



Psalm 48:14

New International Version of the Holy Bible

The Lord, Our Guide

**“For this God is our God for ever and ever;
he will be our guide even to the end.”**

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The first article of the Apostles' Creed reads: *“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.”* In studying this article we have learned, first, that God made us most wonderfully, giving us both body and soul. The second thing that we learned was that God still provides for us by giving us clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all our goods.

Today we learn that our gracious Lord does even more. Our Catechism says: *“He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil.”* This is precisely what God's holy writer says in the 48th Psalm. After declaring God's holiness, might, and mercy – he ends by saying: **“For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.”** **Psalm 48:14**

Are you aware of the fact that the Lord has a plan not only for the whole world, but also for your Life? Even before we were born, the Lord knew exactly what he wanted us to do. Not only that, he now makes every effort to guide us according to his eternal plan. So our topic this morning is:

THE LORD, OUR GUIDE

I - The Psalmist Could Speak from Experience

Looking back over the experiences of God's people, the psalmist could see how graciously the Lord had led them all along the way. For example: Joseph became the ruler of Egypt because this was in God's plan for Joseph. Joseph was the eleventh son of a sheep rancher in a small country by the name of Palestine. Egypt was beyond the desert and being ruler of Egypt never entered Joseph's mind; he thought he would be a shepherd like his brothers.

But the Lord has a way of leading his people according to his plan. Many of you know the marvelous story of Joseph's life. Jacob, his father, gave him a special coat and other favors. The brothers became jealous and sold him to a caravan of traders who were on the way to Egypt. Maybe this wasn't the most pleasant way for Joseph to get to Egypt, but it was God's way. In Egypt he became the servant of a captain of the army who trusted Joseph and made him ruler of his whole house. True, he landed in prison because he refused to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife. Yet in a short time he became a part of the prison staff and interpreted the dreams of the baker and butler to the king. Later, when the king of Egypt had a dream, the butler remembered Joseph and mentioned him to the king. After Joseph had explained the dreams of the king, the Lord led the king to bypass all those who had been serving him and to name Joseph as the ruler over all the land. From shepherd boy in a despised little country to ruler of Egypt (*greatest nation at that time*), Joseph was chosen not by accident, but because God had a plan.

In a similar way, looking back, the psalmist could see God's guidance in the life of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and many others who had put their trust in the living God. That's why he exclaims: **"For this God is our**

**God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.”
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II – This Same Lord Wants To Be Our Guide

The blueprints for our lives are entirely in the hands of the Lord. His plan includes defending our bodies and souls against all danger and guarding and protecting us from all evil from conception to eternity. **“For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.” Psalm 48:14**

The primary goal of Jesus’ plan is to bring us to an eternal life in heaven. Long before we were born, God was already working. He knew that we would be born in spiritual poverty and in a sin-defiled country called earth. He knew, too, that if we were left to ourselves, we could never rise beyond the borders of this miserable life nor would we even care to do so. That’s why he sent his Son Jesus Christ into this world. That was nearly two thousand Christmases ago. But even then the Lord was thinking of you and me. Jesus wasn’t only born - he also lived a perfect life, was crucified and cursed for our sins, rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, and finally prepared mansions in heaven for us. He did all of this because it was a part of God’s plan to save us from this land of sin and misery and to make us kings and priests in his kingdom.

Even more, the Lord didn’t just prepare heaven for us. He made sure that we could find the way that leads there. Sometimes in their travels people get lost. If they are looking for the way to a certain house, no one can help them find the way. But we can easily find the way to heaven, because the Lord himself tells us the way in his inspired Word in the Bible. Jesus says: **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes**

to the Father except through me.” John 14:6 St. Paul declared by the inspiration of God: **“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.” Acts 16:31** When some of the people in Ephesus didn’t quite get God’s directions straight and wondered whether he really meant what he said, namely, that we are saved simply by trusting Christ as our Savior, the apostle wrote: **“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9** The directions to heaven are still available to anyone who wants to know the way. God put the directions in the Bible as part of his plan to lead us to heaven.

Even more, it was through the Lord’s guidance that there is a confessional church here, that pastors were sent to you and that your parents brought you to Holy Baptism and later to confirmation instruction. It’s by the guidance of God that you are in church this morning or reading this sermon. It’s all a part of his plan to lead you to heaven. This very minute he is trying to lead you onward and upward when he says: **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28** He also says: **“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” Revelation 3:20** He has brought you this far. He wants to take you all the way, I pray you will say with the psalmist: **“For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.” Psalm 48:14**

Through his plan, the Lord wants to lead us into a happy life while here on earth. A Christian was speaking to a non-Christian, and since he loved him, he again invited him to come to church with him saying: *“The Lord*

gave his Son for you as well as for me.” “Leave me alone,” exclaimed the non-Christian. *“I want money to pay for my car, milk and shoes for my baby, and a wife with whom I don’t have to quarrel all the time. You’re always talking about this pie in the sky. I have to concern myself with the here and now.”* What this non-Christian didn’t realize was that his help was in Christ, that Jesus Christ is concerned about our happiness here as well as in eternity.

Follow God’s plan. Have you ever tried to bake bread or a new kind of cake without reading the directions? That’s what too many are trying to do with their lives. They are too proud or too lazy to read God’s directions on building a happy worthwhile life. They try to build a happy life by doing what others are doing who have also ignored God’s directions. That’s why there are so many unhappy people in the world. The Lord’s directions are quite simple.

Let Jesus Christ be your Savior. This is the first step. Unless you take this step first you will never find the happy life. This step sets the proper mood and attitude for all the rest. Jesus says: **“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5** A person can memorize all the commandments and read the Bible from cover to cover and will still will be found restless, dissatisfied, and unhappy. This person will be happy only by recognizing the sinfulness that belongs to the human condition. Then, by accepting Jesus Christ as his Savior, true happiness can be obtained.

I am assuming that all of you have taken this step! If you have doubts concerning this all important matter, I want to assure you that your loving Savior is inviting you again to himself right now. When the Bible says: **“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.” John 6:37** - it is speaking of you and to me.

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” Luke 19:10 “For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” 2 Corinthians 5:14

Two men went to the temple to pray. One said: *“I’m better than other people are. I can see hypocrites all around me right here in church.”* This man said: **“God, I thank you that I am not like all other men . . . ” Luke 18:11** The other man took an honest look at himself and pleaded: **“God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Luke 18:13** Which one are you like? Our loving Savior says: *“Don’t be afraid to admit your sinfulness. I have redeemed you and I want you to be mine.”* The Bible says of the two men: **“. . . everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 18:14** If you haven’t done it before, right now take the first step – let Jesus be what he wants to be your Savior.

Read and study God’s commandments. This is the second step. Not just the Big Ten, but all of the statements in which the Lord tells you how to live with God and others and most of all - yourself. The Lord lists a great number of activities which are not good for you: Don’t take God’s name in vain by using it carelessly or in cursing. Don’t despise God’s Word. Don’t mistreat your parents nor neglect them when they are old. Don’t mistreat your spouse. Don’t get a divorce unless your spouse is guilty of fornication or leaves you. Don’t hurt nor harm others by word or deed. Don’t hurt your body through drunkenness, drugs, abuse or neglect. Don’t cheat or steal no matter even if there is a profit to be made. Don’t become self-centered and greedy. Don’t act as though earthly possessions were more important than things spiritual and eternal.

God's directions are important and tell you what you should do if you want to build a happy life. For example, God says: Pray to me and worship me. Use my name to tell your children of the great things I have done. Obey your parents and all others who have been placed over you. Help those who are in need. Give for missions. Love your wife, love your husband. Love you children. Love your parents, Love all people. Forgive parents, brothers or sisters, and all others who have hurt you. Pay fair wages. Do an honest day's work. Speak well of God and of your church. Show a little joy and help lift the spirit of others. Trust God and keep your heart set on an eternal life in heaven. These are only a few of our Lord's directions which we must hear and read repeatedly so we won't forget them. Of course, we know we never will keep these directions perfectly, which reminds us that we are sinners and are constantly in need of God's forgiveness.

Ask God's forgiveness where you have ignored his rules either because of fear, pride, or carelessness, then try, and try again. Just as an understanding mother forgives her daughter who doesn't bake a perfect cake the first time, so the Lord forgives us where we fail and says: *"Of course you are forgiven. Let's try again. I will help you."* Building a happy life alone is impossible, but with God it is possible. With God's help we know that we will eventually succeed.

Pray for the Lord's guidance. There are questions in life which the Bible does not answer specifically. For example: In what city or town should I live? What should I choose for my profession? Should I take my parents to a rest home or try to keep them at home? You can list many other such questions which you yourself have had to face or will have to face in the future.

The point is, whenever you as a Christian humbly pray the Lord for help you make the right decision - he will help you. During my ministry I have

had a number of calls to various places. Some I returned and others I accepted. I believe that in every instance the Lord led me to make the decision which was good. I am convinced that I am your pastor today because this is where the Lord wants me to be right now.

In my ministry I have had members come to me and ask me what they should do - for example getting an offer for a better job in another city. A new job would mean that the children would have to change schools, find new friends, and so on. *"Pastor, what should I do?"* In just about every case my answer would finally be: *"Pray that God will guide you in your decision, he'll make it clear to you, what is right and good for you and your family."*

Young people don't know which college to attend, whether to go to college or a vocational school, or just find a job after high school. They question just whom to marry or with whom to go out on a date. Pray in humble obedience and the Lord will guide you to do what's good. He has promised to help with your decisions.

One of the fascinating stories of God's guidance is connected with Abraham and his son, Isaac, when Isaac reached a marriageable age. Since there were no God fearing girls in that community, how could he find a good wife? Abraham called his oldest servant and asked him to return to his old country in order to find a wife for his son. Even though the servant didn't know anyone in that strange land, being an obedient servant, he went as instructed. He prayed all the way. When he came into Mesopotamia near the city of Nahor, just as his camels knelt to drink, he said a special prayer. He asked that the Lord would lead him to the right girl. God helped him to find that girl. He hadn't even finished his prayer when a young girl by the name of Rebekah came to the well to draw water. After some days in her father's home, Rebekah agreed to return with the servant to become the wife of Isaac. What had Isaac been doing? He had

been praying, confident that the Lord would supply his need. The story concludes: **“Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her . . .”** **Genesis 24:67**

The Lord is willing to give us the same guidance when we pray for the solution to a problem, for Jesus himself says: **“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”** **Matthew 7:7-8**

Is God’s plan working in your life? Or do you feel dissatisfied with life, afraid, or lonely? We all feel that way from time to time, but really we don’t have to be that way. Today can be a new day if you will say in sincerity with David: **“For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.”** **Psalm 48:14**

We need to add that there is a difference between assembling a doll house and putting your life together. You might reach the point where you can say proudly: *“There, it is finished and a perfect doll house!”* Building your life according to God’s plan is never finished. Furthermore, your life here on earth will not always be perfectly happy. The tragedy lies in the fact that there never is a day in which we follow God’s directions perfectly. Life is like a picture puzzle with one piece missing. We will, therefore, never put life together perfectly until the Lord provided that missing piece, and when he does we will be in heaven perfect and happy - just as he and all the holy angels are. God has a plan for our lives and unless we grow weary and give up or are too proud to ask for his help, he will fulfill his plan for our lives. That’s our confidence. That’s why we can say with the psalmist: **“For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.”** **Psalm 48:14**