

# Psalm 16:5-6

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ps/ps-16/psalm-165-6/>

*Our situations and circumstances may seem difficult or confusing, but God is always at work in our life and we can take comfort and be at peace knowing it is God that is directing our lives.*

David is continuing to declare his allegiance to the one true God. He next offers a contrast to what he has said in verse 4, “I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, Nor will I take their names upon my lips.” As we noted, sacrifices were made to other gods and the worshippers of these gods would bring a blood sacrifice in a “cup” and as they put their lips on the cup they would call out the name or names of these gods. Some of the gods David is referring to were Canaanite gods with their blood sacrifice rituals. Now David is declaring that God and God alone is worthy to be praised and worshipped:

*The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup.  
You support my lot.  
The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;  
Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.*

The words *cup*, *portion*, *inheritance*, *lot*, and *lines* would have been familiar to the Israelite readers. After the conquest of the land of Canaan by the Israelites, the land was divided according to the twelve tribes of Israel. In Numbers 26:55 we read, “But the land shall be divided by *lot*. They shall receive their inheritance according to the names of the tribes of their fathers.” A *lot* was like rolling dice. The land of Israel was divided by a throw of chance, with the people believing that God directed the outcome.

David is saying here that he trusts God to control circumstances over which David has no control. In doing this, David is sowing into reality. We are told to trust that God only allows into our lives trials that we can endure (1 Corinthians 10:13). As we are told in Ecclesiastes, we can either look at the “hebel” or vapor of life and trust God, or live the illusion that we are in control. This illusion leads to madness and folly.

David takes this familiar context and brings it to his own understanding of the real meaning of worship. *The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup*. Rather than only looking at the land that they were granted as an inheritance, David says to the Lord that He is *the portion of my inheritance*. David is seeing beyond an earthly inheritance to the eternal God as his inheritance.

The Apostle Paul asserts something similar, stating that God is the inheritance of all believers (Romans 8:17a). This means that all who have believed are in God’s family and have God as an inheritance. Paul makes this as an unconditional statement, that believers are “heirs of God.”

David’s use of the word *cup* goes beyond just a physical cup; God Himself is his *cup*. A *cup* here represents nourishment that leads to life. Likely David has in mind a picture that God is his source of life.

David mentions a “cup” in Psalm 23:5, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.” In Psalm 23, David’s cup appears to represent an abundance of life. Here in Psalm 16 David says the Lord, the Shepherd, the almighty God is his cup; God is the source of abundance.

Jesus uses a picture of “cup” in the New Testament that is not an abundance of life, but rather an abundance of suffering.. When Jesus is near the cross and is praying in the garden of Gethsemane just before His arrest, He says to the Father, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39). Then, in verse 42 of the same chapter, Jesus says, “My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

Jesus drank the cup of suffering in order to overcome death, and bring life to all of humanity (Romans 5:18). This is not peculiar to just Jesus, as He says to His disciples, “If any wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.” It is through drinking the cup of suffering, as Jesus suffered, through which we share the inheritance of reigning with Christ (Revelation 3:21).

“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God [unconditional] and fellow heirs with Christ, if [conditional] indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.”  
(Romans 8:16-17)

As we read about the Israelites taking the land of Canaan, it is God who draws the *lines* or the boundary lines, according to the lineage of their particular tribe. David, as king, is perhaps thinking of something beyond those boundary lines, as he is the ruler of an earthly kingdom. It would be tempting, as an earthly king, to try and draw the *lines* according to his own accomplishments, or his triumphs against other nations.

However, here David is acknowledging that God, the true and living God, is providing the refuge and protection as well as directing the parameters of his earthly kingdom or his *lot*. As he recognizes that “I have no good besides You,” he declares that the *lines have fallen to me in pleasant places*. David could have easily seen that any triumph over another nation would result in *pleasant places* but taking this Psalm as a whole, it seems that the *lines* would become *pleasant places* because they are being drawn by God.

Even if he cannot see the earthly form of *pleasant places*, he knows by faith in the one true God that they will be *pleasant places* according to the purpose and plan of God. David, however, sees beyond just the drawing of the boundary *lines* to his own relationship to God, and so he proclaims, *Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me*. The word *heritage* can pick up the thread of the word *inheritance* in verse 5. Whatever God draws for me will also be the place of my “refuge” and will be pleasant and *beautiful* because God supports *my lot*.

We may not be earthly kings, but we can think of David’s boundary *lines* as being equivalent to our own life circumstances. Most of the time, those *lines* are shaped by the times, world, and culture we live in. They can be *lines* of happiness, wealth, influence, power, health, and general well-being. David here is looking at his *lines*, his circumstances, and expressing gratitude. He

calls them *pleasant places*. David is choosing a perspective that sees his circumstances with thanksgiving. He receives his *lot* with contentment.

This corresponds with biblical teaching that exhorts us to choose to be grateful in any circumstance.

“In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”  
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

It seems that David is providing an example of how to choose a perspective of gratitude for whatever *lot* God gives us. Whatever circumstance God provides, we still have stewardship of our choices. We can either be grateful, and walk in faithfulness toward God. Or we can be disgruntled and look to our circumstances to provide our happiness. When we cede our happiness to circumstances, and attempt to carve out our own *lines*, we are chasing the wind (Ecclesiastes 2:11).

We may look at these situations/circumstances and think that God’s boundary *lines* and His *portion* or *lot* refers only to “spiritual” callings or matters. However, the Bible tells us that as “new creations in Christ Jesus” (2 Corinthians 5:17), we “are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). This means that God created each one of us for specific *good works*, specifically crafted by Him for us to do. We have a special job to do, and that opportunity takes place within whatever circumstances God places us.

This is God supporting our *lot*. He is drawing the *lines* in *pleasant places*. These may be lines in our marriage, in our job or career, where we live, or many other things that define our world. God is just as interested in you as he was in King David. We need to allow God to define what is *pleasant* and *beautiful*, according to His kingdom and not ours. When we accept our circumstances as our particular opportunity set in order to accomplish the job God designed for us, then our cup spills over with purpose, and we can also function with gratitude and pleasure in our work. This puts us in David’s mindset, that we “have no good besides” God (v. 2). When we realize that God wants the best for us, we can respond by faithfully obeying His leading in our lives. All good things are ultimately from God, who knows our ultimate good, and by following Him, He who is the Ultimate Good, our lives take on a new dimension of joy and fulfillment (James 1:17).

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>5</sup>The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup;  
You support my lot.**

**<sup>6</sup>The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;  
Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.**