

Trust

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[0 : 00] Well, good evening. Thanks, Ali. That was worth waiting for. We're good to go.

Tonight I'm filming myself for my peers back at Ridley. So if I say something funny like, this is funny, you should laugh extra hard. You should say amen extra loud and just generally look engaged and maybe we'll turn the camera around at some point or something.

So we're talking tonight about trust. Trust. And as I was thinking about trust this week, I realised that trust is really a commodity that we trade on like we do with money.

We bank on trust. We use it every day in every situation. You know, as we're walking down the street or sitting in church, we're trusting the people around us, some who we might not know very well, that they're good-natured people.

They're not going to try and steal us or rob from us or kill us. When we use money, we trust that our financial system is going to hold up.

[1 : 16] We trust that the bank's computers are going to remember the right numbers in our bank account. We trust all the time. Everything that we do involves some sort of trust.

We trust experts to tell us what's safe to eat, what's safe to wear, what's safe to do, what's dangerous, what's going to give us cancer. All the time, we trust experts.

And sometimes our trust is misplaced, isn't it? Sometimes they get it wrong. So we might trust our teachers at school, for example.

And I was hearing a story today, not today, earlier this week, about how some teachers, when they're teaching some Australian geography, teach that Alice Springs is the capital of the Northern Territory.

Your little grade four child's trust has been abused and they're destined for a life of ridicule. You're doing well at the laughing bit.

[2 : 18] That's good. Or more tragically, we see a man dress as a police officer and break the trust of these young people on this camp in Norway and shoot them one by one.

A terrible breach of trust. But most of the time, it works all right for us. Our trust in our life and in our people works all right for us.

I trust, I've recently engaged a personal trainer and I trust that he knows about health and fitness a lot more than I do and he tells me what to do and how hard to push myself and when I don't listen to him, I injure my foot.

But most of the time, when I'm listening to him, it seems to work. I get fitter, I get stronger, I feel better. Most of the time, our trust is well placed.

And tonight, as we look at Psalm 146, we're going to see that it's a psalm that is about praising God, but it's about praising him because he is trustworthy and if we trust him, he will never let us down.

[3 : 40] Now this psalm, Psalm 146, is the first of the last five psalms and they're all praise psalms and they've all got different reasons why we should praise God but this one, it's all about God's character and his trustworthiness.

So let's get into it and have a look. Verses 1 and 2. Hallelujah, my soul, praise the Lord. I will sing praise to the Lord all my life.

I will, sorry, I will praise the Lord all my life. I will sing to my God as long as I live. Hallelujah, the first word, literally, praise the Lord.

That's how we start and that's what this psalm is about, praising the Lord. And the rest of the psalm we're going to see basically unpacks why, why we should praise God.

But the very next verse, verse 3, seems to take what seems to me a bit of a sidetrack. It seems to go off in this other direction. For instead of saying, praise the Lord because God is awesome, it

says, do not trust in nobles, verse 3, in man who cannot save.

[4 : 50] When his breath leaves him, he returns to the ground. On that day, his plans die. Don't trust in people, the psalm says, because we can't save.

Because when our breath leaves us, when we die, our plans die with us. I'm sure we can all think of, particularly as we get older and older, great plans and ideas that people have had that have died with that person.

There is no hope in human plans. That's what this psalm is reminding us of. Instead, we need to hope in God, the Lord, the God of Jacob.

That is the God who we read about in the Bible. That's what it tells us in verses 5 and 6. Happy is the one whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord, his God, the maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them.

This psalm tells us our hope should be in God. And it's probably written, this psalm, in a time of exile when the Jewish people have been thrown out of their promised land by God.

[6 : 09] And they're probably very rightly doubting God, doubting his ability to save them, doubting whether he wants to even save them. And so you can see that they might be tempted to put their trust in human plans to get them out of exile or to help them live a good life now that they're captives.

But this psalm is saying, no, keep trusting in God. And it's actually very easy, isn't it, for us in 2011 to do the same thing.

As we look out into our world and we see a vast array of horrible things, it's easy for us to trust in people instead of God.

As we look and we see a world that is warming up or as we look and see horrible poverty and famines in places like Africa or as we look in our own country and see people who are desperate and dependent on welfare for a third and a fourth generation whose lives have been ruined by drug and alcohol dependence.

It's very easy for us to say, what can we do? Let's have a carbon tax. Let's up the percentage of taxable income giving or whatever the millennium development goal is.

[7 : 42] Let's get it up to 0.7%. Let's reform our education systems. Let's reform our welfare systems. Let's help people. Let's make plans.

Education is the solution to all of our problems. we look around and we see a broken world and we trust so easily in human plans but not just in our world because in the church too I think we do exactly the same thing don't we?

Because we're here in the West and we look at our church and generally speaking churches in the West Christianity is getting smaller isn't it? There are less people in church.

Now maybe we'll be proved wrong on the census on Tuesday but generally speaking it seems that less and less people want to call themselves Christians and we think that's a terrible thing and so what do we do?

Well we look to people who've had successes who've reversed the trend so at the moment there's a really big craze going on called church planning and there's some guys and they're really successful church planners and we look to them and we think yes I need to be a church planner we need to plant churches let's plant churches and we hope in their schemes or go back a few years and maybe the problem with our churches was we didn't have purpose or we didn't have good enough leadership and so we read these books and we implemented these plans and we got our five point visions and purposes and growths and all this stuff and we mapped it out because that worked for them and now it's going to work for us we're going to trust in their plans this psalm is not saying that leaders are unnecessary it's not saying that leaders aren't useful it's not even saying that church planning schemes or having purpose or vision or whatever is useless but what it is saying is that it's warning us it's warning us against putting all our hope in those baskets putting all our hope in a carbon tax or all our hope in welfare reform or all our hope in church planning no all our hope needs to be in God we need to have our trust in the right place and then we can work out how we might go about things and this psalm gives us two good reasons to put our trust in God the first one we've seen in verse 6 is that he's the creator and he sustains everything and then again at the very end of verse 6 he remains faithful faithful

[10 : 44] God is faithful and how is he faithful well that's what verses 7 to 9 unpack for us he remains faithful forever executing justice for the exploited giving food to the hungry the Lord frees prisoners the Lord opens the eyes of the blind the Lord raises up those who are oppressed the Lord

loves the righteous the Lord protects foreigners and helps the fatherless and the widow but he frustrates the ways of the wicked this is our God being described here in these verses this is the God who the psalmist is telling us is trustworthy who's worthy of our praise who he wants to praise all the days of his life but how do you know that God is faithful I mean after all we look around don't we we look at our world and we see a broken world we see a world where there are oppressed people where there are hungry people where there are things that beggar belief and it might be easy for us to say maybe God isn't faithful maybe God isn't trustworthy maybe he's not keeping his promises how can we know how can we know if he is this world seems so broken is God really worth trusting at all well

I want to suggest that if we look at Jesus then we can see that indeed God is trustworthy that God is indeed doing these things we read about in the psalm that God is indeed worthy of our trust and worthy of our praise for every day of our life see when Jesus was on the earth he did a lot of these things he executed justice for the exploited I think of the woman who is brought to him caught in adultery being exploited by the leaders of the religious people of the day to try and trap Jesus and he rises above it and he frees her from that exploitation and he forgives her of her sin he gives food to the hungry multiple times feeding thousands upon thousands of people and in John 6 we read that he's the bread of life that not only does he literally feed people but actually he's the only food we all need he's our spiritual food that Jesus if we feed on him will satisfy in Acts which I take it is just the story of God and Jesus continuing work in the world after he has risen again we read don't we about how God through Jesus frees people from prison literally their chains fall off Paul and Silas in the jail and they're free and then as we read we see that actually all of us are prisoners we're all caught in the prison of death and sin and that through faith in him we're made free we know that God loves the faithful he loves those who put their trust in him we know that the early church under the guidance of the spirit of Jesus made a top priority to care for orphans and widows and we know as we saw in

Jesus his own ministry that he's constantly bringing justice judging the wicked and the self-righteous bringing forgiveness and repentance and we know that's what he's going to do again finally on the last day so both physically and spiritually Jesus shows us what God is doing in our world that God is doing these things we read about in this psalm God is redeeming the world from sin and death it's in the ministry of Jesus that we see most clearly what God is like and it's in his death his life his death and resurrection that we can truly know that God is trustworthy and worthy of our praise because we know that there's a great promise for all of us who trust in him that we will live in a new world where there is no crime where there is no pain where there are no oppressed people where there will be no poverty where there will be no trust breaching we will live in that world forever if we put our faith and trust in Jesus and these last words of the psalm will ring true won't they the Lord reigns forever

Zion your God reigns for all generations hallelujah praise the Lord Jesus is going to reign forever and we are going to reign with him we are going to share in his glory if we put our faith and our trust in him that's the great message of the Christian faith that God does do these things he talks about here that we are a part of that and that we are going to share in that in a world where it is no more don't you hate this world and all the crap in it what's going to be no more when we're living and reigning with Jesus if you want to get to know God if you're troubled by the crap in this world then look at Jesus read the stories of Jesus in the Bible in the

[17 : 28] Gospels and put your faith and trust in him because like he did in those stories he's going to do for all time in eternity God is a God who is worthy of our praise who is completely trustworthy and who is faithful and does what he says so who have you put your trust in not just for your salvation though that's important are you trusting in Jesus but for everyday decisions I think from where you've got your money to where you're going to go to school to what uni you're going to go to to what your next job's going to be who are you ultimately trusting is it yourself is it your own plans is it your own ideas or your friends ideas or your parents ideas or my ideas or are they

God's are you trusting in God alone to provide and to sustain all things and if you haven't ever trusted Jesus let me tell you it is a great and glorious thing because a great and glorious new world awaits us and we can start now in doing these things that God says he's on about so let's trust God more and more every day amen