

HELP AND HOPE IN GOD

I. [Psalm 146:1-10](#)

A. Psalm 146, just ten verses in length, does not fail to deliver. It's called one of the Hallelujah Psalms. It tells us where to put our trust and why. It also tells us where not to put our trust. It reminds us that God is our all-powerful, all-knowing, Creator, and that He cares for His children--those oppressed, hungry, disabled, imprisoned, downtrodden, wandering, widowed and orphaned. Oh that we might have our hearts aimed towards the same people! After all, they are us...

1) V1-4 "Oh Praise the Lord (a.k.a. Hallelujah)! 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. 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." (As for princes, remember Jesus' encounter with Pilate? Read John 19:9-11)

2) God has founded three institutions, the family, church, and civil government. He directs us to honor those in governmental authority--from the President on down to the county dog catcher. Paul and Peter instruct us to pray for those in authority, both elected and appointed, and to show them respect. (*Nero was in power when those words were penned.*) We dare not trust 'princes' to bring about Camelot, utopia, Shangri-La, or the Kingdom of God on the earth. Elect to put your trust in God!

3) V5 "Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God..." (Jacob was a schemer; his name means supplanter; he was sneaky and conniving and yet he was chosen by God! After wrestling with an angel all night, his hip was put out of joint and he limped the rest of his life. God changed his name to Israel: 'He who strives with God.' We could rename ourselves Millersport Jacob Church. We're a conglomeration of trolls, ragamuffins, and guttersnipes. We're the *Island of Misfit Toys*, the *Bad News Bears*, the *Not So Mighty Ducks*. Our statement of faith here at St. Jake's says we believe in the God of multiple chances. Our slogan is, '3 strike and you're in!') (Quotes by Philip Yancey and R.C. Sproul...)

4) V6-9 "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 prisoners 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." (Who is this God of help and hope that He is mindful of us?! Where do you take your broken hearts and crushed spirits?) (Psalm 147:3-6; Psalm 34:17-18)

5) V10 "The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the Lord! (a.k.a. Hallelujah)! (The Psalm ends with the same word it begins with...)

B. So where do you fit in with respect to Almighty God--this One who keeps count of the stars and numbers the hairs on your head? Is His heart aimed at you? Is your heart turned towards Him? Has He opened your blind eyes and made you to see? Has He made you alive? Has He declared you not guilty? Has He set you Free? Has He served you adoption papers? Is He your Help and your Hope? Can you claim the words the old hymn your very own? "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the Solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand." (Standing or sinking?)

C. Or perhaps you plan to stand before Him someday and present your own record of righteousness. You're more like the pharisee than the tax collector. You're smart, savvy, and popular; you have lots of friends and influence lots of people. And plus you give to the United Way. You wrap yourself each night in your Wounded Warrior blanket. You're well read. You've got several diplomas on your wall. You're a physical specimen, you eat right and take vitamins, you're healthy, wealthy, and wise. Arnold, Trump, and Dr. Phil are all impressed. You've got more silver and gold in your portfolio than William Devane. You've got more toys than Hasbro & Mattel. You've trophy case is loaded. If the draft were held tomorrow, you'd be a first rounder for sure. But do you belong to Christ?

D. Meanwhile, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (NIV) is encouragement for all of us trolls and guttersnipes: "Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, Who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

* Close with Prayer...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Psalm 146:1-10 (ESV)

1 Oh 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!

John 19:9-11 (ESV)

9 He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. **10** So Pilate said to Him, "You will not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You and authority to crucify You?" **11** Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over Me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered Me over to you has the greater sin."

Psalm 147:3-6 (ESV)

3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. **4** He determines the number of the stars; He gives to all of them their names. **5** Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; His understanding is beyond measure. **6** The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked to the ground.

Psalm 34:17-18 (ESV)

17 When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. **18** The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (NIV)

26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. **27** But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. **28** God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, **29** so that no one may boast before Him. **30** It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, Who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. **31** Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

Quote by Philip Yancey

"As I look around on Sunday morning at the people populating the pews, I see the risk that God has assumed. For whatever reason, God now reveals Himself in the world not through a pillar of smoke and fire, not even through the physical body of His Son in Galilee, but through the mongrel collection that comprises my local church and every other such gathering in God's name."

- Philip Yancey, *Church: Why Bother?: My Personal Pilgrimage*, p. 68.

Quote by R.C. Sproul

"For a Christian to be a Christian, he must first be a sinner. Being a sinner is a prerequisite for being a church member. The Christian church is one of the few organizations in the world that requires a public acknowledgement of sin as a condition for membership."

- R.C. Sproul, *Reason to Believe: A Response to Common Objections to Christianity*.

My Hope Is Built/The Solid Rock

Words: Edward Mote Tune: Solid Rock, William Bradbury, Circa 1863

<http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/m/y/h/myhopeis.htm>

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace.
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood.
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found.
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

Film Clips & Other Links

The Call of God - John Piper

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyojmsdOIIA>

When Sparrows Fall - Britt Merrick

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOiZG4Vy_x0

"Come On (My Soul)" - Rend Collective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SswMKsFaHWE>

All Truth is God's Truth - Article and Podcast by R.C. Sproul

<http://renewingyourmind.org/broadcasts/2014/09/15/truth-its-contrary>

Is Your Church Bending the Truth? by Jason F. Wright

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2015/03/13/is-your-church-bending-truth/#.VQW9wICLP0Q.email>

Bonus Stuff

Psalm 68:4-6 (NKJV)

4 Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Extol Him who rides on the clouds, by His name YAH, and rejoice before Him. **5** A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation. **6** God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

Romans 13:1-7 (ESV)

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. **2** Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. **3** For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, **4** for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. **5** Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. **6** For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. **7** Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 (ESV)

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, **2** for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. **3** This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, **4** Who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Peter 2:13-17 (NIV)

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, **14** or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. **15** For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. **16** Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. **17** Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of. Our attention would have been on God."

Quote by John Calvin

"Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, there a church of God exists, even if it swarms with many faults."

Quote by Donald Grey Barnhouse

"The Church was not left in this world to perfume the dung-heap of fallen humanity, but to take out, one by one, those who will be saved from the coming destruction."

Quote by Francis Fénelon

"It should be remembered that even the best people leave much to be desired, and we must not expect too much... Do not allow yourself to turn away from people because of imperfections... I have found that God leaves, even the most spiritual people, certain weaknesses which seem entirely out of place."

- Francois Fénelon, 17th Century Theologian.

Quote by Edwin Gray Hurley

"What makes a church perfect is imperfect people like you and me caring enough about God and each other, and bringing enough of our real, broken, imperfect lives to the Lord who can take them and make us new. Jesus Christ, who turned water into wine, can turn imperfect people like you and me into new people. He can create the perfect, or the real, church."

- Gray Hurley, *The Perfect Church*.

Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon

"The day we find the perfect church, it becomes imperfect the moment we join it."

Quote by D. A. Carson

"What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything else of that sort. Christians come together because they have all been loved by Jesus Himself. They are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus' sake."

Quote by Tim Keller

"Churches that are filled with self-righteous, exclusive, insecure, angry, moralistic people are extremely unattractive. Their public pronouncements are often highly judgmental, while internally such churches experience many bitter conflicts, splits, and divisions. When one of their leaders has a moral lapse, the churches either rationalize it and denounce the leader's critics, or else they scapegoat him. Millions of people raised in or near these kinds of churches reject Christianity at an early age or in college largely because of their experience. For the rest of their lives, then, they are inoculated against Christianity. If you are a person who has been disillusioned by such churches, anytime anyone recommends Christianity to you, you assume they are calling you to adopt "religion." Pharisees and their unattractive lives leave many people confused about the real nature of Christianity."

Quote by Jack Miller

"Cheer up: You're a worse sinner than you ever dared imagine, and you're more loved than you ever dared hope."

- Jack Miller (1928–1996), Pastor of New Life Presbyterian Church, Jenkintown, PA.

Genesis 32:1-32 (ESV)

1 Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. **2** And when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" So he called the name of that place Mahanaim. **3** And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, **4** instructing them, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now. **5** I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male servants, and female servants. I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight.'" **6** And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and there are four hundred men with him." **7** Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps, **8** thinking, "If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape." **9** And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,' **10** I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that You have shown to Your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. **11** Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. **12** But you said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'" **13** So he stayed there that night, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau, **14** two hundred female

goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, **15** thirty milking camels and their calves, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. **16** These he handed over to his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on ahead of me and put a space between drove and drove." **17** He instructed the first, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these ahead of you?' **18** then you shall say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a present sent to my lord Esau. And moreover, he is behind us.'" **19** He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, "You shall say the same thing to Esau when you find him, **20** and you shall say, 'Moreover, your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he thought, "I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterward I shall see his face. Perhaps he will accept me." **21** So the present passed on ahead of him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp. **22** The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. **23** He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. **24** And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. **25** When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. **26** Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." **27** And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." **28** Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." **29** Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. **30** So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." **31** The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. **32** Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the thigh.