

## Great Circumstances

Harmony M.B.C., January 25, 2009 (Morning and Evening)

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**Psalms 16:6** The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places*; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

This verse sits as a diamond of perfect scriptural treasure in the middle of a field of precious pearls, rubies, sapphires, and other precious stones strewn there by this believer's testimony. Here in this 16<sup>th</sup> Psalm, we are standing in a verdant park with all these jewels around us in every verse associated with our text. It is interesting that this Psalm is entitled a Michtam of David, because the Hebrew word michtam has the meaning of a graven poem...something carved or sculpted; in other words a poem that is carved into something as though made permanent. So, here we are standing in David's museum, admiring the engraving expertise of this spiritual poet. And truly, David has carved eternal poetry for us, as he proclaims God's glorious impacts on his life. With his words, he gives us seeds which spring forth with a rich crop of praises that we may speak of. Praises for all the goodness and greatness of God in our own lives.

Many good bible scholars have reserved this Psalm as a prophesy concerning Christ. And, while there are verses in this chapter that belong as a prophesy of Christ, or a testimony concerning Christ, I think we lose a full use of scripture when we do not understand that whatever the relationship Christ has with the Father we receive a portion of that relationship being in Christ through His atoning work, and being true children of God and joint heirs with Christ ourselves. And so, our experiences and enjoyments of God are also mirrored in portions of scripture that in fact do prophesy about Jesus Christ. For that reason, I want us to glean out of these verses what is written about us likewise. The insights God has given David define our circumstances in this world and the world to come as a result of God's own hand in our lives.

This is the direction I want us to go in our consideration of both our text verse, and associated truths about our Lord and His outpouring of blessings upon us as His people. I want us to see that we live in great circumstances today because of God's providential "caretakership" of our lives.

Looking directly at our text, we want to notice:

**I. How The Believer Has Every Reason To Be Glad and Praise God For His (or Her) State In Life.** "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places*; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

- ("lines" in Hebrew: chebel chebel [kheh-bel khay-bel] speaks of measuring off land to be inherited)
  - > David is saying, "what God has given to me in my life is a sweet and delightful circumstance - an environment of pleasant places and a goodly heritage."
- This is the testimony that every child of God in America should have
  - > If you cannot say these same things this morning, I can testify to you that you may need to either re-inventory your state or look at what you are doing with your life that has

caused this not to be so.

- > If we find ourselves in unhappy circumstances, in an unhappy state of mind, in straits that take away our joy in the Lord, let me say as a personal testimony that such things are of our own doing.

- Let's look at some circumstances of Christians and other people in the world today and make some comparisons with our own situations:

- > Nigeria, December 11, 2008 (Compass Direct News) — The murderous rioting sparked by Muslim attacks on Christians and their property on Nov. 28-29 left six pastors dead, at least 500 other people killed and 40 churches destroyed, according to church leaders. (A number of these pastors were Baptists)

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- > 29-Nov-2008 Bureaucratic Persecution Targets Russian Baptists  
In what they believe is deliberate state action against them, two Baptist congregations in the regional centre of Lipetsk have lost their legal status and a third has lost its rented prayer house. "There's been nothing like this in Lipetsk for 20 years, they're taking the last of what we have!"

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- > ISTANBUL, November 17 (2008) (Compass Direct News) — In prison at the age of 14 for having fatally stabbed her uncle in northern Iraq, Asya Ahmad Muhammad's early release on Nov., thanks to a juvenile court decision was overshadowed by fear of retaliation from her extended Muslim family. Also known as Maria, the now 16-year-old Muhammad was sentenced to five years in prison for killing her paternal uncle in self-defense on July 9, 2006 when he attacked her, her mother and little brother at their family kitchen utensil store in the outskirts of Dohuk. The uncle had cut her mother with a knife and was fiercely beating them for converting to Christianity and for “shaming” the family by working in public when Muhammad stabbed him.

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- > World Hunger and Poverty: How They Fit Together (2008 statistics)
  - 923 million people across the world are hungry. <sup>3</sup>
  - Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes--one child every five seconds.
- > In 2005, almost 1.4 billion people lived below the international poverty line, earning less than \$1.25 per day.
- > The median annual income per person in the U.S. in 2007 was about \$40,000. That is

about \$153 / day for a 5 day work week.

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- > Among this group of poor people, many have problems obtaining adequate, nutritious food for themselves and their families. As a result, 820 million people in the developing world are undernourished. They consume less than the minimum amount of calories essential for sound health and growth.

Undernourishment negatively affects people’s health, productivity, sense of hope and overall well-being. A lack of food can stunt growth, slow thinking, sap energy, hinder fetal development and contribute to mental retardation.

- > Americans enjoy the most food availability of any nation on the planet. And, maybe as a result, they represent the second most overweight nation on the planet.

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Fact:

- > There were 744,000 homeless people in the United States in 2005  
This means that of the U.S. population of 303,824,640, 303,080,640 of us have homes to live in.
- > According to the U.S. Census 2000, more than 99% of homes in the U.S. have plumbing, virtually all homes have some form of heating, and less than 6% of homes are classified as crowded, with more than one person per room. The median lot size in the U.S. is 9,100 square feet or one-fifth of an acre, and the average number of persons per room is 0.5. By contrast, in India the average middle-class family (two children, two parents, and two grandparents) resides in a 500-square-foot space, which is the approximate size of many studio apartments in the U.S.

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Fact:

- > A 1995 estimate of the number of Christians in the world showed that this definition of a Christian fit 1,927,953,000 people. This was at a time when the world population was estimated at 5,694,418,460 people. This means that in 1995, one-third or 33% of the world professed to follow Christ.

Estimates for a count of everyone who has ever been born on the earth range between 70 billion and 106 billion (Carl Haub, Population Reference Bureau). If we say that about 33%, (a very liberal estimate) of this entire world population through time were actually saved, and the median population could be said to have been 86 billion, then of that 86 billion, we will estimate that 50% (again a very liberal estimate) of them died in infancy or childhood. This leaves an estimated 28,810,000,000 adults who have died without Christ and are now in hell.

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## **II. See the Spiritual Reasons Why David Could Say This**

V. 5 in this chapter: The **LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.**

- When an estate is divided up among inheritors, one gets this, another gets that. Some get more than others, some get what is perceived as things that are better than others. David recognized that his portion was the Lord.
- Among all the things that humans experience in the world; among all the things that their senses experience, some drink of life’s cup what is mostly bitter, some what in this world is mostly sweet; others drink of a mixed cup. David recognized that his portion of life’s cup was to drink of the Lord
- Some humans receive a lot and do well with what they inherit. Some receive a lot and squander it. Some receive a little and turn it into more. Some receive a little and never have enough; some don’t receive anything. All of these are pretty much at the mercy of the common effects of the ways of the world upon material things. More than that, worldly folks do not recognize the Lords providence in any of these things. But, David recognized that the Lord took care of his inheritance (“...thou maintainest my lot.”)
  - > The Lord’s statement to Abraham fits every child of promise (Genesis 15:1): “I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.”
- **Now, V.7 of this chapter:** “I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.”
  - > With the Lord as his portion, He has the most wise and perfect Counsellor.
  - > That counsel was so effective that even when he found himself in darkness (represented as night here) he had the light of inner guidance, as a result of a converted moral being.
    - Psalms 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.
- Now, V. 8: “I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.:
  - > The spirit of submission inherited as his portion from the Lord has enables him to prioritize appropriately. Namely, that in the spirit of trust and honor, He has set the Lord out in front as the One to be his counterpart (“always before me....”; “before” = Hebrew: neged; “front; that is part opposite; specifically counterpart = a person or thing having the same function or characteristics as another)
  - > This placed the Lord in the position to be his mentor and example
  - > Next, because the Lord is his position of strength (at his right hand), he knew he could be steadfast (I shall not be moved)
- **Now, verse 9:** Therefore my **heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest**

**in hope.**

- > Three spiritual products of the Lord being David's inheritance, enabling him to say that the boundaries of his inheritance were in a pleasant place, and that he had a goodly heritage:
  - The fact of it made his heart glad (my heart is glad)
  - The fullness of it caused him to be copious in declaring joy which glorified the Lord (my glory rejoiceth)
  - The assurance of it gave him security and confidence (my flesh also shall rest in hope)
  
- **Now, verse 10: The fruit and testimony of that security and confidence in the Lord:** For thou **wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.**
  - > His soul will not be left in the grave
  - > His confidence for this lies in his certainty that the Messiah will not experience corruption
  - > He believes he is in Christ; Christ is slated to die for his sins, but Christ will not experience corruption. His confidence then, is in God's keeping of His promise to the Messiah.
  
- **Now, verse 11:** Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fullness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures forevermore.
  - > He will be shown the path to eternal life,
  - > It is into God's presence that the path will lead
  - > where all fullness of joy and eternal pleasures lie.