

## Do Not Put Your Trust in Princes

### Psalm 146

People of God, Praising the Lord is our highest purpose on earth. The church exists to lead the world in the praise of Yahweh. We all praise something. It's natural to sing praises, to celebrate, to rejoice in something.

A common sentiment in the CREC is that man is not *Homo Sapiens* – wise man. Man is *Homo Adorans*, worshiping man. God created us to praise and worship Him.

C.S. Lewis writes in *Reflections on the Psalms* that the act of praising completes our enjoyment of what we love.

*“I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed...The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.”*

This is the passage from which John Piper famously reframed this very catechism question, saying, “The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever.” Our calling to praise God flows naturally out of our enjoyment of Him, and His good gifts and graces.

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

Sometimes, the call to praise the Lord is directed toward the entire congregation. As in the first verse. Praise the Lord is in the second person plural. You all, praise the Lord. Or, for my southern friends, Y'all praise the Lord.

However, there are also moments when we need to command ourselves as individuals to praise the Lord. As the psalmist says: *"Praise the Lord, O my soul."* He is speaking to himself. At times, praising the Lord is effortless—when the candidate you supported wins or when an unexpected check arrives just when you need it. In these moments, saying "Praise the Lord" feels almost instinctive.

Yet, there are other times when praise is difficult—when life doesn't go your way, when trials and hardships arise, when you lose your job, a loved one passes away, or you are confronted with your sins. In such moments, your soul may feel incapable of praise. But this is precisely when you need to praise the Lord the most. God is greater than your grief, stronger than your struggles, and His salvation surpasses your sins.

When your mind and heart are overwhelmed by difficulties, remember that there is one response that can bring peace to the chaos: Praise the Lord.

Notice also that when the psalmist commands himself to praise, he is preaching to himself. As Dr. Newheiser reminded us, we need to stop listening to ourselves, and we need to preach to ourselves. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We cannot trust the things our own hearts and minds tell us. But when we preach the word to ourselves, we remind command our souls to lift up praise to the One who is worthy, and who never lies. This is what the psalmist does—he commands his soul to praise the Lord.

Even now, in worship today we have ascended to the heavenly places in Christ, mystically joining with angels and archangels,

with Jesus and God the Father, and with all the saints. Yet some of you despite being in church and singing praise for 30 minutes, you still haven't truly praised the Lord because you have not engaged your soul in worship. You are still stuck in the muck of your own earthly problems.

The only One who can help you, amid your struggles, to praise the Lord is the Lord Himself who commands you to praise Him. He alone is worthy of adoration and worship.

And as you lift your heart to Him in praise and sing His songs from your soul, you'll find that your worries, anxieties, and burdens begin to fall into their rightful place. When you place God at the central height of your heart in worship and praise, everything else aligns according to His order.

**<sup>2</sup>While I live I will praise the Lord;  
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.**

I like what Doug Wilson said about this. When you go to a concert there is a time when the musicians begin to tune their instruments. It is not quite a song, but it holds the promise of something more glorious and beautiful to come. Such is our praise here. It is a time of tuning, that prepares us to praise God in perfect beauty in Heaven.

If we spend our earthly lives tuning our hearts to sing God's praise, then we will enter into that great heavenly choir and orchestra with hearts perfect tuned and capable of singing God's greatest eternal praise.

This life is a fleeting moment. Don't waste it in idleness, praising that which is destined to pass away. Devote your life to the kind of praise that resonates into eternity.

If you spend your limited time on earth praising what is eternal, you will enter into eternal glories, continuing to praise God for eternity. However, if you give your praise to that which is destined to perish, you too will perish alongside your fleeting, trivial praise.

This segues quite naturally into our next two verses.

**<sup>3</sup> Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.**

**<sup>4</sup> His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish.**

Now, I'm not going to downplay a Trump victory. I'm as glad as anyone that he won, and I hope and pray for generations of godly leaders to be raised up for the good of this people. But we must recognize that it's a common temptation for man to place our trust and sense of safety in earthly princes and rulers.

The left knows no other religion but worship of the state. When their candidate loses, they go through these public rituals of mourning and outrage over their loss. They record videos of themselves screaming and weeping and wailing because Trump won and their candidate lost. They create a spectacle of soul-wrenching grief because their "god" has failed them—and we all laugh at their meltdowns.

But we conservatives have our own sinful tendency that we need to recognize. When times get tough, when corrupt men are in power, we also despair. We might not record ourselves screaming,

but we do talk as if the only one who can save us is our next candidate. Who's going to save us from the disasters of the Biden Harris regime? "Trump will," we say. And so, we idolatrously put our faith in a son of Adam, whose breath is in his nostrils.

And in four years, what will we do when he fails to deliver? When promises go unkept and human leadership inevitably disappoints, we will call for yet another savior to clean up the mess the last one left, or didn't clean up.

In a sense, politics is the cycle of putting our trust in a man to fix the very problems that the last man created—or failed to solve.

We tend to think that we can vote our way out of our problems. But when our problems come to us as a result of great sinfulness and idolatry, calling out to God to give you another idol to save you, is not going to help.

Israel fell into this same trap. They cried out for a king like all the other nations to go out and fight their battles. But the problem wasn't God's ability to save them; it was their own sin that got them into trouble in the first place. They were attacked and oppressed because they'd given themselves over to sin and idolatry, and God handed them over to their enemies as judgment.

But instead of repenting, they layered idolatry upon idolatry, asking Samuel for a king like the other nations, who would fight their battles for them. God had already told them, again and again, that their true security lay in Him, the Divine warrior King.

But Israel rejected that, placing their trust in a prince, in a "son of Adam" for salvation – King Saul. Psalm 146:3 warns us plainly,

*Do not put your trust in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation,—in whom there is no Yeshua, no Jesus.*

How foolish, then, to put our hopes on another son of Adam, destined to return to the same dust as we are. Genesis 5 spells out the fate of every son of Adam: they die. Adam fathered Seth—and he died. Seth fathered Enosh—and he died. And on it goes, reminding us that no mortal can be our savior.

America's greatest problem is not just corrupt leaders or wicked people. It's that we keep looking to men to save us from the consequences of our sins, without turning away from our sins. But salvation can only be found in Jesus.

**“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.”** The word “help” here is the language of military defense and protection. It is connected frequently to the word “shield.” When people trust in God as their shield, rather than in a president or any earthly leader, they are truly blessed.

Yes, God may raise up leaders to provide temporary relief and protection, perhaps even to defend the nation in battle. But we must remember that these leaders are merely God's instruments. It is God who exalts rulers and brings them low. It is God who raises up kings and generals, presidents and senators, to accomplish His purposes—whether for blessing or judgment, whether to defend the people or bring them to repentance.

The good that may come through any leader's actions is ultimately a blessing from God. Our hope, our faith, our trust, and our salvation must rest in Jesus alone. He alone sits enthroned forever as King of kings and Lord of lords. Human

empires rise and fall, but His Kingdom endures forever. As Hebrews reminds us, here we have no lasting city.

So, instead of placing our trust in a man who will one day return to dust, let us place our faith, hope, and trust in the eternal God, in Jesus Christ, the One who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them.

This next half of the psalm ticks off the works of the Lord to prove that he is the one who alone is worthy of our praise.

#### <sup>6</sup> **“Who keeps truth forever”**

Jesus is not merely a messenger of truth—He *is* the truth. He declares in John 14:6, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*” When we trust in Him, we place our confidence in the One who is truth incarnate, who never falters or changes. His truth endures forever.

Ps. 116:11 says, in contrast, that all men are liars. So let us not put our trust in a liar, but in Him who keeps truth forever, and who is incapable of lying.

#### <sup>7</sup> **“Who executes justice for the oppressed”**

Christ came to bring justice to those who suffer under the weight of oppression. This was in large part the purpose of his earthly ministry.

Jesus says in Luke 4, quoting Isaiah 61:

<sup>18</sup> *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me  
To preach the gospel to the poor;*

*He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
 To proclaim liberty to the captives  
 And recovery of sight to the blind,  
 To set at liberty those who are oppressed;  
<sup>19</sup>To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

Also, in Revelation 18:20, the final destruction of Babylon the Great is announced, which is cause for Heaven’s rejoicing.

*“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”*

Jesus is the ultimate judge who brings righteous justice on behalf of His oppressed and persecuted people.

### **Jesus also “gives food to the hungry”**

Our Lord not only meets spiritual needs but also cares deeply for physical needs. Jesus miraculously fed the 4000, and the 5000, demonstrating that He is the Lord who gives food to the hungry. But Jesus himself is also the Bread of Life from Heaven who feeds our souls with eternal life. This verse teaches us that in Christ we find both physical provision and spiritual sustenance.

### **“The Lord gives freedom to the prisoners”**

Jesus proclaims in Luke 4:18 that He was sent “*to proclaim liberty to the captives.*” Christ came to break the chains of sin and bondage. In Matthew 12:29, He teaches that He has entered the strong man's house—that is, Satan's domain—and bound him, freeing those who were held captive. When Christ ascended, as



Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8 say, “*He led captivity captive,*” delivering all who were bound in sin, death, and the grave.

### **<sup>8</sup> “The Lord opens the eyes of the blind”**

When Jesus heals the man born blind in John 9, He opened both the man’s physical and spiritual eyes. The man boldly testifies, “*If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing*” (John 9:33).

Christ’s power to open blind eyes reveals Him to be the Lord. He enables us to see him and know him as the Lord.

### **“The Lord raises those who are bowed down”**

Jesus, filled with compassion, calls the oppressed to Himself and raises them up. In Luke 13:11-13, He heals a woman who had been bent over by an infirmity for eighteen years, saying, “*Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.*” Immediately she stands straight, glorifying God. Christ lifts up those bowed down under the weight of sorrow, sin, or suffering, giving restoration and healing.

### **“The Lord loves the righteous”**

Jesus’ love for His people is profound. John, who is described as “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*” (John 13:23), symbolizes the righteous whom Christ draws close to His heart. Those who pursue righteousness are beloved by the Lord, and in Jesus, this love is made personal and real, as He laid down His life for His friends.

### **<sup>9</sup> “The Lord watches over the strangers”**

In Mark 7:26, He shows compassion to a Syro-Phoenician woman, by casting a demon out of her daughter. The Jews have an absolute hatred for the Gentiles, but Christ’s love extends

beyond Israel to include people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Because Israel was a stranger in Egypt, God commanded them to be kind to the strangers who were in their land.

### **“He relieves the fatherless and widow”**

Jesus shows tender care for the most vulnerable, widows and orphans. In Luke 7:12, He encounters a widow at Nain whose only son has died. Moved by compassion, Jesus raises her son back to life. He is the defender of the fatherless and the protector of widows, embodying God’s promise of protection and provision for those without family support.

In our Gospel lesson in Mark 12 we heard the story of the widow’s mite. But let us not get the wrong interpretation of this passage. Many understand this passage to be a positive example of the widow who gave out of her poverty, and so we ought to do the same.

But that is not the point of this passage. Jesus warns against the scribes who exploit widows, describing them as those who "devour widows' houses" while pretending to be righteous. Mark then highlights this fact by showing a poor widow, who, despite her poverty, puts two copper coins into the treasury, stating that she contributed more than the rich because she gave all she had to live on.

This is not a good thing. The temple leaders were devouring this widow’s house. In Mark 13, immediately after this incident, Jesus and the disciples leave the temple, one of his disciples’ marvels at the buildings, but Jesus prophesies that they will be destroyed, with not one stone left upon another.

There is a common thread that we must understand here. The mistreatment of widows leads to the condemnation and the destruction of the temple. God's warnings against the mistreatment of widows are evident in Scripture, for example,

Ex. 22:22-24: <sup>22</sup>*You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child.* <sup>23</sup>*If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry,* <sup>24</sup>*and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.*

Prov. 15:25 - *The LORD tears down the house of the proud but maintains the widow's boundaries.*

Ps. 146:9 – *He relieves the fatherless and widow;  
But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.*

The scribes' exploitation of the widow prompts Jesus to promise the destruction of the proud who take advantage of the vulnerable. And so he prophesies the doom of the Temple.

The passage in Mark is not given to tell us that God desires for widows to give all they have so they have nothing to live on. That is exploitation and oppression. The very money that was collected at the temple was meant to be given to the widow. But who was receiving the benefits of the temple money? The rich Scribes, which is illustrated by their long expensive robes they wear.

**He relieves the fatherless and widow**

**But the way of the wicked He turns upside down”**

Jesus confronted and overturned the corruption in His day, exposing and rebuking evil wherever it was found. In Matthew 21:12, He enters the temple and turns over the tables of the

money changers, driving out their wickedness. Christ is a force of divine disruption against the plans of the wicked, proving that He will not let injustice or corruption have the last word. His justice shall prevail. And why? Because...

<sup>10</sup> **“The Lord shall reign forever”**

**Your God, O Zion, to all generations.**

In Revelation 11:15, we hear the resounding proclamation: *“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”* Jesus is not just a temporary leader; He is the eternal King whose reign will never end. His kingdom is the only enduring one, and in Him, we have the unshakable assurance of an everlasting rule filled with justice, mercy, and peace. It is best therefore to put your trust in Him who lives and reigns forever, and not in a son of Adam whose length of life is like a vapor and who will return to the dust when he dies.

As an aside, for those who are interested in Apologetics and are looking to prove that Jesus is God from the Scriptures, against Jehovah’s Witnesses or Muslims, just go to Psalm 146. The Lord, Jehovah, is the one who does all these things that we see Jesus doing in the Gospels. Jehovah is the one who...

*...keeps truth forever,*

<sup>7</sup>*Who executes justice for the oppressed,*

*Who gives food to the hungry.*

*The Lord gives freedom to the prisoners.*

<sup>8</sup>*The Lord opens the eyes of the blind;*

*The Lord raises those who are bowed down;*

*The Lord loves the righteous.*

*<sup>9</sup>The Lord watches over the strangers;*

*He relieves the fatherless and widow;*

*But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.*

*<sup>10</sup>The Lord shall reign forever—*

All these are things which Jesus did. Jesus is the Lord, Jesus is Jehovah, or Yahweh.

Therefore, every time you read in the Bible “Praise the Lord” it literally means, Praise Jesus.

In conclusion, Praise the Lord. Praise Jesus, he is the eternal king. Do not put your trust in princes. If any earthly ruler is going to be worth his salt, and have his works last into eternity, then he will strive to give all honor and glory and praise to Jesus Christ, the eternal king. He will publicly recognize and acknowledge that Jesus alone is the Savior, and the government is not the savior, but is meant to be a mere servant of Christ, a deacon.

And if any of you are going to be truly blessed, then you must sing Christ’s praise all your life. Jesus is the one whose allegiance you must swear to. Our trust must not be in some nameless, faceless, attributeless God which we place on our money or buildings. It must be the Triune God, and most especially the God Jesus Christ that we take refuge in. We must make our private and public prayers and praises to Christ, and to Christ alone.

When a national problem occurs, we must not be quicker to call upon the government to solve our problems, than we are to call

upon God in prayer. FEMA is not greater than Jesus. Jesus can use FEMA, Jesus can wield FEMA as a help. But it is Jesus who saves. Jesus can also wield the Royal Cajun Navy and Burma Rangers to bring supplies to the people trapped in the mountains of North Carolina.

The Lord Jesus is the one with whom we have to deal, and we must never ascribe power or glory or honor, that is reserved for Christ alone to the government, or any political leader. Put not your trust in princes.

Neither should we place expectations and responsibilities of our political leaders to do things that only Jesus can do. The State is not the Savior, and so we must stop expecting it to act like it.

None of this is meant to cast a wet blanket on a Donald Trump presidency. I am happy that we have Trump to be our President. But our response to Donald Trump is to praise the Lord. For the Lord is the one who gave Trump and Vance to us, and the Lord is the one who will take them away from us.

So it is best that we keep an eternal perspective about all these things, and continue to place our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and not in a son of man in whom there is no salvation, in whom there is no Jesus. Therefore...

**Praise the Lord! Praise Jesus.**

Amen.