

How To Be Happy In The Lord

Psalm 146

Introduction: 1) The final 5 songs of Psalms both begin and end with the word “Hallelujah”, translated “praise” in English versions such as the *NKJV*, *NASV*, *ESV*, and *NIV*.

2) Psalm 146 is the first of this hallelujah quintet. It is appropriate that the psalter end in this way. Two other sections of psalms bunched hallel psalms (113-118 and 120-136), and now we come to the end of our journey thru the psalms with the “double Hallelujah psalms.

3) Our world is filled with sin and sorrow to be sure, but we serve a Great God who made everything (v. 6), keeps His word (v. 6), does what is right (v. 7) and helps those who are hurting (v. 7-9). For such a God we can say “Hallelujah!”

What exactly does this unknown psalmist (146-150 are all anonymous) teach us so that like him, we can be happy in the Lord?

I. I will praise the Lord

146:1-2

- The psalm begins literally “praise yah”, a single word in Hebrew. It is pronounced hallelujah. The psalmist vows to praise Yahweh (Jehovah), the Lord, “as long as I live” (*ESV*, *NIV*).
- Interestingly the Lord is mentioned eleven times in this psalm. A happy life will be a theocentric life, a God-centered/God focused/God intoxicated life.

1. I will praise Him from my soul 146:1

- The call to praise the Lord is in the form of an imperative, a word of command.
- From the depths of our soul and with all that we are we should praise the Lord.

2. I will praise Him with my singing 146:2

- What lives in our soul will find its way to our lips. We must determine to praise the Lord with our singing “as long as we live,” even when we hurt, sorrow and are confused.
- Genuine praise to our God will:
 - 1) Engage the mind
 - 2) Stir the emotions
 - 3) Move the will
 - 4) Require work
 - 5) Be rooted in God’s revelation of Himself

II. I will trust the Lord

146:3-4

- The psalmist calls us to trust the Lord but does so by negative examples. These examples highlight the finitude, impotency and transitory nature of human life.

1. I will not trust those who cannot save me 146:3

- Kings and princes, presidents and governors are powerful and influential. Still, they are mere mortal men, the meaning of the phrase “son of man” in verse 4.
- They are men not gods. They are flesh and blood humans like you and me.
- Sadly many put more hope in Capitol Hill than Calvary’s hill! They put more hope in a government than they do God! They forget Proverbs 21:1 which

says, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

2. I will not trust those who cannot save themselves 146:4
- Not only can mere mortals not save us, they cannot even save themselves. The *ESV* says it well, “When his breath departs (*NIV* “spirit departs”) he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.”
 - Death comes to us all. (cf. Genesis 3:19).
 - *First Maccabees* 2:63, an intertestamental Hebrew writing, says it well, “Today he may be high in honour, but tomorrow there will be no trace of him, because he will have returned to the dust and all his schemes come to nothing.”

III. I will hope in the Lord

146:5-9

- These verses constitute the heart of the psalm. They inform us concerning the character and conduct of our God, who He is and what He does.
- The student of the Bible will immediately see a connection between vs. 5-9 and the Messianic text of Isaiah 61:1-3, as well as the words of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 and 7:22-23.
- Here in Psalm 146 we are charged to find our help, our place our hope, in the God of Jacob, Jehovah (Yahweh) our God (v. 5). The God of Jacob is a reminder that our God is a covenant-keeping God who helped the patriarchal schemer in his times of need and even desperation.
- The title “God of Jacob” appears at least a dozen times in Psalms.
- The beatitude or blessing of verse 5 is the last of 25 in the Psalms beginning with Psalm 1:1.
 - 1) He helps His covenant people 146:5
 - 2) He made everything 146:6
He is the Creator God of Genesis 1-2 as well as the covenant God of Genesis 12 and 2 Samuel 7.
 - 3) He keeps His word 146:6
 - 4) He helps the oppressed 146:7
 - Those who would abuse the oppressed should recognize they make God their enemy. All will face his justice at the Great White Throne (unbelievers) of Revelation 20:11-15 or The Judgment Seat of God (believers) of 2 Corinthians 5:10.
 - 5) He feeds the hungry 146:7
 - (See John 6:35; Matthew 25:34-46).
 - 6) He frees prisoners 146:7
 - William Wilberforce (1759-1833) who led the abolition of slave trade comes to mind.
 - Of course the greatest liberation is that of the Lord Jesus who thru his cross and resurrection sets us free from sin, Satan, death, hell and the grave. Ephesians 4:8 wonderfully reminds us, “When he ascended on high, He led captivity captive.”
 - 7) He gives sight to the blind 146:8
 - Jesus came as the “Light of the World” (John 8:12).
 - 8) He exalts the humble 146:8

- Consider the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31.
 - Hear the words of James 4:6.
- 9) He loves the righteous 146:8
- The Lord loves those who are made righteous in Christ and pursue righteousness in all they do. They are not carnal pragmatist who believe the ends justifies the means.
- 10) He cares for the aliens 146:9
- God watches over the alien, “he protects the stranger” (*NASV*). God cares for the outsider, the minority, the foreigner. He has a unique and particular concern for them. Do you? Do I?
- 11) He sustains the fatherless and widows 146:9
- 12) He frustrated the way of the wicked 146:9
- God ruins the way of the wicked (*ESV*), He frustrates (*NIV*) their plans.
 - (cf. Proverbs 14:11-12).

IV. I will exalt the Lord

146:10

The psalm ends as it begins, on the high note of a hallelujah or praise of the Lord. And yet a new note is added, the note of Yahweh’s eternal kingship and reign.

1) He reigns forever

- Revelation 11:15 says it so beautifully.

2) His reign is from Zion

- Zion is the earthly home of the King. Echoes of Psalm 2:6-8 can be heard in the corridors of heaven, “Yet I have set my King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession.”
- Wiersbe notes, “This statement comes from the song of victory that Israel sang at the Exodus... Think of it: the sovereign Lord of the universe is our heavenly Father! (378).

Conclusion:

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
 O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!
 All ye who hear, now to His temple draw near;
 Join me in glad adoration!
 Praise to the Lord, who o’er all things so wondrously reigneth,
 Shelters thee under His wings, yes, so gently sustaineth!
 Hast thou not seen how all thy longings have been
 Granted in what He ordaineth?
 Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
 Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee.
 Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
 If with His love He befriend thee.
 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!
 All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before Him.
 Let the Amen, sound from His people again:
 Gladly for aye we adore Him.