

Psalm 146: 1-10; “Hope Remembers the Lord”, A Devotional given by Pastor Paul Rendall at the Prayer and Sharing Time, held in the Library Room of the church, on December 31st, 2023.

As we go into a New Year I believe that we as Christians ought to be looking forward in hope. Verse 5 says – Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God. Knowing that the Lord is your God is something which ought to make you happy and hopeful every day. What is hope, anyway? For a person who has been saved from their sins by Christ, hope is a forward looking grace. In relation to your knowing and walking with the Lord, your hope is your having the desire and expectation that God will always be blessing you, always be helping you in every situation that you find yourself in.

When the grace of hope is active in you, you will look to God for help in everything that you are thinking, and everything that you are doing. How should your hope in God be exercised as you go on into the future? It should be exercised by your remembering that there are many things that only God can do for you. This Psalm gives us a number of those things. Let me open them up a bit in this short time that we have together.

1st of all – Remember that having God as your hope should lead you to praise.

Verses 1 & 2 say – Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! While I live I will praise the Lord. I will praise the Lord while I have my being. These last 5 Psalms are called the Hallelujah Psalms because they all begin and end by the Psalmist saying – Praise the Lord. It is the word Hallelujah in the Hebrew. And we need to remember that praising God in our spirit and praising Him with our lips is an act of Divine Worship. We should ask ourselves – How much do I praise God? Do I praise Him every day in my heart and mind? Do I praise Him in joy and in sorrow? Do I praise Him when I am in the midst of the great assembly at church? Do I praise Him at all times?

At all times I will bless the Lord, His praise shall continually be in my mouth, David says in Psalm 34, verse 1. Verse 2 says – My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. Praise is your boasting in God. Praise is extolling Him and magnifying and blessing His holy name for all that He is, and all that He does for you. For God is your strength and He is your song and your victory over all of your enemies of sin and death, and the world and the devil. Praise honors God for all that He is, and all that He does for you.

He is continually upholding you and keeping you in life. He is the one who has saved you from yourself and from all of your sins if you have believed in Jesus. He is your constant companion who never leaves you nor forsakes you. God is continually thinking upon you to do you good, because He is your Father. God is the Father of all men in terms of His having created them. But God is your Father in a special and personal sense when you come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. For when He saves you, He makes you His child, spiritually speaking. He adopts you spiritually into His own family; of those who make up Christ’s church.

And so Paul says in Ephesians 1, verse 3 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

For all the spiritual blessings of your salvation, you ought to remember to praise God each and every day of your life. There are no greater blessings than these. But remember that God is the Giver of every perfect gift. He is the Author of all of these blessings and you ought to love Him so much that the thoughts of your heart are continually praising Him for His greatness, His glory, and His goodness to you. And especially for His love to you in and through Christ. This ought to become your chief meditation if it not already at present. That is, to praise God while you have your being. As long as you live, you will resolve to praise Him.

2nd – Remember that having God as your hope, you will not put your trust in men.

Verse 3 says – “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.” “His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish.” This verse implies in the way that it is written, that God is the One who has created all men. And He does use men to help us at many points in our lives. However, because of Adam’s sin being passed on to all of us from our birth, the Psalmist is telling us that we cannot place our trust in men as we should place our trust in the Living God. Trusting in men to be your greatest help in time of trouble or distress or perplexity, this is something that you should never do. For ultimately, there is no help in men, to help you, besides that which God is pleased to ordain to His glory and for your lasting good.

You find this often mentioned in the Scriptures, of people, even godly people, trusting in the arm of flesh. That is, trusting in the counsel of men more than in your seeking God for the outcome that will be godly and good, and which will come from His working on your behalf. If you have greater regard for the impressiveness of another person’s mind or strength, or in his plans by which he says that he can help you to accomplish something which is of very great concern to you, you will not be wise. Psalm 20, verses 7-9 – “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.” “They have bowed down and fallen; but we have risen and stand upright.”

Sometimes we can become discouraged because we are trusting in men more than we trust in the Lord. We somehow think that men and their plans determine the outcome of any situation that affects our life. But if you look at Psalm 71 you will find how a godly person should view the loss of their own strength, or the strength of the nation that they live in, or the strength of people who are trying to control you by their words or deeds. Verse 1 – “In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame.” “Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; incline Your ear to me, and save me.” “Be my strong refuge to which I may resort continually; You have given commandment to save, for You are my rock and my fortress.”

This is how we ought to view opposition and oppression by men. God will be our Helper. Even if we are getting older and more feeble, and we are not able to do many things that we used to be able to do. Verses 7-10 – “I have become a wonder to many, but You are my strong refuge.” “Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day.” “Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails.” And verse 12 – “O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make hast to help me!” “Let them be confounded and consumed who are adversaries of my life; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor who seek my hurt.”

The way to deal with the greatest and most difficult issues that come to you in your life, is by prayer to God, in just this way. God will answer your prayers for Jesus sake. And so you can boast in Him all the day long. Verses 14-16 – “But I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more.” “My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits.” “I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.” This is the glorious reality of the Christian life; that because we have the God as our strength, our righteousness, and our refuge, we can hope continually and praise Him yet more and more for His help.

3rd – Remember that having God as your hope you will be truly happy as you will know His help in all things that are a concern to you. (verses 5-10)

Verse 5 says – “Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God...” And then things are made mention here in the following verses, of what God does for all who will trust in Him and hope in Him. In verse 6 mention is made of His having made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them. If He created all things, and He did, we should also understand that He watches over all that He has created according to the purpose for which He created them, and for your ultimate good, if you will trust in Him and hope in Him.

We are told at the end of verse 6 that He, our God, keeps truth forever. He keeps it by being faithful to His word at every point. You and I who are Christians, we should always remember that God sanctifies by means of His truth. In His working in our lives, He sets us apart to holiness and to His own holy work in our heart and life, all through our life. He calls us to a life of holiness, to be holy as He is holy. And He leads us through all the various situations of our lives, to show us that He Himself will teach us His way. He will lead us in the truth and teach us, as David prays in Psalm 25, verses 4 and 5. For He is the God of our salvation.

Therefore, we should wait upon Him all the day, it says there. To wait upon God is the same thing as your hoping in Him. He executes justice for the oppressed, it says in verse 7 of Psalm 146. Are you not thankful today that God watches over political state of our nation, and other nations becoming a threat to us? Yes, God does watch over our nation even as He watches over us as individual people. And He does not overlook all the injustice that Christians in this nation are experiencing in these days, at the hands of evil men. If you are waiting upon God and hoping in Him, you will be learning to pray to God about all that concerns you.

Psalm 25, verses 8 and 9 – “Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He teaches sinners in the way.” “The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way.” This very encouraging to learn is it not? That it is not the proud that God guides in justice, but the humble. And in the process of His guiding, He will teach you His way. His teaching you will be found coming to you in connection with your learning His way of doing things. His way is not your way. His way is not found by inclining your heart to your own wisdom, your own strength, or your own ability to make things happen, or to get things done. All must be done to the glory of God and to show forth your dependance on Him to have success. You will know His blessing all through the process of His teaching you.

Psalm 25, verses 12-15 – “Who is the man that fears the Lord?” “Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.” “He himself shall dwell in prosperity, and His descendants shall inherit the earth.” “The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.” “My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net.” And verses 19-22 say – “Consider my enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.” “Keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You.” “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You.” That is – I wait, hoping in You.

And then it says in verse 22 – “Redeem Israel, O God, out of all their troubles.” Did you know that not only individual people need to be redeemed from all their sins, but both individual people and the nation that they live in, need to be redeemed from all their troubles? Sometimes it is the nation that needs to be brought back from its troubles, and brought out of them? This is what hope remembers in the Christian’s mind and heart. Many other things are mentioned in verses 7-9 that God does. We should remember them also, as we hope in God. He gives food to the hungry, freedom to the prisoners, opens the eyes of the blind, and raises up those who are bowed down.

He watches over the strangers, He relieves the fatherless and the widow, and He turns the way of the wicked upside down. Why does He do all this? It is because of what it says in verse 8b – “The Lord loves the righteous.” He wants us to know that He reigns forever. And He is God to all generations. This is why we can be a happy people on the verge of this New Year. We have the God of Jacob for our help. You remember how much Jacob needed to learn about salvation, and doing what was right in all the difficult situations of his life. He had many things to learn, and he didn’t always want to learn them. But God loved him, and so He was willing to patiently teach him. He will do the same for you, dear Christian.

