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# As long as I live

## Psalm 146

### Introduction

Today we conclude our four-part series titled “A Call to Praise”. We will begin by way of review. (recap over the first three messages; approx. 7min.)

### Recap

Some of you may recall back on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June we explored the topic; What praise is.

- ❖ Message #1: What praise is (We unpacked a biblical definition of praise)
  - ❖ Psalm 113
  - ❖ The LORD is matchless in majesty and mercy. Therefore, let us praise Him from now on and wherever we happen to be.

The following Sunday we looked at the topic; What happens when praise disappears.

- ❖ Message #2: What happens when praise disappears
  - ❖ Psalm 13
  - ❖ When life is hard and God seems far away the problem is not found in the distressing situation but rather in the distorted sight of Him.

Psalm 13 helped us to see a critical component to restoring our praise. It gave us hope to realize that when praise disappears from our lives the problem is neither in the unpromising circumstances nor in the Lord. The problem is located in our hearts. We have lost sight of who God really is. Change needs to occur. And this change is in how we view God. And how that change comes about is by God intervening to give us clearer sight of who He really is. This gift of spiritual sight comes from God as a result of earnest and intentional. When life is hard and God seems far away let us pray earnestly for renewed sight of Him and wait in hope upon Him who restores His praise to His people.

- ❖ Message #3: How the LORD restores praise to Himself
  - ❖ Psalm 30

When our praise over the Lord decreases the Lord's discipline over us increases so that our praise for Him reappears.

When He restores us we find that our affections are reoriented, our prayer life is reordered, our need of grace is recognized, our praise for God is renewed and we begin to recruit others into this wonderful call to praise the Lord.

Today, our Psalm presents a renewed determination to praise the LORD as long as one has life. What we find in Ps.146 is necessary for our longevity in praising the LORD. We will only be encouraged a few weeks to praise the LORD and then resume status quo should we not hear and heed Ps.146.

## **Declaring the reasonableness of the praise of God**

### **Vv.1-6**

Psalm 146 is organized in two basic sections. The Psalm begins and ends with the command to praise God. Within these two commands we find these two sections 1) declaring the reasonableness of the praise of God and 2) describing the characteristics of the God of praise. The objective of this Psalm seems to be aimed at providing us what we need in order to praise the Lord as long as we live.

Let's start our time in Psalm 146 by reading the first 6 verses. (read and pray)

### **A determination to praise God**

#### **Vv.1-2**

The first movement of this Psalm is made of verses 1 & 2. We see that the psalmist determines to praise the LORD as long as he lives. Our Psalm starts off with the Hebrew shout "Hallelujah!" You may recall our time together a couple of weeks ago in Ps.113. We were instructed by that Psalm that the word "Hallelujah" is an imperative to praise God. It is a command to render to Him excited delight over His exquisite beauty. And this expression of joy was to be done in public. This was how Ps.113 began and ended and this is how our Psalm for today begins and ends. We are commanded to excitedly boast over our majestic and merciful Lord verbally and publicly.

But now notice what happens to the one writing the Psalm. As he looks out over the congregation and says "Hallelujah" = You all, praise the Lord, the command bounces off the wall back to him.

Rather than merely command others to praise the LORD, the psalmist says that he is to be excited himself over the wonder of God.

Therefore, he in the latter part of v.1, commands his soul to praise to the LORD. As we read on we sense the determination to carry out this command. "I will praise the Lord...I will sing praises to my God". Our psalmist is modeling for us what we need in order to carry out praising the Lord as long as we live.

Taking responsibility of our own souls, we are to exhort ourselves to find and express delight in God. We are to tell ourselves constantly to praise the Lord. And we are to do this from this day forth and forever more. Permanence in praise is the point of vv. 1-2. We, like the psalmist, must renew our determination to a lifestyle of praise to our glorious God seen in our gracious Savior Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **A delight to praise God**

**Vv.3-6**

In saying that praise should be a matter of determination and commitment, I do not wish to imply that praise is a difficult or an unpleasant task. Though we have times in which we must take our soul by the back of its neck and march it in front of the splendor of Christ and say, "Praise the Lord! Look at what you are missing! Notice your Creator and Redeemer's beauty and power and love and compassion. Stop sulking. Start hoping. Love the Lord. Long for Him. Soul, praise the Lord!"

Though we have seasons or moments like this, I do not want to leave you with the notion that praise is a burden. Look with me at vv.3-6. These verses demonstrate that the psalmist delights in praising the LORD because the LORD is his only help and hope.

### **First denies that help and hope are found in the creature**

**vv.3-4**

In this section the psalmist first denies that help and hope are to be found in the creature who is mortal and frail. We come clearly to the teaching that ultimate solutions to all our problems are not found in any other than God alone! Man is limited and lacking in permanence. When the creature dies any help he might have given passes on with him. The psalmist makes his case that it is a delight to praise the Creator not the creature by showing how frail man truly is.

Notice how the psalmist describes man. He is not talking about some scoundrel in whom we are not to put our trust. The ones being contrasted with God are not evil or deficient men. They are termed

“princes”. Even the best of people who may give help and comfort are frail and mortal. God is supreme and eternal.

This is why he finds praise to be a delight. When the heart stops trusting in mere man and his plans and starts trusting in God and his plans, the soul finds the LORD praiseworthy. The heart finds God to be the object of joy! What a delight it is to praise the LORD.

### **Affirms that all help and hope are found in the Creator**

**vv.5-6**

In strong contrast to these words of verses 3-4, we find verses 5-6. Here the psalmist affirms that all help and hope are found in the Creator who is faithful forever. Why ever should we trust ultimately in the creature when we might trust the Creator? The one who does trust in the Creator who is faithful forever is described in verse 5 as “blessed”. The term “blessed” describes the condition of the heart which trusts in the LORD. O, how happy the soul is which relies upon the eternal, faithful, Creator of vv.5-6. This is why a determination to praise the LORD of vv.1-2 gives way to a delight to praise the LORD of vv.5-6.

“What is this Creator God like?” someone may ask. In vv.5-6, the psalmist presents a portrait of the One in whom we are to trust and the One on whom we are to pour out our praise.

### **The God of Jacob**

The first phrase we come across in v.5 speaks of God as “the God of Jacob”. This relates to God’s covenantal relationship to the patriarchs. All of the history of God’s faithful dealings with His people are enwrapped in this phrase. The point here is clear. When we look to the God of Jacob for our help, we are standing in the tradition of faith that has extended for over four thousand years. From the time of the patriarchs to 2004, God has been proven to be faithful to His word, true to His covenant, unwavering from His promises. He is the One we can trust. He is the One we must determine to praise; for it is a delight to praise the LORD.

### **The LORD his God**

The second phrase which describes the God in whom we are to put our trust, the God upon whom we are to lavish praise is “The LORD his God”. Not only is God the faithful maker of the covenant for all these years but He is the present and personal God who establishes relationship with His people. We notice this facet of God as we see the psalmist using God’s personal Name; Yahweh. He then says that this almighty personal God is his God.

These two phrases work together to give us a most impressive statement of the ultimate resources we have in Him. When we see Him like this, we delight to trust and praise this God as long as we live!

### **Maker of heaven and earth**

If these descriptions are not enough, the poet goes on to give us another phrase to convince us that *as long as we live it is our delight to trust and praise God*. This phrase is “who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them”. The God who created the vast Universe and the varied Earth, the God who creatively made and sustains the sea and all that is in it, this God is to be trusted and praised! What power, what control, what authority, what supremacy we see in the God of Psalm 146.

Are you left with any hesitation to trust Him? Do you still have any rational reason for not boasting about Him in public and demonstrating that He is your help and hope? Oh, beloved, stop with unbelief. Start trusting. Find Him all-glorious and all-gracious. Find him to be your only source of help and hope!

### **The keeper of faithfulness**

But if there are still people in the auditorium whose heart finds it difficult to trust and praise this God (i.e. upbringing was ungodly, trapped in a practiced sin, years of sinned against, living with a difficult person, etc), then allow the last phrase to win you over. This phrase is found in the last part of v.7. “Who keeps faith forever” is a phrase designed to communicate God’s forever faithfulness. The point of this phrase seems to be that this God of covenantal love, of personal relationship, the Creator of all; this God is faithful to the end! Here is our sure ground for trust. Here is our sweet grace for praise. Here we find our hunt for help and hope terminated. We are at home when we are here with this God!

## **Describing the characteristics of the God of Praise**

**Vv.7-10**

The second section of this Psalm is found in vv.7-10. Here we come across the psalmist describing the characteristics of the God of Praise. He is the One, we will hear, who ever gives to the helpless and the hopeless. Listen and learn from verses 7-10 (read vv.)

### **A description of the God of praise**

**Vv.7-9**

We see the third movement of Psalm 146 as we attend with interest to vv.7-9.

Here the psalmist describes the LORD of praise by talking about His actions. Much could be said about these verses. I encourage you to meditate upon this section until you realize and relish the God of Psalm 146. For our time this morning I'm simply going to lift off the page and place before you both the verbs and the nouns of this third movement. The purpose is to see again what a God He is and to see what need we have of Him.

We are reminded in these verses that our God characteristically aids the helpless and the weak. These words flesh out the central declaration of the Psalm, found in verses 5-6. Our help and hope may be in Him (v.5) because He guards faithfulness forever (v.6). This truth causes our hearts to be happy (v.5). This happiness demonstrates itself in obedience to the command "Praise the LORD (vv.1,10).

Let's look at these elements found in these vv. to give us power to permanently praise the LORD.

## 8 verbs

The characteristics of the LORD seen in vv.7-9 are discovered in the types of verbs used in this text. Just listen to them for a moment.

### He executes

Our faithful forever Lord who aids the helpless and hopeless executes justice. He will ensure that all wrongs will be righted for His people. Therefore, let us praise the Lord as long as we live!

### He gives

Our faithful forever Lord who aids the helpless and hopeless gives food. He guarantees necessities to sustain His people. Therefore, let us praise the Lord as long as we live!

### He sets free

Our faithful forever Lord who aids the helpless and hopeless sets free the prisoners. His power will break all addictions over His people. Therefore, let us praise the Lord as long as we live!

### He opens eyes

Our faithful forever Lord who aids the helpless and hopeless opens eyes. He illumines eyes to see spiritual riches for His people. Therefore, let us praise the Lord as long as we live!

### He lifts up

Our faithful forever Lord who aids the helpless and hopeless lifts up the bowed down. His compassion restores the depressed. Therefore, let us praise the Lord as long as we live!

### He loves

Our faithful forever Lord who aids the helpless and hopeless loves the righteous. His enduring love recaptures the hearts of His people. Therefore, let us praise the Lord as long as we live!

### He watches over

Our faithful forever Lord who aids the helpless and hopeless watches over His people like a caring parent. We are never outside His watchful eye. Therefore, let us praise the Lord as long as we live!

### He upholds

Our faithful forever Lord who aids the helpless and hopeless upholds the defenseless and ones exposed to danger. Therefore, let us praise the Lord as long as we live!

### He brings to ruin

Our faithful forever Lord who aids the helpless and hopeless brings to ruin those who try to ruin His people. Ultimately, nobody will get away with hurting His chosen people. Therefore, let us praise the Lord as long as we live!

Oh, with such a portrait of the Lord what more could we ask to assist us in the enduring obedience of praise? The answer is found in verse 10.

## A demand to praise the God of praise

## V.10

The last verse of Psalm 146 presents the concluding thought of the passage as the psalmist demands the praise of the Lord who reigns for all time. He rules and reigns now over your hardships. He rules and reigns now over your finances. He rules and reigns now over your temptations to sin. He rules and reigns now over anything that would tempt you to worry and stop praising Him. And we know this by noticing how long He reigns. The verse says that He will reign forever. With God on the throne of all our tomorrows, we need not fear or fret. We need to praise. And that is how we find the psalmist concluding his poem. Hallelujah! Let us praise the Lord!!

## Conclusion

To sum up both this message and our four-part series:

- ❖ Remember the definition of praise (Ps.113)
- ❖ Remember the difficulty of life (Ps.13)
- ❖ Remember the discipline of the Lord (Ps. 30)
- ❖ Remember the duration of praise (Ps.146)