

Praise the Sovereign Lord

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 November 2025

Preacher: Joe DeHaan

[0 : 00] I will praise the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man in whom there is no salvation.

When his breath departs, he returns to the earth. On that very day, his plans perish. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever, who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoner free. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. The Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the sojourners. He upholds the widow and the fatherless.

But the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. The Lord will reign forever. Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord.

Let's pray. Lord, I pray that you would open the eyes of our hearts to see you. Work through your word and through your spirit to draw us closer to you.

[1 : 19] Lord, I pray that as we reflect on Psalm 146 this morning, our reflections on Psalm 146 this morning would lead to truer worship of you. And may the words of my mouth be pleasing to you. Amen.

Amen. All right. After the resurrection, Jesus drew near to two disciples that were on their way to Emmaus.

He walked with them, feigning ignorance about all that had just occurred in and around Jerusalem. But once the disciples had gotten to the part about the empty tomb, Jesus couldn't contain himself. And he said, Oh, foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

And beginning with Moses and the prophets, he interpreted to them in all of scripture the things concerning himself. The eyes of the disciples were only opened after Jesus broke bread with them later that evening.

[2 : 29] And no sooner had they recognized him than he vanished. The disciples hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the eleven about what they had seen. And that very evening, Jesus appeared among them.

And after settling them down and eating a bit of broiled fish, presumably to prove he wasn't an apparition, he said to them, These are my words that I have spoken to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.

Followers of Christ today have the advantage of hindsight that the disciples back in Jesus' day didn't have. As we will see later in the sermon, even those who should have been very familiar with the Old Testament were still blinded to the fact that Christ was its fulfillment.

[3 : 48] Once his earthly work was completed, he opened the eyes of those who, despite following him for years, were still blind to that fact. We see in Jesus the fulfillment of the law, the prophets, and the Psalms.

Jesus continued and culminated the work that his father had begun, the work that he was destined to complete from the creation of the world. Our response to this work should be the same as the

psalmist, who recognized God's faithfulness even before all of his covenant promises had become manifest.

With that in mind, we turn back to Psalm 146, and in it we see where we should put our hope and why we have good reason to put it there. The first two verses say, Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

I will praise the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. Psalm 46 begins and ends with the call to praise the Lord.

And this probably isn't surprising. Many of the psalms fall into the category of hymns, psalms of praise to God. And each of the last five psalms begin and end with the phrase, Praise the Lord.

[5 : 03] This collection of psalms has been called the great doxology, a fitting end for a book known to its original audience as the Tehillim, Phrases.

Expanding on this, several commentators have recognized the psalter as a cathedral, not built with stones, but built with words, a spiritual temple. Psalms 1 and 2 serve as the gate or guard of the temple, providing instruction on the ways of wisdom and warning those who would stray from it.

Psalms 146 through 50, the great doxology, the final hallelujah, give the reader no choice but to lift their voice in praise to God, to their God and King, as they exit the spiritual structure.

The call to praise is repeated over 40 times throughout these final five psalms, a third of them in the final psalm. Praise the Lord.

Praise God in his sanctuary. Praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his mighty deeds. Praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with trumpet sound.

[6 : 12] Praise him with the lute and harp. Praise him with the tambourine and dance. Praise him with the strings and pipe. Praise him with sounding cymbals. Praise him with loud crashing cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. I don't think there's a way that you can get past those five psalms, especially that last one, without getting the idea.

Praise the Lord. What can we do when exiting this cathedral of words except praise the Lord? You can't get past them without getting a picture. The repeated call to praise shouldn't be the only thing that stands out in these first two verses.

The psalmist adds, I will praise the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praises to my God as long as I have my being. As long as I live while I have my being.

Several psalmists say something very similar in other psalms. Psalm 34 begins, I will bless the Lord at all times. His praises shall continually be in my mouth.

[7 : 16] Psalm 113 says, From the rising to the setting of the sun, the name of the Lord is to be praised. Psalm 45 begins, I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.

Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. You get the idea. At all times, regardless of context, we are to praise the Lord.

And Psalm 146, unlike several other psalms, gives us no context. We're not sure what situation the psalmist was in in his life when he wrote that. But there are other similar psalms that do give us an idea.

One example is the psalm that I just read the first verse of, Psalm 34. This one gives us a subtitle. It says, The psalm was written of David when he changed his behavior before Abimelech so that he drove him out and went away.

You see, at this time, David was fleeing from Saul, fleeing from one danger into another. He went to the king of Gath, whose men warned the king about David's great military feats.

[8 : 25] So David changed his behavior and acted like a madman, which led the king to dismiss him from doing anything worse than dismissing him. And when reflecting on these events, David saw it as a time when God had protected him.

And the only proper response to this was praising the Lord. Similarly, the rest of Psalm 146 gives us reason for praise. Suffice it for now to say that God deserves our endless praise, independent of where we find ourselves in life, because we know that we can trust that our God is a faithful God. We see this recognition of God's faithfulness in Job after Satan had been allowed to test him and had taken away his children and property. Job's response is a response of trust in God. The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. And while reading a little bit further into Job might make you question the genuineness of Job's words here, they are true nonetheless. Regardless of

circumstances, blessed be the name of the Lord.

The history of God's people is a history of God's faithfulness. We see later in verse 6 of Psalm 146 that God keeps his faith forever. This does not mean that we will not face trials of many kinds.

[9 : 48] It does mean that through these trials, God will continue to be faithful to those who trust and put their hope in him. And we see this call to praise God carried on throughout the entire Bible.

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul closes by encouraging them to rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ.

We can do this because, as Paul writes in Romans, we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose.

This doesn't always make it easier when we are going through these trials, trials. But instead of feeling jaded by these calls of praise, they should be a call to hope, a hope in our faithful God who brings us through these trials.

And that's what we see in the rest of the psalm. But before we get there, the psalm gives us a strong warning about where not to put our hope. In verses 3 and 4, it says, I'm sure this stanza is something many, if not all of us, can relate to.

[11 : 09] We've all heard promises and assurances from leaders that weren't followed through on. We've all seen someone in a position of authority say one thing and then do something else.

Though, as Paul wrote in Romans 13 and Peter wrote in his first letter, God puts authorities in place to ensure good conduct, that doesn't automatically mean that these leaders are unfailable.

After all, they're finite humans just like us. We see the failability and the frailty of human leaders throughout the Bible. In Ezekiel 34, the prophet rails against the shepherds of Israel who instead of taking care of the flock allow them to be preyed upon and scattered.

Time and time again, the Psalms point out the failability of man. Psalm 118 says, it's better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. Psalm 60 and 108 cry out to God, O grant us help against our foe, for vain is the salvation of man. Jeremiah 17 goes as far as saying, cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord.

[12 : 25] Once again, you get the idea of where to put our trust and our hope. Man may triumph here and there, but man's triumphs are short-lived. All men return to the dust from which they were formed, and with them their plans perish.

Man is not a sure hope of salvation. Salvation belongs to our God. He is our true hope, and that's where the psalmist turns to next.

Verses 5 through 7 turn to our only true source of hope. They tell us who our God is, saying, blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever, who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry.

Blessed be. This is the final beatitude of the psalter. The psalter opens with blessings for those who delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on it day and night.

It's fitting that the final beatitude is one for those whose hope is in their Lord. because after all, our faith is a hopeful faith. Faith, hope, and love abide.

[13 : 45] It is hope that we cling to when things aren't going our way. It is hope that allows us to praise the Lord when we are in the dark valleys of life. And the psalm goes on to give reason for this hope.

Our God is the God who created heaven and earth and all that is in them. Our God is the God who keeps faith forever. Our God is the God who executes justice for the oppressed.

Our God is the God who gives food to the hungry. And I'm sure the psalmist could have gone on and on. And I'm sure that as you reflect on it, you could add your own verses to it.

As you think about the peaks and valleys of life that God has shepherded you through, you see that God's previous acts of faithfulness and it's this faithfulness that gives us hope for the future.

And our hope is well established. Our God is the God who made heaven and earth. He is the sovereign creator. When the earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep, our faithful God spoke our world, spoke our cosmos into existence.

[14 : 59] Our God keeps faith forever. Our God is a God of covenant promises. After the fall, he promised a son of Adam who would come as a snake crusher and defeat our enemy of old, the serpent, the devil.

Our God made a covenant with Noah to never curse the ground because of man or strike down every living creature as he did in the flood. Our God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the land of promise and to make their descendants like the sand of the seashore and to bless all nations through them.

Our God kept Jacob's family alive through times of famine by sending Joseph to Egypt to help preserve them. Our God heard the cries of the oppressed when Pharaoh feared the great nation that Israel had become and sentenced them to servitude, making them mold mud bricks to build his empire.

Our God brought his people safely through the Red Sea working a great salvation and destroying the army that pursued them. Our God heard their cries again and again after they settled into the land and provided them judges to save them from their oppressors.

Our God kept faith with his people as he fed them through 40 years of wilderness wandering, giving food to the hungry and bringing them back to the land of promise and giving them victory over foes they had no business defeating.

[16:29] Our God showed faith to David feeding him with the holy bread when he was fleeing from Saul. Our God showed faith to Elijah feeding him through three and a half years while the land of Israel faced famine.

And after their rebellion and exile, our God continued to show faith to his people by bringing them back to the land and restoring their temple. and in his most wondrous act of faithfulness, our God sent his son, the snake crusher, to live a perfect life and be a substitutionary sacrifice to ransom us from our sins.

Working his mightiest act of salvation, the son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, God in flesh, Emmanuel, continued the work of his father during his time on earth.

He fed the 5,000. He gave sight to the blind. He lifted up those who were bowed down. And this is where the psalm goes next. The Lord sets the prisoner free.

The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. The Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the sojourners. He upholds the widow and the fatherless.

[17:42] But the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. The previous stanza describes who God is. This stanza describes what he does. Verse 9 continues the drumbeat that began in the Pentateuch.

The Lord watches over the sojourner. He upholds the widow and the fatherless. These concerns were so important to God that he repeated them again and again in his instructions to his people at Mount Sinai and as they prepared to enter the land.

Psalm 146.9 paraphrases Deuteronomy 10.18 where God tells his people that he executes justice for the fatherless and the widow and loves the sojourner giving him food and clothing.

He commands his people to follow his lead when he tells them to love the sojourner because they were sojourners in the land of Egypt. And again we see these acts of God manifested in his son Jesus Christ.

When Jesus initiated his earthly ministry he launched it at a synagogue by reading Isaiah 61. The spirit of God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

[18:51] He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

We see here the same themes the psalm sang of centuries before. The gospel of Matthew and John tell us stories of Jesus restoring sight to the blind.

In the story in John the man born blind ends up seeing better than the Pharisees ever did. He recognized God's power in Jesus Christ through the restoration of his sight.

During his second round of questioning by the Pharisees he couldn't contain himself and exclaims why this is an amazing thing. You do not know where he comes from and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will God listens to him. Never since the world began has the eyes of a man born blind been opened.

[19:58] If this man were not from God he could do nothing. The eyes of the Pharisees were shut. Having eyes they did not see.

Though they knew the Hebrew Bible inside and out they couldn't see Jesus for who he was the one who opens the eyes of the blind. But there was one Pharisee that Jesus had other plans for Saul. Acts 9 tells us that on his way to Damascus to arrest followers of the way Saul saw a light from heaven and was knocked down. Jesus called to him asking him why he was persecuting him.

After Jesus spoke to him Saul rose and though his eyes were open he couldn't see. Once Saul arrived in Damascus God used Ananias to open the eyes of another blind man. His sight restored Saul rose and was baptized and went on to become the greatest evangelist of all time spreading the good news of Jesus to the Gentiles. As Paul later reflected on the work of Christ he recognized the truth of the words the Lord sets the prisoners free.

[21 : 08] True God literally set some prisoners free like Joseph when he was wrongfully imprisoned and even Paul himself when he was in Philippi. But more importantly Paul recognized how through Christ God set those who trust in him and call on the name of his son free from their sins.

In Romans 8 he wrote there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ for the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

Put not your trust in princes and a son of man in whom there is no salvation. Instead put your trust in the son of man our Lord Jesus Christ the one who forever set us free from our slavery to sin. And this brings us to the end of the psalm but also back to where we started. Praise the Lord. The Lord will reign forever. Your God O Zion to all generations.

[22 : 32] Praise the Lord. Our Lord will reign forever. Our Lord is deserving of our praise. As one generation calls to the next each in their turn lifting voices in praise to God the creator of the cosmos the one who is always faithful infallible the one who keeps faith forever and executes justice to the oppressed who frees the prisoner who lifts up those who are bowed down who upholds the vulnerable who set his son to set hopeless sinners free from sin and death.

The result will be endless and infinite worship to the Lord our God and he deserves no less. Psalm 146 is titled Put Not Your Trust in Princes.

It tells us who we can truly put our trust in. God has shown his infallible faithfulness in the gift of his son the one the psalm and the prophets looked forward to the one whose return and everlasting reign we now look forward to the one who in this upcoming Advent season more than any other time of year we reflect on and we thank for becoming God in flesh God with us Emmanuel and as we reflect on him during this Advent season we look forward to his return when the faithful shall be raised to eternal life and when the final trumpet sounds and the dead are raised when we awake a new life in Christ we will all return to our praise praise the Lord let us pray Lord our God you are the one who keeps faith forever you are our one true source of hope you are the great creator who made heaven and earth you are the great sustainer giving food to the hungry we pray oh Lord that you would work change in our hearts bring true worship to you we pray that through the working of your word and your spirit that you would conform us more to the image of your son God we pray that you would use us to be instruments of your peace to shine your light in a dark world be with us now as we enter this week of thanksgiving may our hearts abound in thanksgiving to you we pray these things in the name of your son our Lord Jesus Christ amen amen