

## Seeking Hope

### Psalm 146

This Scripture doesn't seem very much like a Scripture that would be read during the season of Lent. This Scripture seems to be more appropriate to be read during the Season of Advent with all this talking about "Praising God". When we think of Lent, our minds don't immediately go to praising God. Our minds usually go towards images of journeys, images of the cross, images of wilderness and the notion of "praising God" gets lost in translation. But that's the good news of Psalm 46. That's the guiding light of Psalm 146. That's why we read Psalm 146 during the Season of Lent.

As we journey and make new discoveries, we sometimes lose our way. We sometimes forget that God is working in the world. We sometimes forget that the darkness does not have the last word. And we begin to wonder where is God? We begin to wonder why God is not working in our world? We begin to wonder how God can let this happen?

As we journey through Lent, we don't want to face the darkness, the despair, the suffering along the way and Psalm 146 reminds us that it doesn't work that way, God doesn't work that way, life doesn't work that way.

Psalm 146 reminds us that as people of faith, our first and foremost, calling is to praise God, in all of life's circumstances. Psalm 146 reminds us to remember that God has acted in the past and God will act again. Psalm 146 reminds us to sing God's praises even when the darkness threatens to overtake the light. Psalm 146 gives us hope for the journey, strength for the journey, courage for the journey because it reminds us that the only way we can be true to our calling as people of God is to remember that we are called to have hope and to remember that only God can save, to remember that all of our plans, that all the promises of leaders do not last. Not because we fail to see our promises through but because we are human, we are mortal, we are temporary. We are called to praise God because we understand that our God is faithful always, that our God has acted in the past, continues to act in the present, and has given us the true promise that God will act in the future.

We praise God because we are grounded in the trust and secure in the knowledge that God watches over us, protects us, guides us, no matter what mountains or valleys of death that we might pass through along the way.

Psalm 146 is to known as a Halleluiah psalm; and speaks so beautifully and simply. The very basic purpose of this psalm is to sing the praise of God and to call all people to do the same. And in doing this seemingly simple act, this psalm

speaks to the very foundation of our faith that we proclaim as God's people. We are in a relationship with God and as we journey, we experience the good, the bad, the ugly, and the breath-takingly beautiful with God. And When we sing praises to God, we remember and remind ourselves that God is God. The same God who made the highest mountain. The same God who made the delicate butterfly wings. The same God who placed the stars in heavens and the same God who formed us and knows us completely.

God is God. And for God to be God, God must act in certain ways. God is a God of justice. God is a God of peace. God is a God of grace. And God is a God of Love.

And this is the God that calls us to be in relationship with God. And in this relationship, we are called to bring our joys, our concerns, our anger, our sorrows, our celebrations, our doubts and all through it all, trust and have hope in God on the "basis of God's sure and saving deeds and attributes."

we understand that "faith in God does not spare [us] as God's servants from difficulties. But faith equips us to live with courage and with hope despite the difficulties of life." As people of faith, we are called to trust in God especially when "life circumstances seem to call God's trustworthiness into question."

And that's the good news of Psalm 146. The author remembers and celebrates that he is God's own, created, claimed and named. The author remembers that God has acted in the past and God will act again. The author remembers that even though the darkness threatens to overtake the light, the light will not fully be extinguished because God has the last word. The author celebrates and reminds people of faith to remember that plans and leadership fall away, not just because they are fallible, but also because they are temporary. Only God remains. Only God is eternal. Only God is trust-worthy.

And when we celebrate this good news, we have hope!

And so the psalmist reminds himself and reminds us today that as people of faith, as we journey to the cross, as we journey through life and experience all of life's ups and downs, we are called to praise God, , secure in the knowledge of God's promises and celebrate that God holds us in the palm of God's hand.

The author reminds us that we hold to the promise that one day we will be a part of God's Kingdom, where God will rule, where there will be no more pain, where there will be no more suffering but in the meantime the author reminds us that it will courage to live as a person of faith in world where darkness threatens to take over. It will take courage strengthen by the promises of God to proclaim the Good News in the midst of a world that is broken, hurting, and disconnected. It

will take courage to proclaim that this world does not have the last word. God does. It will take courage to travel the path and journey to the cross this Lenten season. And that courage is grounded in hope because we are called to sing and to praise, to pray “as Jesus taught us: “Thy will be done, Thy kingdom come.” We sing and praise God because we have hope! Because we know that God has the last word.

When we hear these words from Psalm 146 along our Lenten journey, they reminds us that sometimes we place our trust in things, in abilities, in ourselves before we place our trust in God. These words of Psalm 146 remind us that we sometimes gain a sense of false courage because we think we can handle the situation on our own or that we have an arsenal of weapons that we can rely on to defeat any situation.

These words of Psalm 146 remind us that all of those things are temporary. They fade with time. They break down. They fail. They crumble in despair. Our bodies begin to creak and crack more with each passing year. And only God remains. Only God is sure. Psalm 146 reminds us that only by having faith in God do we have the true courage to live the life of a child of God, that only by sing the praises of God, do we remember that God has acted in the past, continues to act in the present, and will act always for us as God’s people.

We know as people of faith, We will be called into some difficult situations. We will have to give voice to the voiceless. We will have to be pushed out of our comfort zones. We may have to go to place that are unknown. We may have to speak out against the injustices that we see in our community around us. We may find ourselves in situations where we are on opposites sides from our family and our friends. We may even have to love our neighbors as ourselves. It will take courage, courage grounded and secure in God's promises, courage sustained by trust in God because "to have courage is to speak from the heart, to listen to our heart, and to act from our heart." Courage that is grounded in hope.

We are called to be a people of hope. And through all of life's highest mountain top experiences and lowest valleys of the shadows of death, we are to praise God, to be strong, and to let our hearts sing. Psalm 146 reminds us that the Lord is faithful; that our God gives sight to the blind; that our God brings justice to the oppressed; that our God is eternal and everlasting.

Hear the Good News: There is hope in praising God. There is hope in preparing for the coming of the Lord. There is hope in continuing the journey to the cross. There is hope in trusting in the Lord.

We sing because we're happy. We sing because we're free. We sing because we're God's. We sing with a purpose and that purpose is to praise God through all

life's varied circumstances. We sing because we have hope. We have hope because we praise God, through all life's varied circumstances.

And remember that God is faithful always. That God is always with us. That God alone saves.

All of which gives us hope to continue our journey as people of faith. All of which gives us hope because we see the presence of God in the one we call the Messiah. All of which gives us hope to sing God's praises, in the spite of the cross, in spite of what awaits us in Jerusalem, in spite of a world that tells us our praises of gladness will not amount to anything or make a difference.

As people of hope, as people seeking the Messiah, we know differently. We sing praises to God because we have hope. We have hope because we sing praises to God and remember that our God saves.

May we continue to seek the Messiah who gives us hope always. Amen.