

Who May Dwell with God?

Psalm Series

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Bible Text: Psalm 15

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Well, it's so good to be together twice during the week, isn't it? On Sunday and on Tuesday. It kind of breaks up the week and it's just good to be together with God's people to study God's word together and this is what we love to do at Truth Community Church. I'm so glad that you're with us.

As we've studied the Psalms together over the summer beginning back in May, we've repeatedly seen a contrast between the righteous and the wicked. That's been shown throughout Psalms 1 through 14 and last week we looked at Psalm 14 which really describes the way of the wicked and I want to just kind of point this out to you. Look at the first three verses of Psalm 14 by way of reminder. As we come to Psalm 15, you'll see the contrast very clearly. Psalm 14 says, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one." We looked at those verses last week and it's obvious that Psalm 14 and 15 kind of serve as companion Psalms, one showing the way of the wicked and here in Psalm 15 showing the way of the righteous.

Now by way of interpretation, it's important for us to see these two Psalms side-by-side because in Psalm 15 you get a description of the righteous man and we'll look at that in just a moment but what I want you to see is that as we read Psalm 15, we are not seeing a roadmap on how to become saved. We are not seeing a prescription for how a man can make himself right with God. That is so very important to see. We know that that's the case by reading it in the context with the Psalm that had just preceded it. Look at Psalm 14:3 one more time, "They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one." Now, when you slide into Psalm 15 and it says, verse 1, "O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart." It's evident that there has been a change wrought by grace in the man that is described in Psalm 15 because Psalm 14 has just said there is no one who does good, not even one and then you get a description in Psalm 15 of a man who is a man of integrity.

Well, this is giving us an indication that there has been a change, a transformation that takes place in the soul of a man that produces righteousness. There is a change that has been worked by God in this man that we're reading here in Psalm 15. We see that by reading those two Psalms side-by-side.

So what we have here in Psalm 15 then is a question of who it is that enjoys fellowship with God? Who is it that enjoys communion with him? Who is it that has a character that God approves of? What is the mark of that character? What can we recognize in that character? Who is the man who has fellowship with God and, let's put it this way, who enjoys the providential protection of God? Who is the man that God has his hand upon as opposed to being opposed to the fool that we saw in Psalm 14? Well, that's the question that Psalm 15 is answering. Psalm 15 defines the kind of righteousness that God requires of the man who would walk with him. Not how he can become right with God but a man who is right with God, what is the characteristic of his life? As you read Psalm 15, it opens with a rhetorical question. Look at verse 1 with me now as we get into the actual text of our Psalm for this evening. There is a question that is asked and answered in Psalm 15. The rhetorical question serves to kind of grab your attention. It wakes you up. This is a most important question. Verse 1,

1 O LORD, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?

There is a significant question there and implied in the question is this: not everyone can. Not everyone does dwell with God. Not everyone is entitled to abide with him and so the question of Psalm 15 draws your attention of a thinking person, who may be with God? Who is it that may have fellowship and communion with him whether in a temporary dwelling like a tent or in a permanent residence on his holy hill in the city of Jerusalem? Who is it that could enter into the presence of a holy God in light of what we had just seen in Psalm 14 that there is none righteous, not even one? Stated differently: what kind of man will God accept into his presence whether it's his presence as expressed in the tabernacle in the wilderness or the temple in Jerusalem or in heaven itself? No matter where the visible location of God is being manifested at the particular point in the progress of revelation, the question is the same: who may approach God? Who may approach a holy God in light of the fact that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God?

Now, from a New Testament perspective, we understand that there must be the righteousness of Christ applied to the account of anyone who would approach God. It is by grace that we are saved through faith. It is not through works of righteousness that we have done with our hands but through his mercy, Titus 3:5 says and it is only because Christ himself has lived a perfect life. It is only because Christ himself has died to take away our sins that the barrier of sin can be removed and we have access to God. You know that from all of our study together. Now what we have expressed here is what is the kind of life that is marked by a life that has been transformed by grace? How can you recognize a righteous man? What it says and what it gives us, are answers to help us evaluate the quality of our lives.

Now, Psalm 15 is not intended to be a comprehensive answer to the question. In fact, if you will recall, some of you may have been here when we studied this Psalm earlier in the year on a Sunday morning. At the time, I hadn't planned out this series on the Psalms so we're kind of reviewing things that we've already studied from the pulpit of Truth Community in months gone by. But Psalm 15 is not a comprehensive answer to the question: what does God require for my life? Psalm 15 does not speak against murder or adultery or theft like the Ten Commandments do. It really doesn't say anything about loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind or your neighbor as yourself. It doesn't speak to the Old Testament sacrificial system as you might expect from an Old Testament book. It doesn't talk about reading Scripture. It doesn't talk about prayer and so it's obviously not intended in its five short verses to be a comprehensive, exhaustive answer of everything that would be required of a man of God who wanted to walk with God during his time on earth. We just need to understand what this Psalm is and what it is not. It is not a roadmap to how you can earn your salvation through your works. It does not say everything about the godly life that could possibly be said. That's not its intent. It's too brief for that.

So what is it doing? Well, when you understand what it's doing, it makes it a pretty exciting Psalm to study together. Psalm 15 is giving us representative traits that God requires if we want to fellowship with him. It's giving us examples. It's illustrating the point, the quality of a godly life and it gives you enough of breadth of the different aspects of a man's life on earth to help you measure this out. If a man's life is straight in these areas that are laid out here then you can be confident that it's a reflection of a life that is marked by grace.

There is another way to think of about this Psalm before we get into the heart of it. In fact, turn over to the book of James chapter 2 with me, if you would. This is more perhaps in the spirit of illustrating what the Psalm is illustrating. It is a pervasive problem in the Scriptures as well as among men in general and in the church in particular. I'm using the word church with a C speaking broadly about those who would profess Christianity. Scripture speaks repeatedly of those who would claim to have faith but their life is inconsistent with that claim. 1 John 2:4 says, "if we say that we have come to know him and we do not keep his commandments, we lie and the truth is not within us." Jesus said in Matthew 7 that, "There will be many who say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not do all of this stuff? Did we not do miracles and cast out demons." He'll say, "I never knew you. Depart from me you who practice lawlessness." It's a very pervasive problem that Scripture addresses of men knowing something in their head that is disconnected from the life that they live and that is a massive spiritual problem that the church is repeatedly having to call attention to in order to warn people about the state of their souls that they would examine themselves to see whether they're in the faith. This is a pervasive problem and James chapter 2 addresses this in familiar language. Verse 14, James says, "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?" Verse 15, "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?"

Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself." Now, understand the theological reason that that is true, the theological reason that a truly converted life will bear fruit is due to the doctrine of regeneration. When a man is born again, when a man is truly saved, God changes his nature and places the principle of the divine nature itself within that man. The Holy Spirit comes and dwells within him. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old things have passed away. Behold new things have come."

So when a man is truly converted which is different than him simply claiming the name of Jesus on his lips, there is a change that takes place in that man that inevitably produces itself in real life. The man who only speaks about Christ without a change in life is an imposter. He is someone who is deluded about the reality of his salvation. Stated differently, stated one more way: Psalm 15 in a positive way sets forth the marks of real spiritual life. In the process, therefore, it exposes what a hypocrite is and the problem of hypocrisy, the problem of false professions of faith, is that which Psalm 15 helps us with and is therefore very, very helpful for those of you who come from Christian families, those of you who are young people in Christian families, trying to sort out where your life is really at, whether you really know the Lord or not. Psalm 15 helps us with all of that. It gives us representative traits that God requires of a righteous man. One writer says this and I quote, "Psalm 15 insists that worship is meaningless unless it goes hand-in-hand with an inner moral integrity which expresses itself in responsible living." There is an interchange that we're going to see and it expresses itself in real life. That is the mark of the one who made dwell on the holy hill with the Lord himself. There is an interchange that works itself out in real life. There is no such thing as someone who is a Christian who lives like the world in unbroken fashion.

We're going to see five of these traits here in the way that we've structured the message here tonight. First of all, we're going to see that the righteous man can be recognized by his character. The righteous man can be recognized by his character or if you want to do this in a more profitable way and you want to make this sermon more profitable for yourself, use the first person pronoun, "my character." View this from the perspective of addressing "my character," not third person "his character" and that will be most helpful to you. Look at Psalm 15:2. We've seen the question, "Who may abide with God? Who may dwell with him and have fellowship with him?" Now in verse 2, we start to get the answer unpacked for us. Here in verse 2 we see a description of the character, the inward character of that kind of man. Look at verse 2 with me. It says,

2 He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth
in his heart.

Notice the inner dimension there, in his heart. Verse 2 is a summary statement of everything else that follows in the rest of the Psalm. David is speaking here of one whose life has integrity. His Christian life is consistent. He applies the entire word of God to his entire life. He's the same on Tuesday as he was on Sunday. There isn't this black and white difference between when he's inside the walls of the church and when he's outside the walls of the church. David is emphasizing here in verse 2 the internal dynamic of the righteous heart. Look at it with me again there in verse 2. All of these are Hebrew

participles that are expressing the habitual nature, the continual ongoing aspect of the man's life. "He walks with integrity." That "walks" doesn't refer to a physical step-by-step physical gait but rather the manner of his life is one of integrity and consistency. "He works righteousness out in his life." And even in the inner recesses of his heart, there is an element of truth, "He speaks truth within his heart." Jesus said that the words that come out of our mouths are a reflection of what's going on inside of our hearts. Here in Psalm 15:2, we see the same principle being expressed.

Those of us that value communion with God, those of us that take seriously the call to love him with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind, those of us who are eager to be conformed to what he would have us to be, need to remember as this Psalm reminds us that there is an inner dynamic to the spiritual life. There is an inner dynamic to righteousness that cannot be overlooked. You can't harbor sin in your heart and manifest the external aspects of righteousness. No, you see, the righteous man and I know this is true of so many of you here, you want to be right inside. You want your thought life to be what it should be, not simply what man sees on the outside. The righteous man is mindful of the fact that the Lord looks on the heart and he wants his inner man to be pleasing to God.

This is a repeated theme in the Psalms. This just occurred to me. Turn over to Psalm 19 which we'll see a few weeks down the road. But you need to see this in Psalm 19 as well. Psalm 19, the very last verse of that Psalm says, Psalm 19:14, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." We would all do well to ponder the question of what's been going on in our heart. Is there a preoccupation with the word? With worship of God? With love toward others? Or is there selfishness and envy? Or lust and hatred that is bubbling up just below the surface? You see, the righteous man, those of you that are here in this room that are Christians, what you want to remind yourself of is that you need to not only attack the external sins that men see but even more, you need to go after the sins of your heart because it is there in the inner core, in the character of your very being, that righteousness is expressed. What is your thought life like? What is the inner man like? The one who dwells with the Lord is one who is manifesting integrity and truth and righteousness inside where no one sees.

Pretty convicting, isn't it? It reminds us of our need for a Savior. We realize that we fall short here and yet if you're a true Christian, you should see inside your heart a desire that aspires after this kind of consistency. I despise my inner inconsistency. The inconsistency of my inner man. I detest that about it and you do too if you're a Christian. Not my inconsistency but you hate your inner inconsistency, just to be clear. You can hate mine too but that's a different point. Your inner man. Your character, is what Psalm 15 drives your attention to.

Now, David takes that general statement about character and applies it and illustrates it in some other things that are more outward in his characterization of the righteous life. Secondly, we're going to look at your conversations. Your conversations. We've seen the aspect of character in verse 2 and now we see the righteous man being identified in verse

3 by his speech, by what he says. How the worshiper uses his tongue. David stated here with three negatives here in verse 3. Notice this, he says,

3 He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend;

This word for "slander" pictures someone who is going around, walking around spying things out in order to spread stories to other people about other people. David has made, if you'll remember, David has made a point of the speech of wicked men repeatedly in the Psalms that led up to Psalm 15. Look over at Psalm 12:2 for a moment. Let's pick it up in verse 1 because the negative contrast is helpful. David says, "Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases to be, For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak." So he had just in Psalm 12 been expressing disillusionment with the flattering false tongues of the wicked and now as we come to Psalm 15, we see the righteous man is separated from that kind of devious tongue. The man whom God approves. If you want to have fellowship with God, you're a person who watches your tongue. You're mindful of what comes out of your mouth. What I want you to see in this, this is very interesting to me, it's not just that we refuse to speak the evil. It's not just that we won't say it, notice in verse 3 he says, "nor will he take up a reproach against his friend." He's talking about what we listen to as well. Will you take up, will you listen, will you receive an evil report about someone who is your friend? Someone whom you know? Would you welcome that? Will you receive it or will you rebuke the one who has made that known? Charles Spurgeon said it this way on this verse, he said, "In slander as well as robbery, the receiver is as bad as the thief. If there were no gratified hearers of ill reports, there would be an end of the trade of spreading them. Call for a policeman, we say, if we see a thief at his business. Should we feel no indignation when we hear a gossip at her work?" What comes out of our mouth and what we are willing to receive into our ears. Think about it not only of the personal conversations that you have but included in this would be the idea of what you are willing to fill your mind with from media and entertainment as well. You know, we not only keep the garbage from coming out, we keep it from going in in the first place. Our conversations are a reflection of whether we are living righteously or not and what we hear has a reflection on that.

So we see in character, in conversations. In verse 4 we're going to see now your companions and who it is that you associate with. It's often said that you can know a man by the company he keeps, well this is reflected in Psalm 15 as well. Look at verse 4 with me. We've seen the character in verse 2, verse 3 the conversations, verse 4 the companions. He says,

4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the LORD;

We'll stop there and pick up the rest of the verse in the next point. What David is saying here is that the righteous man, the righteous heart, is not attracted to the company of the ungodly. He isn't attracted to fame or fortune of a person who rejects Christ. He follows

godly men. He defends godly men from criticism. Look at verse 4 with me again, "In whose eyes a reprobate," or a vile person, a wicked person, "is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD." I just can't help but think of how this helps identify hypocrites within the church. Where is it that you find your company? Where is it that you find your common spirit once you step outside of the church? Are you drawn and attracted to the company of Christians or are you drawn and attracted to the company in the entertainment and the role models of those who despise the Lord? That kind of hypocrisy is exposed in what we're saying here. People who have vile lives are reprehensible. We want to separate ourselves from them if we are truly the righteous people who are enjoying fellowship with the Lord. Beloved, search your hearts and ask yourself what it is that you are attracted to. For most of you, I know what you are attracted to because you're here on a Tuesday night. But we can't assume that it's a monolithic 100% representation here.

Let me give you another practical application of this that I find very, very searching. Verse 4 here says, "In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But he honors those who fear the LORD." Here's a practical application for you. You've probably heard me say this before. Think about how you respond when you hear someone criticizing a Christian leader no matter where they're at, a Christian leader who is known for his godliness and his faithfulness. This verse greatly affects the way that you respond to those kinds of situations. Verse 4 says that he honors those who fear the Lord. Now, listen to me: the question is, when you hear that kind of criticism, do you defend that Christian leader or do you join in the criticism? Do you receive the reports and say, "Oh, tell me more," or do you step to the defense of the godly man? It doesn't have to be someone in leadership necessarily, simply someone that you know that they have lived a life of integrity and suddenly someone picks up criticism against them. Look, I love to say this: almost everyone unconsciously thinks when that occurs that it is the godly person's character that is under scrutiny, that is being tested by what is being spoken in that conversation. That's not the case at all. That's not the case at all. The person whose character is being tested when that kind of report is brought to you, whose character is being tested there, it's yours. It's your character that's being tested at that time because the question is: do you receive that report? Do you welcome it? Do you entertain it? Or do you honor the one who fears the Lord?

Understanding this completely changes the way that you receive those kinds of gossips. How you respond is a measure of your own righteousness because a righteous man despises the gossip, despises the attack, the undermining of a godly Christian but he honors those who fear the Lord. So one of the ways that you can take this and apply it in your life as you are looking out and looking to the future and contemplating future situations that you find, be on the lookout to defend godly people in conversations when they're not there. Be ready and be quick to say, "That can't possibly be true. That can't possibly be right. What you're saying, I'm not even going to listen to that because that woman's character is established and I don't know what you're doing, but there's no reason for us to be talking this way," so that your character in conversations where that other person is not even present, your character shines forth as one who will honor, who will defend, who will uphold those that you know to be godly.

That would be a pretty good way for us to live together as a church, wouldn't it? For me to have your back and you to have her back and him to have her back, for us to have each other's backs like this. To be living in a godly way and then when the inevitable attacks and slanders come, say, "No, I'm not going to be a part of that," and tying it to this scriptural principle that the one who once fellowshiped with the Lord is one who honors those who fear the Lord and they will despise the evil reports that are brought against them. This would unify and protect the church in ways that we would never be able to measure. I'm going to be that way. How about you? You want to be with me on that? Let's be that way together. Let's make that an aspect of the way that we serve each other in Truth Community Church is that we serve each other this way and we stand up for each other in conversations. I think the Lord will honor that. I think that we'll find corporately that we have a place where we can know that we're abiding with the Lord and enjoying his fellowship and communion if we find ourselves being people like that. That's just what Scripture says.

But perhaps for some of you younger people, just be mindful of the fact that who you are choosing as your companions, what's coming out of your mouth on a day-to-day basis is a reflection of what you really are. I understand that you are from a Christian family. I understand that you claim to be a Christian and I pray to God and trust in God and pray for you that that's the case. I want it to be that way but I also know that young people who have grown up in Christian homes are extremely vulnerable to self-deception. You've conditioned yourself. You've learned what to say to get the approval of your parents and get the approval of those who are around you. Well, you look at your life. You look at what comes out of your mouth. You look at the people that you want to be like and by that standard, measure whether your claim to be a Christian is real or not because who you choose, who you want as your companions, says volumes about your character and says volumes about whether you belong to the Lord or not.

David goes on here and he talks about, fourthly, our commitments. Our character, our conversations, our companions and our commitments now, point 4. Look at the end of the verse with me here where he says,

He swears to his own hurt and does not change;

The question really comes down to this, we could simplify it here this evening and simply ask this question: can you be trusted? When you say that you're going to do something, will you do it? Do you do it? Or do you come up with excuse after excuse about why you couldn't do it this time or that time? Look, we could talk about this at so many different levels but the integrity that David talked about in verse 2 is being expressed in the way that a man carries out and is faithful to what he says. So we could talk about this in terms of the way that you keep your marriage vows. Are you faithful to your spouse? Are you faithful and loving and committed and have you been faithful to your spouse in the course of your marriage? Those vows that you took on your wedding day, has your life borne out truthfulness and have you kept that commitment? If you're in business, what does God see in the way that you handle your business dealings. Do you keep the

contract? Do you honor the promise? Again, you young people, do you do what you say you will do when it comes time for you to do it?

You see, what I want you to see is that this gets down in this short little Psalm, it gets down to the daily details of the way that we live life. What it says is, what it's telling us is that the man who wants to have fellowship with God does what he says even when it hurts him to do so. Even if the circumstances have changed, he keeps his word. He doesn't change it. But if you're somebody who has become skilled at giving excuses for why you didn't do what you said you would do, you need to be seriously convicted by the word of God here this evening and realize that God is exposing at the very least, a thread of unrighteousness in your life which should concern you deeply. Why didn't you do that? "Well, I got busy or I forgot or I did this or that." You know, you can dismiss that stuff at that superficial level and make an excuse for it but what you have to see is that Scripture takes that unfaithfulness in your life and ties it to your character and then ties it to whether you even belong in the presence of God or not. The righteous man, the one who has fellowship with God, the one who is in communion with God, can be counted on to do what he said he would do. If that is not your life, you need to examine yourself to see whether you're in the faith or not. It's that serious. If you think about the character of God, you would understand why it has to be that way. God is faithful. God is true. God never breaks his word. You realize, don't you, that an unfaithful, unreliable person is the exact opposite of what God is. How could it be that an undependable, unreliable, excuse making man, woman, boy or girl, could be someone who is actually right with God? Those things are absolutely inconsistent with one another. By the quality of your life when you're living that way, you are a living denial of the character of God, of his faithfulness to who he is and his commitment to keep and do what he says that he will do. So at the very basic level of day-to-day living under the roof with your family, is being laid out and displayed whether you're a true Christian or not by whether your word is dependable or not. Verse 4 says, "He swears to his own hurt and does not change. O LORD, who made dwell in Your holy Hill?" Let me tell you, it's someone who swears to his own hurt and doesn't change. When he says he'll do something, he does it. And so the commitments even in the small things, are a display of whether you belong to Christ or not.

Let's look at this and think about this from another perspective as well, one other way that Jesus said this because Jesus spoke about this exact same thing when he said that, "He who is faithful in a little thing will also be faithful in much." You see, the question isn't whether it's a really big important thing and you do that, the question is what do you do with what you say you'll do? Because the issue is your faithfulness, not the size of the stage on which your faithfulness is displayed. Integrity is the mark of a true Christian. A lack of integrity is a mark of someone who needs to examine themselves and examine themselves quickly because when Scripture says these things, I like to say this, Scripture is teaching for keeps. God means what he says here and the fact that we are so easy and so quick to excuse ourselves from our unfaithfulness is not an indication that God views it that way. God requires us to keep our word. God keeps his word. So let's examine ourselves on this, huh?

Well, there's one more that David gives here. He's talked about your character, your conversations, your companions, your commitments and you start to see how pervasively searching this is. In verse 5, he goes down and he deals with the issue of your cash, the way that you deal with and handle your resources. Verse 5 says,

5 He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

What he's saying here is that the godly man considers his neighbor in the way that he handles his resources. It's not wrong for a man to make a profit. Scripture never says that but what this is talking about is that the godly man is not one who will take advantage of the unfortunate. Scripture tells us to be generous and to be ready to share from what we have. Turn over to 1 Timothy 6 as a reference point, a cross reference on this. 1 Timothy 6, beginning in verse 17, where the Apostle Paul says, "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches." That verse assumes that there will be an occasional wealthy person within the body of Christ. He doesn't tell them to renounce all of their earthly goods here. He's simply telling them how to handle it and he says, "Instruct them not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy." And so the person of means and those of us in America are all going to probably qualify in comparison to the rest of the world, we realize that what we have is a gift from God who has generously given it to us so that we could enjoy it and we're grateful to God. We don't have to be guilty about having a measure of earthly wealth but we see our attitude toward it and then in verse 18 he goes and says here is how you deal with it in relationship to others, "Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed." So the godly man has a disposition toward what is his and says, "I have this as a gift from God. I'm grateful for this but I'm ready to share it with others." That goes to the man of wealth and means, it's late in his life. It goes to a young person who has toys that others want to share with. There is just this element of generosity in sharing that marks the godly man.

Now go back to Psalm 15 with me for a moment. Here in verse 5, "He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent." Money in other words, doesn't corrupt him. The availability of wealth does not corrupt him. He doesn't use it to sway things against innocent people. He's ready to share it. He doesn't take advantage of the unfortunate. All of that being a mark of the way that he is disposed towards earthly resources that the Lord has given to him.

So let's take a little bit of an overview here and just see the sweep of what this Psalm has searched us at. Our inner man, what's going on in your thought life? Our conversations, what comes out of your mouth? Your companions, who is it that you join together with? Who is it that you enjoy fellowship with? Your commitments, are you somebody that can be trusted? The way that you handle resources. You see that in this brief Psalm, we have seen a searching display. God has taken a flashlight and shone it around in all of the corners of your life.

Now, let's come back and speak to the believers here, those of you that are Christians, that feel the weight of falling short. Your life does manifest this kind of character. This is the direction of your life even though you stumble from time to time. Two things that I want to say to you. Recognize that what this Psalm is saying is that you're welcome in the presence of God. Because of the work that Christ has done for us in securing our redemption, the work of grace that is being manifested in your heart as you see this spiritual growth, this transforming effect of grace in these different areas of your life, understand that that's pointing to a greater reality. This whole Psalm is about the greater reality of communion and fellowship with a holy God. Those marks in your life are an indication of the reality of grace at work in your heart and therefore become a grounds of hope and rejoicing and confidence.

As we think about the way that this Psalm has stung us, let's step back for a moment and look at one other man as we contemplate this. This Psalm prefigures the perfect righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see in our Lord Jesus Christ not the imperfect aspirations in carrying this out that we ourselves model but look at verse 2 and let's walk through this real quickly thinking about Christ, that in the Lord Jesus Christ, we saw a man, Scripture described a man, he was that man who walked with perfect integrity. He was that man who worked righteousness. He was that man who always without exception spoke truth in his heart. He was that man in verse 3 who never slandered with his tongue. Who never did evil to his neighbor. He was crucified without cause. Those who crucified him had to acknowledge that this was the Son of God. Pilate said, "I find no guilt in this man." Jesus said, "Which one of you convicts me with sin?" and the whole place fell dead silent because there was such perfect righteousness on display that could not be denied. In whose eyes a reprobate was despised. He was the one who preeminently feared the Lord and honored his Father. Oh, think about the Lord Jesus Christ with his face set to Jerusalem. Going to Jerusalem, knowing what awaited him there was the cross, was an unjust conviction and a bearing of the weight of the sins of the people of God upon his shoulders, separation from his Father. That's what he set out to do when he left heaven to come to earth.

What do we see reflected in this perfect righteous man from verse 4? If ever there was a man who swore to his own hurt and did not change, we saw the Lord Jesus Christ doing that on the cross. He said, "I have come to seek and to save that which was lost." And there he is on the cross and that's exactly what he's doing. He said he would do it and in the midst of the agony of Calvary, he did not change. He could have called down legions of angels and put a halt to the proceedings but he didn't. In our Lord Jesus Christ, we preeminently see the man who swore to his own hurt and did not change and you and I are the beneficiaries of that great man, that great incarnate God. Your whole spiritual eternity, your spiritual destiny, your spiritual well-being, the forgiveness of your sins, the difference between heaven and hell for you and me depended on that one man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "I will seek them and I will save them," not blinking when it came to his own hurt. When the darkness descended, when he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Even in that forsaken, lonely moment of his righteous soul,

he did not change. If ever there was a man who swore to his own hurt and did not change, we see it in our lovely Lord Jesus Christ, don't we?

Well, Psalm 15 ends on a promise for us who have trusted in Christ. He asks the question, "Who may dwell with God?" He's answered the question with these representative character traits which we see preeminently exemplified in perfection in Christ. Now this great promise from God that belongs to those of us who know Christ, whose lives have been transformed by grace, here is the promise of God that we are intended to take away and rely on.

He who does these things will never be shaken.

We will never be dislodged from our position of fellowship with God. Satan himself cannot move us out of this position of favor. When the ground of life shakes underneath us, we still stand firm because we are held by the God who has allowed us to dwell in his holy tent. In other words, what this Psalm ends on is a promise to you of God's sustaining grace. Look, you look back on your life and you see if you've been a Christian for any length of time at all, you should be able to look back on your life even in the midst of difficulties right now and say, "I have seen God sustain me through difficult times and hardships in life and he was faithful to me back then." You should be able to say, "Now I'm trusting God to sustain me even though this present circumstance is difficult." This belongs to you. This is where your life is meant to live is in this confidence, in this fortitude, in this courage, that says, "I have fellowship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. My life will not be shaken today."

Let me give you this which should be a death blow to your future anxieties. It's not just that this promise has been true in the past. It's not just that we experience this confidence and trust and the sustaining grace, albeit imperfectly now in the present today as we sit or stand here tonight, but what you have to understand, where you are meant to get your roots into the flowing water of God's grace, is to understand that this is where you are to live and your mind is to think about the future. This is how you're to contemplate the future. Not in fear of what might happen. Not in fear of all the multitude of things that could go wrong. Forget all of that. Forget the things that you are afraid of and anxious about and that occupy your mind. You are meant to be transformed by this reality that going forward, "Just as God was faithful to sustain me in the past, he will be just as faithful and even more in the future. Therefore, I don't live life from a perspective of anxiety. I don't live in the midst of fear. I don't tremble when I look to the future. I am confident. I look forward because I have the blessed promise of God that he who does these things will never be shaken. God says he will keep me and therefore it doesn't matter what might happen, from a perspective of external circumstances. What will happen is that this a God who dwells on his holy hill, this God who dwells in heaven, this God who dwells among his people, this God who dwells in us, who has sworn that we will never be shaken, will keep his word." Whether we've got another 24 hours or another 24 years or another five decades of life ahead, we look forward with the expectation, the confidence, the certainty, the assurance, that God will keep us and not allow us to be

shaken from our position of strength in the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to God. Praise be to God.

Bow with me in prayer.

You know, I know that this Psalm has described many of you. You are brothers and sisters of mine in Christ and I'm so grateful to you. I'm grateful for your faithfulness. I'm grateful for the work of God in your life. Let me encourage you to simply give glory to God for the work that he has done, that you see these traits manifested in your life. Give glory to God. Give glory to Christ and excel still more because you believe that he'll keep his promise never to let you be shaken. For those of you, perhaps some of you young people, if you have not trusted Christ in a way that produces this kind of godly character, let me be just really clear and blunt with you as we all have our heads bowed here tonight: if this Psalm hasn't described you, let's be really clear about what that means, you will not dwell with God; you are not dwelling with God; you are not under his providential protection; you are separated from him; you are under the wrath of God because of your disobedience and that is a frightful, fearful place for you to be. You are on a pathway where you will be cast away as unfit for his presence. Let's not kid each other. We're talking about real, eternal spiritual realities that God will most certainly fulfill. He will be faithful to his word and he will cast aside those who are not of this kind of character, those who have not trusted in Christ.

Oh, my unsaved friend, don't stay there. Why would you stay in that place of danger? Why would you stay separated from God? Why would you harden your heart again against the things that I'm saying? That makes absolutely no sense. That is mentally incoherent. Come to Christ. Come to the one who calls you, who says, "I will give of you water that will bubble up into eternal life for you." He'll receive you. Just repent and come to him so that he might grant you the blessings of the forgiveness of your sins, that he might wash you and make you clean and keep his promise to give eternal life to everyone who comes to him. Come to Christ tonight. Tell someone tonight that you've trusted Christ and turn from your sin.

Our Father, we thank you for the wonder of this Psalm. We welcome the way that it has searched us and cut us and rebuked us. We want to conform our lives to what your own righteous character requires from us. Help us to live that way. Father, for those who are come in outside of Christ, God, do a work in their heart and bring them into Christ so that they might be saved. Lord Jesus, even as we've thought about how you swore to your own hurt and did not change on Calvary, we take a special moment tonight to thank you. We rejoice not in our own character, we rejoice in your character. We honor your character. We worship you. We thank you for taking that narrow road, for bearing the cross on your shoulders and then carrying our sins far away with your shed blood. You swore that you would help us before you came to earth. You accepted the Father's designation, his plan for your life. You embraced it and you followed it through to perfection even though it cost you your own earthly life. How we treasure you. How we love you. How we honor you. How we rejoice in you. How we humble ourselves before you. Give us grace that we might be faithful to our calling, that we might be faithful to

you even as you were faithful to your calling and faithful to your Father. Lord, we love you. We honor you. We rejoice in being called by your name. Amen

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