



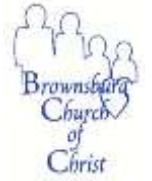
The Unshakable God Filled Mind

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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AM Assembly



Introduction:

On September 8, 1900, the deadliest hurricane in American history made landfall at Galveston, TX. An estimated 8,000 to 12,000 people lost their lives. By comparison, close to 2000 lost their lives in the third deadliest hurricane Katrina. In adjusted-for-inflation terms, the Galveston Storm did \$104.3 billion of damage (making it the third costliest storm, trailing the 1926 hurricane in Miami and 2005 Hurricane Katrina).¹ After the storm, the city was ruined. Few structures were left standing. Many who died from the storm actually died because they were trapped under the damaged debris, and rescuers couldn't get to them in time. I have actually been inside a building that faced that storm. Just 8 years before the storm, Colonel Walter Gresham had his mansion built on the island. It was designed by Nicholas Clayton. Years later it was purchased by the Roman Catholic Diocese to house their local bishop and is today a tourist attraction called "The Bishop's Palace." And it is indeed a fantastic house. According to the official website for the house, "it survived the great storm of 1900 virtually unscathed,"² even though the nearby Catholic cathedral did not. It also withstood the fourth costliest hurricane in our nation's history, which hit Galveston only 15 years later (though due to the construction of the seawall, the death toll was considerably lower; only 53 died in that storm of similar strength and destruction). Imagine living in that house when the storms came and walking out afterwards to see the destruction all around but your house stood unshaken, seemingly unshakeable. Who wouldn't want to live in a house like that? That is what **Psalm 16:7-8** is all about—living unshakably, being in an unshakeable house. Of course, we are not talking about surviving a literal hurricane. But we are talking about the storms of life. As Jesus's famous parable of the two builders shows, when the storms of life hit, we can abide unshaken (**Matthew 7:24-27**). **Psalm 16:7-8** provides the key to such protection.

Discussion:

I. Let the Lord be your counselor.

- A. Storms are coming. Troubles will hit. I don't know what you're going through, but whatever you face you have two options. You can either do what seems best to you, or you can follow the counsel of God. This is not always easy because God's counsel is often counterintuitive. That is, it doesn't always seem natural. We would much rather listen to the counsel that feeds our passions, takes the path of least resistance, expects the least from us, and gives the most to us the quickest and easiest. Consider Rehoboam of **I Kings 12**. The older generation gave him godly counsel, but the younger generation told him what he wanted to hear. Through his folly, he lost 10 of the tribes to Jeroboam.
- B. Consider two great examples from David's own life. First, in **I Samuel 24:3-7**, David has King Saul cornered and his men are even advising him to kill Saul. They even want him to believe that the very nature of the situation is revelation from God Himself that it is okay to kill Saul. But David knows the Lord's counsel. You don't put your hand against God's anointed. That is counterintuitive to any military mind. How can you possibly win against an enemy you won't strike? Yet who becomes king in the end? David, because he followed the Lord's counsel. But notice another account in the very next chapter. In **I Samuel 25**, David had been protecting a man named Nabal's flocks and shepherds. When a feast day came and he sent to Nabal for provisions for the feast, Nabal rebuffed him. David's knee jerk reaction was anger. He mounted up with his men to wipe Nabal out. But Abigail, Nabal's wife heard of her husband's folly, and intervened. She prepared food for David's feast and came to David encouraging him to stay his hand against Nabal lest he have guilty conscience for having shed blood without cause. Notice David's reaction to Abigail in **I Samuel 25:32-33**: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand!" (ESV). Imagine how hard it was to be bent on vengeance, wanting vengeance. Think about all the frustration David had been feeling, not just because of Nabal but because of his whole situation, fleeing Saul constantly. Now is the chance to get to vent some of that anger and frustration. Can't we imagine that every fiber of David's being was bent on this attack? But when Abigail speaks to him, he realizes that she is really sharing the Lord's counsel. And he has a choice. His own counsel or the Lord's. He took the Lord's.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1900_Galveston_hurricane

² <http://www.galvestonhistory.org/attractions/architectural-heritage/bishops-palace>

- C. This is often hard, but we must learn to let the Lord be our counselor. We need to allow His Word and will to guide us. We need to allow His people to interrupt our folly with His Word. We need to allow His counsel to fill our hearts and minds, guiding our actions. Our counsel leads to death (**Proverbs 14:12; 16:25**), God's counsel leads to a steady and unshakable life.

II. Be steeped in the Lord's counsel.

- A. The second line of our key passage says something interesting. "In the night also my heart instructs me." That almost seems like a contradiction of our first point. It seems like now David is listening to his own counsel. However, in the context of the surrounding statements, I think we can see a different meaning to this. David's point is not that he is getting counsel from his own heart by itself. Rather, he is so steeped in the counsel of the Lord that even in the night when he is lying awake because of his troubles, or perhaps while he is asleep and dreaming because of his faith in God's care, God's counsel is working in his heart. His heart is so full of God's counsel even in the night his heart instructs him with God's counsel.
- B. I once read a fellow who said, "I want my heart to be so full of God's Word that if someone were to cut me I would bleed Bible." Now that's steeped in God's counsel. Brothers and sisters, this is so much more than listening to a couple of sermons per week and attending a couple of Bible classes per week. This is steeped in God's counsel. This is a mind marinated in the Word of God. This is a soul slathered in God's Scriptures.
- C. **Psalm 19:7-11** explains how amazing God's Word really is. It revives the soul, makes wise the simple, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, endures forever, is righteous altogether, and is more valuable than gold and sweeter than honey. **Psalm 119** demonstrates what a great lifeline God's Word is in the midst of trouble. As **Psalm 119:92-93** says, "If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life" (ESV). This is the very point of Jesus's parable of the two builders in **Matthew 7:24-27**. We need to dig deep in God's Word, laying an unshakable foundation. Certainly that is difficult. It is easy to just show up at church, go to Bible class, and coast. But trust me, the storms are coming. If the foundation is laid properly, you will be unshaken. In fact, this is also a lesson from Jesus's other famous parable, the one about the sower in **Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**. Throughout the entire parable, Satan is trying to keep the Word out of our hearts. Just as we need to dig deep into the Word, we need to let the Word dig deep into us. We need to clear the way, breaking up the hard-packed earth, removing the rocks and stones, digging out the weeds so the seed of the Word can shoot roots deep into our hearts and souls and bear fruit high up to God.
- D. When the storms hit, we need to be so steeped in God's Word that the words of God are our natural thoughts and reactions. Our consciences need to be so trained by God's Word that in the heat of the moment, God's reactions are what shine forth. Brothers and sisters, that just takes time in God's Word when the storm isn't raging. Sadly, when the storm isn't raging, the Word may not seem as important. We're doing fine, coasting along. It doesn't seem like we need much to make it. But without warning the squall comes and it can be too late to prepare. Love God's Word, delight in it, meditate on it, memorize it. Let it fill you so that it pours out of you when you need it most. Be so steeped in it that your heart instructs you with God's counsel even in the night, whether you are waking or sleeping.

III. Practice the presence of the Lord.

- A. I almost hate to describe the third part of our passage this way since I learned this phrase from a Roman Catholic Monk and I so disagree with much of what that church teaches. But I have yet to hear a better or more beautiful description of this kind of unshakable relationship with God than what was authored by the man simply known as Brother Lawrence. If we want to be unshakable, we must learn to practice the presence of God. David said, "I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken" (ESV).
- B. Practicing the presence of God is living and praying as if God is literally and physically at your right hand. This is not some kind of boogie man threat. This is not, "Watch your step because God is watching." This is taking comfort in the very ever presence of the Supreme Deity and All-powerful Creator. This is learning to speak to God not as if He is in the far off heavens, but as if He is walking beside us. And indeed He is. As **Hebrews 13:5** explains, God has promised to never leave or forsake us.
- C. When you are in a frightening situation, remember your Comforter is nearby. Share your fears with him the way you might a close friend sitting across the kitchen table. When you are facing temptation, tell Him what is in your mind. Don't try to hide it from Him, He already knows. When you are making a decision, lay out your case before God as you would a counselor on an opposite couch. In your eye of faith, see the presence of God and talk with Him as if you can really see Him right there. What are you daydreaming about? Tell God.

What are you meditating on? Tell God. What just caught your attention? Tell God. What are you excited about? Tell God. What just cheered you up? Tell God. See Him as your constant companion through thick and thin and because He is at your right hand, you will be unshakable.

- D. Isn't that at least in part the message of **Philippians 4:5-7**? The Lord is at hand. Cast your cares on Him. Then will peace which passes our understanding guard our hearts and minds. Then will we be unshakable.

Conclusion:

I don't know exactly what storm David was facing when he recorded **Psalms 16**. But he knew the only refuge was God. He refused to pursue other gods because he was aware that Jehovah God is more than enough. Because of that, he allowed his heart and mind to be so filled with God's message that he would not be shaken. Oh, that didn't mean he wouldn't face troubles, traumas, trials, and tragedies. His life was full of those. But it meant he walked on sure footing, holding on to God's hand through all the peaks and valleys of life, straight into the arms of God for all eternity. Don't be shakable. Let God counsel you. Be steeped in His counsel. And practice His very presence.