

His Faithfulness
July 30, 2017
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Psalm 146

Opening Discussion: Who can you TRUST? Why is trusting in other people a necessary part of life? What are some examples of how people betray trust?

To function in life we have to place some level of trust in people. Deciding who and when to trust can be a challenge because people are flawed and will disappoint us, sometimes without even meaning to. Thankfully, we have a powerful, loving Heavenly Father who can always be trusted.

Big Idea: People will disappoint us; our Heavenly Father never will. Praising Him every day helps us remember that truth and live confidently in a flawed world.

Psalm 146 (ESV)

146 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

² I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³ Put not your trust in princes,
in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

⁴ When his breath departs, he returns to the earth;
on that very day his plans perish.

⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God,

⁶ who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever;

⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free;
⁸ the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.

⁹ The Lord watches over the sojourners;

he upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

¹⁰ The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the Lord!

- You can't miss what this psalm is all about because it begins and ends with *"Praise the Lord!"* We have our instructions before the psalmist even gives us his reasons. We are to PRAISE THE LORD.
- Let me share something interesting about those three words.
- *"Praise the LORD is literally "praise Yah." The Hebrew word for "praise" is halal, and Yah (or jah) is the shortened form of the Hebrew Yahweh, the covenant name of God. Hence, this is transliterated into English as "Hallelujah."*¹ Now we know what we're singing when we sing "hallelujah!"

Our lesson writer reminds us that word is not to be used "lightly:"
*"Praise the LORD served as the call to worship, just as it still serves as a call to worship today. It is sad that the word Hallelujah, or praise the LORD, is trivialized so often in Western culture and even by Christians. Even in worship, Hallelujah should not be spoken as an empty mantra or sung as a trite jingle. In these praise psalms the word was used to call the attention of God's people to important truths about God. The word contains the name of God, so using it lightly is misusing God's name (Ex. 20:7)."*²

- That's a powerful reminder: Hallelujah or praise the Lord shouldn't just be a "throw away" line. It should be the most sincere cry of our hearts!
- Verse two: **How long should we praise the Lord? What other "human commitment" does that remind you of? Like wedding vows, how does this speak to changing circumstances and conditions?**
- Also verse two: **How often should we praise the Lord? Why do you think the psalmist was so specific? How is this like the instructions on a prescription? How is it about forming a habit?**
- Let's spend a few minutes on verse three. This one jumped off the page!

- **What is meant by the word “princes?” Why not kings?**
- God places people in positions of authority, but they are ultimately HIS subordinates. They get into trouble when they forget who is the KING!
- Question: Think about the Garden of Eden. **How was Eve’s (and Adam’s) failure a case of “misplaced trust?”**
- Our lesson writer: *“Eve did not trust that God had their best interest in mind when He commanded Eve and Adam to abstain from eating one kind of fruit (Gen. 3:1-6). She trusted the serpent’s word more than God’s. The issue of trust remains central for God’s people. Do we trust princes (people in leadership) or God?”*³
- Verse three again: **What reason is given for NOT trusting in men?**
- *“Both Psalms 60:11 and 108:12 declare, “vain is the salvation of man.” In contrast, Psalm 3:8 states, “Salvation belongs to the LORD.”*⁴
- I spent four days this week in our nation’s capitol. If there was ever a week when our lesson text resonated with me personally, it was week and this verse: (Psalm 146:3 - NLT)
³ *Don’t put your confidence in powerful people; there is no help for you there.*
- All week I was reminded that though God gives us human authority figures to govern the affairs of our society, HE is the only one worthy of our total trust and confidence.
- God allowed me to be around some public servants who I believe are trying hard to do the right thing for you and me. We need to pray for them.
- He also allowed me to observe at close range one or two that caused me to really think of verse three; people who are driven by naked ambition and what’s in it for THEM. We need to pray for God’s intervention and protection for our nation from such leaders.
- We can’t avoid trusting in human leaders completely. **What is the right balance between trusting in human leaders and ultimately trusting in God?**
- We can’t live our lives without placing trust in human beings. It’s just the way things are. This Psalm reminds us the only way we CAN place SOME confidence in people is if our ULTIMATE CONFIDENCE is in our LORD.

- We need to exercise good judgment in deciding who and when to trust. However, we don't have to go through life in a constant state of fear and paranoia wondering whom we can trust -- God always has our back!
- Verse four: **What other reason does verse four give for the need to be careful in how much we trust in even best-intentioned people?** (Illustration: family photos)
- Verses five and six: **How are verses five and six a continuation and a reminder of what we've studied in past weeks?**
- Beginning in verse seven the psalmist lists the reasons we can trust our God. **What do these verses say about God's compassion? Verse eight: Why does this verse say God is so caring toward His people?**
- **Final question: How could this Psalm speak to you when you're feeling betrayed by flawed people or on your own?**⁵
- We can trust in God because over and over again He has proven His love, care, and compassion for those who fear and love Him!

So, What's the Takeaway?

- People will disappoint; our Heavenly Father never will. Praising Him every day helps us remember that truth and live confidently in a flawed world.
- We can't live our lives without placing trust in human beings. It's just the way things are. This Psalm reminds us the only way we CAN place SOME confidence in people is if our ULTIMATE CONFIDENCE is in our LORD.
- He's a loving Father who cares for the oppressed, the hungry, the imprisoned, those who can't fend for themselves. He lifts us up because He "loves the righteous." And we can only be righteous by placing our trust in Him through His Son Jesus Christ.
- We need to exercise good judgment in deciding who and when to trust. However, we don't have to go through life in a constant state of fear and paranoia wondering whom we can trust -- God always has our back!
- Verse ten reminds us that human leaders will come and go from the scene, but the Lord "reigns forever." That's why He deserves our praise every day as long as we live!

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¹ Lifeway. (n.d.). *Explore the Bible Leader Guide Ps. 146*.

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *Serendipity Bible for Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998. Print.