

Selections from the Series, **Gently Take My Hand and Lead Me**

Gently Take My Hand and Lead Me

Gently take my hand and lead me down the path of life,
Build for me a home with Jesus as its chief delight.
Let godly conversation fill the rooms from day to night.
Gently take my hand and lead me,
This you've done for me, your wife.

Gently take my soul and lead me down the path of life,
Always point me to the Savior, be my godly guide,
Teach me to trust more fully, be my couns'lor, true and wise,
Gently take my soul and lead me,
This you've done for me, your wife.

Gently take my heart and lead me down the path of life.
Choose to love, protect and nurture, persevere for life.
Grow in patience and compassion, full forgiveness when we fight.
Gently take my heart and lead me,
This you've done for me, your wife.

Gently take my frame and lead me down the path of life.
Cheer and serve me in my sickness, pray for all my frights.
Hold me close through all my sorrows, let my needs help shape your life.
Gently take my frame and lead me,
This you've done for me, your wife.

Like the Savior, you have led me, by His Word and by His grace,
Shown me Jesus, led me to Him, through your hands, your heart, your faith.
Gently take my hand and lead me,
I will follow, I'm your wife.

On June 5, 2022, Mark and I reached forty years of marriage and ministry together. "Four" with a "zero" behind it seemed worthy of a big celebration with friends. My preparation for the party took me a-visitng many memories as I picked out pictures to display. And amongst those I found treasures buried by the years: cards that my husband wrote to me at different points in our lives. As I re-read these cards, I was struck by how faithful my husband has been to lead me all these years, and that the words and music to the above song formed. It wasn't a song about perfection in marriage or ministry. But it was is a song of faithfulness—of Mark's faithfulness to me, and of God's faithfulness to us both, through dark and difficult days as well as those bright with happiness and promise.

In light of this, these talks flow out my life with my loving, gentle leader, and are written for you, fellow ministry wives. I hope that you will glean wisdom from lessons we have learned, both the "easy" and "hard" way. And most of all, I hope you will be encouraged that the same God who has been so faithful to us is the same God who can be counted on to be faithful to you.

Psalm 16

A miktam of David.

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

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

3 As for the saints who are in the land,
they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.

4 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.

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

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

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

8 I keep my eyes always on the LORD.
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,
10 because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

11 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.

Introduction

The inscription for Psalm 16 says it is a “miktam” of David. No one really knows what that means. Its spelling is very similar to the Babylonian word for the lid to a pot. Others say it refers to an unknown technical poetic or musical term having to do with how the words of the psalm were structured or the tune was played. Over the past 30+ years as a pastor’s wife I found Psalm 16 to be both of these in a way. It has been like a “lid” of God’s truth that has nicely fit over our very full pot of pastoral stew.

Lid to Our Pastoral Stewpot

Now if you ever made a stew, you know that it starts out with tough meat and crunchy vegetables, a little water, and a lot of seasoning. The pot is put on the stove to simmer and gradually the water starts to boil. Without the lid, the water would boil away and the ingredients would burn and ruin. But with it, the contents tenderize and blend into something delicious.

There may not be tough meat or crunchy vegetables in pastoral stew, but there certainly are hard hearts and difficult circumstances in pastor, pastor’s wife and God’s people. Yet God uses the heat of our lives together to tenderize our hearts and to blend us into his church; and through that process, not only do we taste and see that the Lord is good, but he creates in us a picture of Him that, by His grace, others can taste and see that He is good too.

God has frequently used the truths of Psalm 16 as the lid on our pastoral stew pot. They have provided a surprisingly full description of who God is, how we should live, and His promises to help us live that way. They have worked with the heat of life to soften my heart, to infuse thoughts of who I am and how I should live with the seasonings of God and His Word, and have kept us blending together as husband and wife and as pastor and church family rather than burning up.

Structure to These Talks

Psalm 16 hasn’t only been a lid. It has also become the structure I’ve used over the years to encourage other pastors’ wives and their lives in their own pastoral stew pot. It will be the structure I use for these talks, too. And like David’s miktam, I hope this book will help you to taste and see the Lord is good and is up to good in all he is calling you and your husband to. He is faithful and He will do it!