

Psalm 146

January 6, 2008 - Skip MacMillan

The Call

**Praise (Halelu-Yah) the LORD . . . I will praise the LORD.
(Halelu-Yah).**

The call is for everyone to "Praise the LORD" (v. 1).

This is a command found in the imperative, to praise God.

David is personally determined – "I will praise, I will sing to my God as long as I live" (v. 2). He is intentional; it requires effort, grit: "I will praise the LORD".

Praise = "Halelu-Yah," to boast in Yahweh; rejoice, give thanks to God, to exult, to glory.

There is praise for a great wife, a renowned city, and a wise man in Scripture.

God is the unique and sole object of true praise; we are to boast in God's great nature and acts.

The most frequent use of the word relates to praising God, not a wife, city, or wise man.

A third of these passages occur in the Psalms and the largest number of these are imperatives/commands to praise the LORD. "This speaks to the vital necessity of this action."

We need to be determined to praise the LORD as a church, as friends, families, and individuals.

When we do, it is amazing how God shifts our attitude and perspective of people and our situation.

Congregational – the word is found in the plural many times, showing us that praise of YHWH was/is especially congregational; involving music, prayers, Scripture reading, sermon and congregational singing. These are essential elements for public praise to the LORD. We are singing more!

Individual – you are called to praise God "as long as you live", in every part of your life.

Praise originates from sincere belief and joy in the LORD and a deep thankfulness for His nature and acts. As you grow in your understanding of these, your praise will become more meaningful and powerful.

The last five Psalms (146-150) begin and end with "Halelu-Yah." What a great way to end the book of Psalms and a great way to begin a new year.

The Warning

"Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that every day their plans come to nothing."

Princes = politicians, pastors, self-help gurus, yourself, etc.

Why?

Mortal – Hebrew "*Ben*" which means "son of men," contrasted with the "Son of Man," Jesus Christ. "The great and wealthy, have a dangerous attraction through the splendor attaching to them, suggesting to us the step of taking shelter under their patronage. . . (Yet,) the most powerful of the world's princes is but a *son of man* (mortal). This should be enough to rebuke our folly in worshipping them as a kind of demigods (between human and divine), as Isaiah says, (Isaiah 31:3) 'The Egyptian is man, and not God; flesh, and not spirit.' Although princes are furnished with power, money, troops of men, and other resources, David reminds us, that it is wrong to place our trust in frail mortal man, and vain to seek safety where it cannot be found" -Calvin.

People are mortal. They "cannot save;" there is no salvation, no deliverance or victory in them. People can help point you in the right direction, teach techniques, share wisdom from experience but they cannot ultimately save you, deliver you, or make things happen for you.

"When their spirit (*ruach*) departs, they return to the ground." God breathed His spirit (*ruach*) into humanity (Genesis 1-2), giving him life and when a man dies, the man's spirit returns to the feet of God.

Why place your trust in one who will bow before the King Eternal and not the King Eternal Himself? Why trust in the created, the mortal, the finite when the Creator, immortal, infinite invites in you?

". . . on that every day their plans come to nothing (vanish, destroyed)."

"Plans" = "his glitterings, splendors, glories"; they are annihilated.

1. All of these are the opposite qualities of God; mortal to immortal, cannot save to can save, temporal to eternal plans.

2. We seem predisposed to trust in people, the "next big thing."

Life Gurus – Tony Robbins, Oprah and Tim Connor - self-help guru, motivational speaker and author.
Hollywood star – Mel Gibson, drunk driving and racial slurs.

Politician – promises regarding: taxes, character, spending, foreign affairs, the war, terrorism.

Boyfriend, spouse, child or parents.

Pastors – "In the last 15 years, psychologist Mark Laaser has seen 'an escalating crisis in the church' so that 'rarely a day goes by that I don't get a call about a "fallen" pastor'" -Maxwell.

You know you have placed too much trust in the person when if they fall you give up the cause.

You so wrapped up the cause around a person that when the person fell so did the cause.

3. Called to love people, work with, help, serve, build up, befriend, forgive, but you are not to place your trust in them.

Trust in God to work in and through them but not in them alone – they are mortal and limited.

We have all fallen prey to trusting in people and felt the despair, so what do we do?

"Blessed is he whose help is in the name of the LORD his God" (verse 5).

Blessed = "happy".

God of Jacob - distinguishes God from the multitude of false gods, whom many praise.

The LORD his God – personal relationship.

Many are not blessed. They agree that trusting in people will get you nowhere but they do not turn to the LORD. They understand verses 3-4 but not verse 5 because they refuse to believe in the LORD. They have no one they can trust, therefore they become cynical, depressed and adrift but this is not necessary if only you would turn to the Lord.

Our help and hope comes from the LORD and the nature of God gives us something to praise the LORD for; God is nothing like man.

God is: verses 6-10

- Maker of heaven and earth – Creator, He is supremely powerful.
- Remains faithful forever – He is faithful.
- Upholds (executes justice) the cause for the oppressed – it is His nature to care for the struggling.
- Gives food to the hungry – He is our provider and He is good to us.
- Sets prisoners free / loosens them that are bound – He is our deliverer – Luke 4: 18-19.
- Gives sight to the blind / opens the eyes of those in darkness – He rescues us from darkness.
- Lifts up those bowed down – He will give the humble a great inheritance.
- Loves the righteous – He is the redeemer, loves sinners and makes them righteous.
- Watches over the alien – He is the watchman.
- Sustains the fatherless and widow – He is the sustainer of all things.
- Frustrates the wicked – He is sovereign over all times, places and people.

The call and command of Psalm 146 is to praise the God of Jacob, this God with this nature and these acts. We are called to trust in Him and place our hope in Him.

And because of His nature and wonderful acts, Halelu-Yah, "Praise the LORD"

To the unbeliever, do not trust in princes or become cynical but believe and turn to the LORD now.

To the believer, "when we don't know what to do, are perplexed, and dismayed, as if the darkness of death had fallen upon us, (remind yourself of the nature and acts of God), that He may dissipate the gloom and open our eyes" -Calvin.

Communion

All praise to the Savior Jesus Christ.

Revelation 5:9-10 - Jezebel's understanding.

"And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."