of the Holy Spirit who birthed us in the new birth.

And if Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers, then we should never be ashamed to call each other brothers. Rather, we should delight in each other as members of the same family.

So, why other Christians should be the object of our delight? We have so much in common. We're all brothers and sisters in the same family.

Any other thoughts? Why they should be precious to us? This is a little bit of a twist off of what we've just been considering.

But because they are sons of God, friends of God, we should delight in each other for his sake. Are you a friend of so-and-so?

[18 : 46] Oh, then you're a friend of mine. Because any friend of him is a friend of mine.

Remember, David delighted in that poor, lame Mephibosheth.

Why? Why? Not for anything in himself, but because why? For Jonathan's sake. Jonathan, his father's sake.

Oh, you're a son of Jonathan? I delight in you. And he called him into the palace and said, you will eat at my table from now on. And all the lands of your grandfather Saul will be given to you.

And I'll have servants work it. And you will receive the profits. And you'll eat at my table the rest of your life. And he says, what am I?

That you should show such kindness to a dead dog as I am. And the answer was, it's given in the text there. It's, I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan.

[19 : 47] And so David loved Jonathan. And for his sake, he loved his son Mephibosheth. Do you love God? Yes, you do.

You wouldn't be a child of God if you didn't. Then for his sake, love his other children. Love his sons and daughters. If they are precious to Jesus Christ, then they should be precious to us.

You can't feed Jesus Christ. You can't visit Jesus Christ. You can't clothe Jesus Christ.

He is bodily, physically not present. He is in heaven. And so he says, if you would do such kind deeds to me, then do them for these, the least of my brothers.

And when you do them for the least of my brothers, you will have done it as unto me. So here's a reason that we should be precious to one another, that we should be showing God's kindness, his undeserved kindness to one another, because they are sons of the God we love.

[21 : 00] They are brothers of the Savior that we adore. And they are precious to him. And if they're precious to him, they're precious to me.

So we ought to delight in other Christians because they are the Lord's delight. We don't think about this enough, and I want us to think of it. Psalm 16 has been called a messianic psalm simply because it speaks of the Messiah.

And if you look at the end of the psalm, you'll readily see this. Verses 9 through 11 or 8 through 11, you'll see this passage. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.

My body also will rest secure because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. 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.

Do you know where that passage is quoted in the New Testament? Acts 2, Peter's preaching at Pentecost. And he says, David has died and gone in the grave and rotted, but he spoke about him, Christ.

[22 : 15] He's speaking about Christ. This passage is Jesus Christ. It was his, excuse me, it was his, maybe we could turn that down just a bit, please.

It was his confidence that he would not be abandoned in the grave, but that the Lord would raise him and keep him from decay. So these things were written about him.

Now, that means then that we come to Psalm 16 and we ought not only to see David, these things were true of David in one sense, but they are true of the Lord Jesus in another sense, that far exceeds even David.

Now, that puts a wonderful, gives us a wonderful insight when we read this Psalm from the perspective of Jesus Christ. And you can read Spurgeon's commentary. He takes it all the way through as of Jesus Christ.

Doesn't even refer that much to David, but to Christ himself. And so when we come to verse 3, we are to hear Jesus Christ say, As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.

[23 : 26] In spite of their weaknesses and failings, the Lord thinks highly of them. He counts them as his excellent ones. That's another translation for glorious ones.

It's a name that was given to nobility. Your excellency. And Jesus says, That's how I consider my saints in the land. They are the excellent ones.

He prefers them to all the rest. He who knows them best says they're the ones in whom is all his delight. Spurgeon says his opinion of us is far different than our own.

We count ourselves less than nothing. Yet he makes much of us. He bypasses the great ones of the earth. For these, those whom the world thinks highly of are nothing compared to the saints who are in the land.

They're the prize of Jesus Christ. And throughout the scriptures, he speaks of his pleasure in his people. They're the apple of his eye. They're his treasured possessions. Malachi 3.17.

[24 : 35] His jewels. There is glorious ones in whom is all his delight. That's what he thinks of you, Christian. And by the way, that's exactly how he thinks of your brother and sister all around you.

All of them. That's how he views them. And so if he delights in them, will I not do the same? If he counts them the best company on earth, then should I not do the same?

You can see in Revelation 3, his desire for fellowship with them. As someone said, we love to spend time with each other. Jesus loves to spend time with his children.

I stand at the door and knock. If any of you will open the door, I'll come in and sup with you. I'll eat with you. I'll give you the sweetest table fellowship you've ever had.

That's his delight in his people. And when our hearts grow cold, he seeks us. I want you to love me with first love. I want you to come in. Open the door that I can come in and fellowship with you.

[25 : 40] Well, these are some reasons they should be precious to us. Because they're precious to our Lord. Now, some of you historians will want to look this up. Do you know about King Ingo?

Ingo? An ancient king of the Draves. Do you know about the Draves? I have it by the testimony of two or three witnesses, so I'll share it as if it were fact.

He held a feast, King Ingo did. And in his realm, he had many great noblemen, wealthy merchants and landowners.

And yet they were pagans for the most part. And also in his kingdom, he had some poor Christians. And he invited them both to his feast. And the unconverted nobles he appointed to sit in the hall below while he commanded the poor Christians to be brought into his presence chamber to eat and drink at his table.

And his peers wondered about this and asked him, to which he said that he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament to his table and more worthy of his company than the greatest unconverted nobles.

[26 : 57] For when you will be thrust down to hell, these will be fellow princes reigning with me in heaven. Thomas Adams says, he looked upon them with a spiritual eye and beheld them below as they will be above, clothed with white robes and crowned with glorious diadems.

These he loved and honored in his heart because they were loved and honored by God. So, see them as they will be, not just as they are.

They will be reigning with you, worshiping Christ for all eternity with you. So that's why Christians should be our great delight.

Number two for the village pastor, why do we not delight in them more? If they should be that, why do we not delight in them more? Well, it's because we easily forget these things that we've just talked about.

We neglect them to see each other as we ought. We're quicker to see sin in them than we are to see the grace of God in them. Doesn't Jesus tell us about that tendency that we're quicker to see

the speck in our brother's eye than the beam in our own eye?

[28:19] That's true, but it's also true that we're quicker to see the speck of sin in their eye than the beam of grace in their life. So we have this fallen tendency to pick at each other's sins rather than to appreciate each other's graces.

We forget what they once were or what they would be apart from God's grace. We see them as they are and we say, oh, that's hard to delight in.

But we're forgetting what they were. And if we think of what they were, we delight to see them as they are now. Or we forget what they would be apart from grace.

No, think of what they were when Jesus found them. Think of what they might be without Christ. So we need to look for and see the graces of Jesus Christ in them.

Are they a Christian? Then they are being changed into the likeness of Christ. His glory, His own likeness and glory is being reflected in them. Are you looking for it?

[29:27] Are you looking to see Christ in your brothers and sisters? Does the holy, holy, holy Jesus see them exactly as they are and yet call them the excellent ones in whom is all his delight?

Then who am I to not see the same and not say the same about them? To see no attractive beauty in them. In Psalm 45, verses 10 and 11, we have a message to the bride of Christ.

Listen, O daughter. Here's a word for the bride on her wedding day. Listen, O daughter. Consider and give ear. Forget your people and your father's house.

The king is enthralled by your beauty. Honor him for he is your Lord. Christian, you are that bride.

The church together comprises that bride. And Jesus Christ, the king, is enthralled with your beauty. It's the beauty wrought by his own Holy Spirit in your life who's stamping you with his own character and he sees that work in you and he delights in you and he's enthralled with your beauty.

[30:50] Does he see enthralling beauty in my brother? Then will I ignore it or pass over it to pick on their faults? We must see the saints as Christ sees them.

And it's helpful not only to see how Christians are viewed by our Lord, but also to see how they're viewed by the apostle Paul, a fellow sinner, saved by grace like us.

And in his New Testament letters he writes to the saints, as I said in Ephesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi and so on. And yet as we read those letters we find that these saints were very imperfectly sanctified saints at best, weren't they?

Because he points out their faults in those letters and corrects them and instructs them and calls them to repent. These holy ones still had some nasty remaining spots of unholiness in them.

I want you to turn to 1 Thessalonians. It makes for a good review for where we've been these last Sunday evenings studying this letter, but what have we seen?

[31:57] Well, we've seen in verse 3 of chapter 4 that these saints, these holy ones, still need to be sanctified. They still need to be made more holy, more pleasing to God.

We find in verse 3 of chapter 4 that some of them are still falling into sexual immorality and need to be told to abstain and stay away from all such sins.

We find in verse 11 that some were not busy, but they were busy bodies meddling in other people's business and they needed to be told to mind their own business. In the same verse 11, we find that some of these saints were slackers.

They were lazy. They were not wanting to work. And so they were mooching off of others such that they lost all respect from the unchristian world outside.

And they needed to be told to work with their own hands. Verse 13, we find that others were acting like the rest of men who have no hope in the area of grieving for their lost loved ones.

[33:00] You couldn't tell the difference between the Christian grieving and the non-Christian grieving. And then we find that some of them had some faulty views of the second coming of Christ that led to wrong behavior as well.

And yet, though all of this is true of them and though Paul must instruct and warn and rebuke them, he nevertheless counts them, notice verse 19 in 20 of chapter 2.

He counts them as his joy, his crown, his glory. In other words, he does what David does, he does what Christ does, and he says, as for the saints in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.

You, you Thessalonians, with all your baggage that still needs to be sorted out, you are my joy, my crown of rejoicing, my delight. And he always gives thanks for them, all of them, not just for the real spiritual ones at Thessalonica.

Verse 2, I always give thanks for you. And verse 26 of chapter 5, he wants to extend his greeting to all the brothers with a holy kiss, like we would say at the end of a letter, give my love to your family. [34 : 21] Paul says here, give my holy kiss to all the brothers there. Hendrickson says, even those who are displaying tendencies in the direction of fanaticism or of meddlesomeness or of idleness, none is to be skipped.

Paul says, they're all to be greeted with a holy kiss from me. Well, it's a helpful insight into Paul's esteem for the saints, even imperfect saints.

And it's seen in the way he greets them at the beginning of the letters. He not only calls them saints, but he also refers to them as what is true of them. He speaks of spiritual realities. Chapter 1 and verse 1, they are in God, the Father, and in the Lord Jesus.

They're loved by God and chosen by Him. If they're loved by God and chosen by Him, they're the precious ones in whom I delight. He sees what God has done for them. Verse 3, thanks God for their work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope.

In other words, he sees the grace of God operative in their lives and rejoices in that. He sees them as they will be at the last day. 1 Thessalonians 5, 23 and 24.

[35 : 32] We'll have them blameless in that last day. So he doesn't just think of them as they are now. He sees them as they will shine one day in glory. And that's why he delights in them.

And that's one of the reasons he's able to say they're the most glorious ones. My joy and crown. It's true even of the troublesome church at Corinth with their many problems. Yet, he delights in them and sees the grace of God operative in their lives.

Chapter 1, verses 4 through 9. And so, boy, our time's flying. We don't have, let me just mention the heads.

Other reasons why we don't delight in each other more. Because the process of restoring Christ's image in them is dragging on slowly. And we see so much of the flesh in them that it's hard to take delight in them.

Because we sometimes foolishly judge each other according to the outward appearances of man, according to the standards of this world. Are they wealthy? Are they healthy? Are they educated and wise and influential?

[36 : 37] Well, then we esteem them. Well, that's judging men according to man's standards rather than God's. Because we don't know them well enough, as someone has already said.

because we're delighting in other things too much so that we don't have time for the saints that are in the earth. Well, the third point is why other Christians do not delight in us more.

Not only, why do we not delight in them more? Now, this just puts it on the other foot and says, well, why is it that other Christians don't delight in us more? It's thinking of it from the other side of the coin.

Sometimes, some of the things are their hang-ups just as we struggle with delighting in other Christians, but some of the reasons are found in us.

And so we need to think through these things. Is it our maturity and slowness to grow in grace that makes us less than delightful company to other saints? Is it our dim reflection of the character of Christ, our sins and flesh that marks, that mars our delightfulness?

[37 : 39] Could we not aim at becoming more delightful company to our brothers and sisters? And so that leads to the last point, how to make our fellowship more delightful. How can we make our fellowship more delightful?

Well, become more like Jesus. Sin is what makes us ugly. Likeness to Jesus is what makes us beautiful, delightful. The holiest people make for the best company.

Those closest to Jesus make for the best company. Those fullest of God's love so clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and the graces found in Him. The graces of the Holy Spirit make for delightful company.

Go through the graces of the Holy Spirit. Love, joy, peace, and so on. And think how those graces make a person delightful company. You just love to be with those kind of people.

Those who are clothed with humility. Don't you love to be with humble people? Don't you see Christ in such people? Don't you see people? We would do well then to spend more time together, to get to know each other, to enjoy what we have in common together.

[38 : 49] Make it a priority. Put it on your calendar. Have someone in that you haven't had in. This month, in January, have someone in. Fellowship luncheon Sundays, an opportunity in the evening

to have a family in.

And when you do, share what you have in common. Talk about your common fears. Your common joys. And go to the common throne of grace with each other and see if it doesn't bind your hearts together in Christ.

Take a genuine interest in them. Ask what you can pray for. Treasure them. Delight in them.

Delight in the grace of God in them. That glorifies God, who is the one who makes them delightful company. So let's take Psalm 16, verse 3, and ask what we can do to make our fellowship more delightful and more glorifying to our Savior.

We're dismissed.