

Sermon followed by Service - April 27, 2025 - Psalm 16

“I’m not afraid of nuthin’!” Big words, aren’t they? “I’m not afraid of nuthin.” Easy to say when life is easy, when there’s nothing around to be afraid of, isn’t it? It can be easy to say, “I’m not afraid of snakes” when there are no snakes around; but put a fox snake on the trail in front of me, and I’m seeing rattlesnake, a rattlesnake that I don’t want to see anywhere near me.

In our psalm today, Jesus says, “I’m not afraid of nuthin,” except he didn’t say it like that. He said: “**nothing can shake me.**” Now Jesus didn’t say “I’m not afraid of nuthin; nothing can shake me’ when there weren’t any snakes around. Jesus said it when he was surrounded by the snakes. The Great Snake Serpent Satan was striking out at Jesus. And Satan wasn’t alone. The Great Serpent had Judas as his snake, snakes in the church and snakes in the government - all striking out at Jesus. No doubt about it; Jesus was surrounded by snakes. And yet he could say, “**nothing can shake me!**”

How could Jesus be so confident? Jesus wasn’t just saying: “I’m not afraid ...” But Jesus was saying “**with you, God, at my side, I’m not afraid.**” Jesus didn’t think of himself as alone; he saw God at his side, the Mighty One, all-powerful to save. With the Mighty One at his side Jesus knew he didn’t need to be afraid of anything. And how did Jesus know God was on his side? Because Jesus knew he did right by God (v2) and he did right by God’s people (v3). So he knew God would do right by him and keep him safe.

When I first saw that I thought: “That doesn’t do me any good.” I don’t do right by God like Jesus did. Jesus lived with God as the Lord of his life; me? I’m still fighting. Jesus gave his life for God’s people; me? I can still get mighty selfish. And what about you? Am I the only one here who doesn’t always listen right and do right by God? Am I the only one here who holds back on the love? I didn’t think so. What should that mean for us? Instead of God holding us safe in his love, we deserve to have God hold us damned in his anger.

So why are we looking at this psalm? Not just to see what Jesus prayed, but to see what we get to pray. Now we don’t get to pray like Jesus, “God, keep me safe; I’ve done right by you.” But we can pray with Jesus, in Jesus’ name -- “God, keep me safe, Jesus has made me right with you.” Look at the cross - by his death on the cross, Jesus has paid for your sin and guilt; with Jesus you’re forgiven! Look at the Jesus Window. Think of how Jesus lived. Jesus lived right by God, he lived right by God’s people. Now look at the baptismal font. In your baptism God put Jesus’ right life on you; he’s covered you with Jesus.

What does that mean for us? When you pray, “God, keep me safe,” you can pray with confidence. Confident because with Jesus you’re forgiven by God; confident because with Jesus you’re right by God; confident because with Jesus you’re loved by God - God loves you as his own dear child. So, you get to pray “God, keep me safe” with the same confidence Jesus had, that God will keep you safe.

“God will keep me safe.” Jesus put it this way: **“LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.”** Jesus looked at what the LORD had done for him; he looked at what the LORD had in store for him; and Jesus thought, “This is good.” He saw God as generous; he saw his future with God as safe and secure. That’s the confidence Jesus had in life.

Now here is the amazing part of Jesus’ confidence. Think of when Jesus might have prayed, **“Keep me safe, O God.”** When would Jesus have needed to pray for safety? When would Jesus have been thinking about death and the grave? How about Holy Thursday, praying in the Garden of Gethsemene? Or Good Friday on trial before the chief priests or Pilate? Or when Jesus was being beaten by the soldiers or hanging up there on the cross? Jesus was praying because he was facing danger and death. And yet look at the confidence he had in his God! The “boundary lines” God had set around Jesus let Jesus be beaten and whipped and murdered. The “portion” God had assigned to Jesus included injustice and pain and misery. The “cup” God had poured for Jesus would taste terribly bitter. And yet look at the confidence Jesus had in his God! **“The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.”**

When Jesus was in such great hurt, how could he be so confident? Jesus knew that his place with God was secure; God had set boundary lines. And even though God’s boundary lines had room for so much evil, God had set boundary lines for how far the devil could go, boundary lines for how much God would

bless him. Boundary lines that would keep Jesus safe. God would see to that. Jesus knew that. And Jesus knew what came after the finish line. **“Who for the joy set before him [the joy of having you with him in heaven] endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God.”**

Listen to Jesus’ confidence here in the psalm: **“I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 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.”** Jesus was confident that even in death he would be safe. His God wouldn’t abandon him to the grave; he wouldn’t even let Jesus’ body decay. Instead, the LORD had shown Jesus the path of life. Jesus could look forward to Easter; God would raise him back to life, eternal life in heaven.

So it didn’t matter how many enemies attacked Jesus; with Easter, Jesus knew he was safe. It didn’t matter how hopeless things looked ... before Pilate, nailed to the cross, dead in the grave; with Easter, Jesus knew he was safe. It didn’t matter how far away God seemed to be; with Easter, Jesus knew he was safe. So it didn’t matter how much he hurt ... with Easter, Jesus knew that the boundary lines were in the right place. With Easter, Jesus knew that his inheritance, his future with God was safe and secure.

We get to have that same confidence - not that our bodies won't decay in death, but that in life and death we are safe. We are safe, because with Jesus, we have Easter. We have his Easter promise: "**because I live, you also will live.**" That life, that Easter life is the portion, the cup, the boundary line, the inheritance that God has assigned to you. That Easter life is your lot in life that God is keeping safe and secure for you.

Living in this world of sin and death, there might be times we think that the portion God has assigned us is nothing but trouble ... that the cup God has poured us is nothing but bitter ... that our lot in life is frustration. But we have Easter. With Easter - the portion God has assigned you is love and forgiveness, the cup God is filling for you is blessing. With Easter - it doesn't matter who's against you, God has set his boundary lines around you, the devil can't take you, death can't hurt you, with Jesus you are safe. With Easter, you have a place with God in heaven!

That's why we can say: "Nothing can shake me; I'm not afraid of nuthin!" - with Jesus. Amen.

April 26 & 27, 2025

DIVINE SERVICE II

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we are surrounded by forces that stress us, push us, crush us, frighten us, worry us

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we hear Jesus in a stressed and frightened room, and what does he say? "Peace!"

OPENING HYMN

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia"

Hymn 442

Christ the Lord is ris'n today; Alleluia!
Christians, hasten on your way; Alleluia!
see the place where he was laid; Alleluia!
praise him for the ransom paid. Alleluia!

For the sheep the Lamb has bled, Alleluia!
sinless in the sinners' stead. Alleluia!
"Christ is ris'n," today we cry; Alleluia!
now he lives, no more to die. Alleluia!

Christ, the victim undefiled, Alleluia!
God and sinners reconciled, Alleluia!
while, in strange and awe-full strife, Alleluia!
met together death and life. Alleluia!

Christ, who once for sinners bled, Alleluia!
now the firstborn from the dead, Alleluia!
throned in endless might and pow'r, Alleluia!
lives and reigns forevermore. Alleluia!

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**
For faithless worrying and selfish pride,
For sins of habit and sins of choice,
For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,
I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.
O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

HYMN

"This Is the Feast"
Hymn 938

Refrain

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God. *Refrain*

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength,
and honor, blessing, and glory are his. *Refrain*

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:

Blessing, honor, glory, and might
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen. *Refrain*

For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia!
This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O risen Lord, you came to your disciples and took away their fears with your word of peace. Come to us also by Word and sacrament, and banish our fears with the comforting assurance of your abiding presence; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Colossians 3:1–4

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 16B

Refrain



This is the day the LORD has made.



Let us re-joice and be glad in it.

Tone



LORD, you alone are my portion / and my cup;
 you make my / lot secure.
 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant / places;
 surely I have a delightful in- / heritance.
 I keep my eyes always / on the LORD.
 With him at my right hand, I will not be / shaken. *Refrain*

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue re- / jices;
 my body also will / rest secure,
 because you will not abandon me to the realm / of the dead,
 nor will you let your Holy One / see decay.
 You make known to me the / path of life;
 you will fill me with joy in your presence,
 with eternal pleasures at / your right hand.
Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
 as it was in the be- / ginning,
 is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

John 20:29

Alleluia. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.
Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 20:19–31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

THE SECOND ARTICLE (REDEMPTION)

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord. He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

HYMN OF THE DAY

"These Things Did Thomas Count as Real"

Hymn 468

These things did Thomas count as real:
the warmth of blood, the chill of steel,
the grain of wood, the heft of stone, the last frail twitch of flesh and bone.

The vision of his skeptic mind was keen enough to make him blind
to any unexpected act too large for his small world of fact.

His reasoned certainties denied that one could live when one had died,
until his fingers read like braille the markings of the spear and nail.

May we, O God, by grace believe and thus the risen Christ receive,
whose raw imprinted palms reached out
and beckoned Thomas from his doubt.

Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.

I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."

I say of the holy people who are in the land,
"They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."

Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.

I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods
or take up their names on my lips.

LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.

I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.

I keep my eyes always on the LORD.

With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,

because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

HYMN

“Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart”

Hymn 817

Lord, thee I love with all my heart; I pray thee, ne'er from me depart,
with tender mercy cheer me. Earth has no pleasure I would share;
yea, heav'n itself were void and bare if thou, Lord, wert not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break, my trust in thee can nothing shake.
Thou art the portion I have sought; thy precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord,
forsake me not! I trust thy Word.

Yea, Lord, 'twas thy rich bounty gave my body, soul, and all I have
in this poor life of labor. Lord, grant that I in ev'ry place
may glorify thy lavish grace and help and serve my neighbor.
Let no false doctrine me beguile; let Satan not my soul defile.
Give strength and patience unto me to bear my cross and follow thee.
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord,
in death thy comfort still afford.

Lord, let at last thine angels come, to Abr'ham's bosom bear me home
that I may die unfearing; and in its narrow chamber keep
my body safe in peaceful sleep until thy reappearing.
And then from death awaken me that these mine eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, thy glorious face, my Savior and my fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer attend, my prayer attend,
and I will praise thee without end.

OFFERING

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EASTER PRAYER

M: O Lord God, our strength, our song, and our salvation, you fulfilled your promises by the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead.

C: Thanks be to God! You give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

M: In your compassion you sent Christ, the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life to rescue the lost.

C: Drive out all doubt and gloom that we may delight in your glorious triumph.

M: Lift our eyes heavenward to see him who lives to make intercession for the saints, and grant us confidence in the greatness of his power. Keep before us the vision of your redeemed people standing before your throne and singing the song of victory.

C: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive wisdom and power and honor and glory and praise.

M: Make us instruments of your peace as we bring the good news of hope and new life to those around us. Guide us in the use of all that you have entrusted to us: our time, our talents, and our treasures.

C: Risen Lord, live in us that we may live for you.

M: Merciful Lord Jesus, grant healing to the sick, and strengthen the faith of the suffering and the dying. Assure them of your abiding presence, and comfort them with the hope of eternal life.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: Gracious Father, you have restored to us the joy of your salvation. With happy hearts, we come before you and say:

C: Alleluia! Thanks be to God! Amen.

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"

Hymn 465

"Christ the Lord is ris'n today!" saints on earth and angels say.

Raise your joys and triumphs high; sing, O heav'ns, and earth, reply.

Love's redeeming work is done, fought the fight, the battle won.

Lo, our sun's eclipse is o'er; lo, he sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal; Christ has burst the gates of hell.

Death in vain forbids his rise; Christ has opened paradise.

Lives again our glorious King! Where, O death, is now your sting?

Once he died our souls to save; where your victory, O grave?

Soar we now where Christ has led, foll'wing our exalted head.

Made like him, like him we rise; ours the cross, the grave, the skies!

Hail the Lord of earth and heav'n! Praise to you by both be giv'n!

God has now fulfilled his Word; praise the resurrected Lord!

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Being The Hands of God in The Deaf Community

This summer, Rev. Dan Frey, pastor at Gethsemane, Lee's Summit, Mo., and six of his members—four who are deaf and two who are interpreters—are planning to make the trek to Wisconsin for a conference on how to serve the deaf and hard of hearing members of God's church. The Hands of God Conference will be held July 18–20 at St. Paul, Lake Mills, Wis.

Frey, a member of the WELS Mission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing committee planning the conference, is excited to gather with others to dig deeper into this important topic.

"This is a passion of mine—I'm in it now," he says, referring to his own congregation's ministry to the Deaf population. "I'm excited to help open the eyes of other people who might be interested."

The conference will feature topics like technology devices in church for the deaf/hard of hearing, how to welcome deaf/hard of hearing guests at church, how the deaf share their faith (panel discussion), and setting up a deaf Bible study. One workshop, which will be led by deaf members, will focus on the Deaf culture, how it is different, and how congregations can bridge the gaps. "This [conference] is for the deaf [members] to get together but also for anyone interested in working with the deaf," says Frey.

While the conference focuses on how the deaf can serve and how congregations can support them, the keynote presentation "Hands of God" is a message that can resonate with called workers and lay members in any circumstance. "We want to provide a setting where all can learn how God used his hands to save us and how we now get to be the hands of God in various ways to serve one another in love," notes the conference website.

Learn more and register for the conference at wels.net/mdhh-conference-2025.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AT ST. JOHN

June 24, 2025 – June 29, 2025

- Tue 6/24 - 8:30am to 11:30am
- Wed 6/25 - 8:30am to 11:30am
- Thu 6/26 - 8:30am to 11:30am
- Fri 6/27 - 8:30am to 11:30am
- Sun 6/29 - 9:00am to 10:00am



Guide kids on the ultimate Alaskan adventure where northern lights glow over majestic mountains, racing rivers, and glistening glaciers. As kids trek the tundra, they'll explore how easy it is to lose sight of what's true in our wild world today. Pointing them toward Jesus, True North VBS shows them that he is a faithful friend we can always trust. He's our True North!

Scan the QR for more details and to register. Please reach out to Brooke Gast with any questions.

TRAINING CAMP 2025 – JULY 13-18

Are you looking for a youth summer camp for 2025? Consider Training Camp - a week-long Lutheran youth camp in Ingleside, IL. Youth entering 3rd – 9th grade in the fall may attend. Registration and FAQs may be found at <https://smniles.org/overnight-bible-camp>.