

SEPTEMBER 2014

PROMISE OF VICTORY

Psalm 16

All across Mississippi on Friday night and Saturdays during football season, people will be flocking to stadiums to cheer their teams to victory. Mississippians love their football teams! When I was on my high school football team, our coach placed a large sign over the door of the locker room that said, *When the going gets tough, the tough get going!* As I look back on those words now, I see they are pretty vague. Our coach used them to inspire us in whatever particular direction he felt we needed inspiring that day. Football is a tough game. Those who play learn that those who handle adversity best usually find themselves victorious.

Life may be that way. Certainly all of us have found that life can be tough. The challenges of a football game can seem fairly insignificant when compared to life's challenges. The Bible never promises that we will not have tough times. Instead, God uses the words of the Bible, joined by the Holy Spirit to prepare us, to go with us through tough times, and to help us be victorious. Psalm 16 is one of the passages in the Bible which can help us when life gets tough.

Unlike the message of the locker room sign, sometimes the tough times in life leave us aware that our strength alone is inadequate to survive. However, King David had learned the place to put his trust ... God. Verse one shows King David saying "Preserve me" or "Keep me safe". He was calling on a Power greater than himself. He admitted that there were times in his life when he was powerless in his own strength. Yet, he knew he could take 'refuge' in God by trusting Him. The King had the option of being independent and relying on the weapons of his army, the advice of his royal cabinet, and his own influence to try to overcome the tough times. Those things ultimately will be insufficient when life throws its worst at us. David, the King, trusted in God. Will we not benefit by doing the same?

King David also remembered the blessings of God in the past. In verse 6, he remembers that 'the lines of my life have fallen in pleasant places'. No matter how difficult our way, we need to remember the blessings we have received. Some years ago, my wife gave me a little notebook. The note she wrote in the front challenged me to write down five things every day for which I am thankful. Remembering the blessings of God has changed my life and made me grateful. When the tough times come in life, it helps us face them with trust to remember God's past blessings.

Psalm 16 closes with a promise. The promise is that no matter how hard life may be here; God will turn difficulties into joy. We don't go around difficulties; we have to go through them. But we don't go alone. We look forward to a day when verse 11 will be fulfilled, 'at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' What a wonderful promise of victory!

