

# Psalm 146

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[ 0 : 00 ] So this psalm, we've been doing this summer psalms over the summer, thinking about different songs that God has given to us in his word that we can sing to him, that we can pray to him.

And we're on Psalm 146. This psalm is a song of praise to the God who, and in this psalm that focuses on who delivers, or who liberates, you might say, who sets free the loathlete.

It is a song of praise. And praising, as we know, as I've just said to the kids, which I'm going to develop a little bit, is not an exclusively Christian idea, because everybody praises.

Praise is the expression of approval, of admiration, for someone or something. And we praise things all the time. It is good to praise people when they've done something.

It is good to praise kids when they show you something they've done that they're pleased with. It encourages them and says, you say, well done, that's great. What a great thing you've done.

[ 1 : 04 ] Well done, you've played football really well. You've got a great report from school, or whatever it is. It encourages our children. But praise is also used to express to others what we think of something.

You know that we do that when we get something new, like, I don't know, if you get a new car, or if you've gone to buy new clothes, and there's a new shop that matches your style.

We praise them, don't we? We say, come and see this amazing technology, my new car. Come and see this latest clothes range at, I don't know, Superdry or Oasis. And the praise has an impact on the person who's hearing it, as they think, oh, I must try it out, whatever this, it sounds so great. It impacts the one that you're speaking to. But it also impacts the one who's doing the praising. Because as you praise your own enthusiasm, you get more excited about the thing that you're praising.

Two of my big sort of loves outside of the Bible, Live Sport and Star Wars. If I think about it, even if I'm on my own, I get excited just by thinking about it.

[ 2 : 20 ] But the more I talk and praise it to other people about any Live Sport and Star Wars, the more praise I give it, the more I want to talk about it. I don't know if you have this.

When I do that, I go into this kind of weird nostalgia, where you reminisce about either scenes from the movies, or sporting events which got me excited, which I never get old or tired of telling people about or watching.

But equally, when I talk to other people who like Live Sport and Star Wars, when they start talking about it, when they start praising it to me, I get excited about it.

There's kind of a mutual praise and a mutual encouragement as we talk about the things that we're excited about. Once you start looking, you can see that praise, praising things is actually everywhere.

Because actually there's kind of a worship happening everywhere, every day. Sports the biggest. This afternoon, it's kind of like the Premier League.

[ 3 : 24 ] There's actually, next week the Premier League starts, but today is like the start of the football season in England. They've got the charity shield on. If you watch football times next time, if you're watching the sport, you see the passion with which football fans sing about their team.

Arms in the air, eyes closed, singing at the top of their lungs. Because it's praise. They're in a church. It's a gathering of people.

It's worship to them. They're gathering, watching something that they're praising. There's people that they're singing their names. Why? Because they delight and have so much joy in being there, in reminiscing about what their team has done for them.

They reminisce about the moments they felt the adrenaline, the excitement about just being there, and what people have given to them in their lives. We, people, we are hardwired, everyone, humanity, hardwired to praise, to things we enjoy, and we're hardwired to be affected by the praise of others.

And by when others praise about stuff in front of us, and we want to be praised too, praise, it is intrinsic to our humanity. There is a reason for that.

[ 4 : 42 ] There is a reason for that. You were made to praise, and you were made to sing, because you were made to sing and to praise, and actually to lift your hands to the one who actually deserves all the praise and worship.

There is never a time, never a time, when praising God is not an appropriate thing to do. He's always worthy of every ounce of enthusiastic celebration of all that He is. There is a worship band in the States called Sovereign Grace Music, and they have this amazing song where they express the praise of God.

And they say, No praise is high enough, no thanks is deep enough, no life is long enough to tell of all you've done, no shout is loud enough, no words are strong enough, no song is sweet enough to sing your love.

No matter how much we praise or speak about God, He's always worth more. You can't out praise Him. You can't inflate His ego or be too gushing.

If you started singing now and sung as we, one of the hymns we sung, 10,000 reasons, in 10,000 years time, if you started singing now, there'd be more reasons to keep singing for eternity.

[ 5 : 54 ] And so we're going to be thinking about this this morning as we look at this psalm, which is of praise, as we think, what is praise and why do we do it?

We're going to be thinking about that. Three points. Praise God who encourages, praise the God who helps, and praise the God who delivers the needy. So praise, praising God encourages, praise the God who helps, and then praise God who delivers the needy.

Before we jump into it all, it is worth knowing that this psalm is the first of the last five psalms in the Book of Psalms. They're known as the Hallel Psalms, or you might say Hallelujah Psalms.

Hallel in Hebrew just means praise. Yah means Lord, Yahweh. So you put them together.

Hallelujah. The Hallel means praise the Lord.

It means praise Yah, praise the Lord. And if you look through Psalm 146 to 150, you have Hallelujah all the time. It says praise the Lord. So these are praise psalms.

[ 6 : 59 ] This is a psalm of praise, and praise is there to well up joy in us. It's meant to be psalms that lift us to rejoice in what God does, and what God has done, and what He will do.

It designed us to lift us, to lift us from however we feel, to be confident in His goodness. That doesn't mean that we're only supposed to sing it when we're happy or feeling great, but it's supposed to lift us however we feel, that there's always reasons to praise the Lord.

And the reason we know that is because of how this harm starts, and how it ends, which is what we're going to look at first. Praise the God who encourages. Now, music is used all the time, and songs are there to affect our emotions.

If you've ever, whatever you do, the music that you listen to, you choose songs based on the music and the lyrics, or at least I do, depending on the activity that you're doing.

I remember, before I was a Christian, whenever I had an exam, at school or at university, I used to listen, like the last five minutes, before I went into the exam hall, I used to listen to the same song on repeat.

[ 8 : 19 ] It was Right Here, Right Now by Fat Boy Slim. Now, that seems a strange choice, but it used to get me motivated and pumped, that I was going to pass. Like, it made me feel like, right here, right now, I've got this exam covered, I'm going to do it.

It wouldn't have the same impact, if I decided to listen to some, like, 80s power balance. Because I took the lyrics, Right Here, Right Now, to mean, you've got this exam, Right Here, Right Now, you're going to be okay.

You're ready for it. The songs of the Old Testament, the Psalms, they're not different to that in many ways. The difference is, it's not the words of Fat Boy Slim, but God's own words, which have intrinsically more power, to lift us.

At the beginning, at the beginning, and the end of the psalm, we see, who the psalmist is singing to. At the beginning, I want you to, I want us to notice, he starts actually, by singing to himself.

You see that? He's actually singing to his own soul. And, this is not an alien concept. Either we sing to ourselves, well, maybe, I don't know if everyone does. I think I sing to myself quite a lot.

[ 9 : 29 ] In the shower, we've all sung in the Cairo, when we're on our own, and nobody's watching, played air guitar. Here, through the psalmist, God is telling us, that singing to yourself, singing to your own soul, his words, is good for you.

Look, verse one, praise the Lord, and then, praise the Lord, my soul. We might call it today, self-talk, or soul-talk. He said, praise the Lord.

He's saying, come on soul, praise the Lord. He's, in a sense, he's commanding his own soul, to praise the Lord. Reminding himself, of why he should.

Now, we don't know the details, particular to the psalmist. Maybe, he didn't feel like, praising the Lord that day, but, that's true of us some days. But, what the psalmist, is in doing, is encouraging himself, he's, it's almost like, a godly pep talk.

Come on soul, praise the Lord. There's reasons to do that. It's good to do that. Singing praise to God. Even if you don't, feel like it. Even if, you think like, you can't sing.

[ 10 : 37 ] Lifting your voice, to the Lord, telling yourself, to do it, is good, because, it connects, our emotions, with worship. It does something, in you, that, is different. And you notice, this is not just, a one time thing, for him either.

He says, I will praise the Lord, all my life. I will sing, to my God, I will sing praise, to my God, as long as I live. And, so can I, can I encourage you, that we, take the way, that the psalmist, lives his life.

That he encourages himself, to praise. And make time, in our week. And do it, when you don't feel like it. The best time. To remind yourself, of his goodness.

Maybe, if you're daring, even to sing it to yourself. Might feel a little bit awkward, but, we do it with other songs. Why not use God's own word? Or if you don't do that, put it in your headphones, listen to it, put it in the car.

Use praise, to, to, to, to, to get your own soul, to be praising the Lord. Reminding yourself, of why, he deserves, to be praised. But also, I want us to notice, how, how it changes, to the end of the psalm.

[ 11 : 47 ] He starts by, telling his soul, to praise the Lord. By the end of the psalm, he isn't just singing to himself, but he's singing to God's, people. You go to the end, verse 10. The Lord reigns, forever.

Your God, or Zion, for all generations. Praise, the Lord. Zion, is a synonym, if you like, for Jerusalem.

Mount Zion, is where Jerusalem is built. Then, when Zion is referred to, it's referring to God's, worshipping people. He, he's singing to God's people.

He's saying, the Lord reigns, forever. You're good. God's people, Zion, for all generations, you should praise the Lord. The Lord reigns, forever, all generations, all God's people.

You should praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. The song, was written to be sung, together, as a gathered people, where each worshipper, would begin, by singing to their own soul, and finish by singing, to one another.

[ 12 : 51 ] We should all praise the Lord. To encourage one another, praising the Lord, lifting up his name, is always, always worth it. It's always needed. It's always appropriate, reminding, of what he has done.

And don't we know that, in our own experience, of meeting on every Sunday. There are times, I know for myself, when we sing, when the words, from the hymn, or the psalm, are very personal, and it feels like, it's just you singing.

Or you concentrate on that. And it encourages us, to be singing to God, when the words matter to us, as individuals. But equally, I know that there are times, when I've noticed, how loud, everyone else is singing.

And I hear, other voices, and voices, the voices of people, that I know. And it's encouraging, to hear them sing. One of the things, that I really find encouraging, is when I hear someone singing, who I know, is going, through a rough time themselves.

Because, it witnesses, of faith. What an amazing work, God is doing. If they can sing, and praise God, that loudly, in the middle of difficulty, if they can sing, praise the Lord my soul.

[ 14 : 04 ] Oh church, praise the Lord, Zion, praise the Lord, he reigns forever. If they can sing that, it's encouraging, to know that God, is at work, in the midst, of difficulty.

And I can see it. What an encouragement. So praise the Lord. They're here, to praise the Lord. So that's what we get, at the beginning, and end of the psalm.

Telling ourselves, and telling one another, to praise the Lord. But the central verse, which really, I think the psalm, is wrapped around, it comes in verse 5, which is all about, the God, who helps. Praising the Lord, because he's the one, who helps. It comes in verse 5. Blessed are those, whose help, is the God of Jacob, whose hope, is in the Lord, their God. Now this verse, it comes immediately, after a warning, in verses 3 and 4.

The warning concerns, is where help, doesn't come from. Help comes from God, the God of Jacob, but does not come, from human powers. Verse 3, do not put your trust, in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.

[15:10] Now often, when we read verse 3, we might assume, that the psalmist, wrote it, because at that time, there must have been, an issue, a pointed problem, in which God's people, were actually, trusting human powers, in human beings.

We always need, to be warned, from doing that. But, let's just remember, this is a psalm of praise, about what God has done, is doing, and will do. It's not like, other psalms, a psalm of lament, or a psalm of judgment, against God's people.

So, we might ask, well if that, if that's not the case, if it's not all about, what people are doing, why is it there? It is there, this warning, actually, because, the negative, magnifies, what God does.

In stating the negative, it shows, how different, God is to men. It's there, to accentuate, the positive, by stating the salvation, that man, can't offer, it amplifies, the salvation, that God does, offer.

How holy, how magnificent, the liberation, and deliverance, is, that he offers. The negative, is that man, can only ever, offer you, temporary relief, from an issue, you're dealing with.

[16:30] He can only ever, offer you, temporary relief. And the reason, is because of verse 4, is true of every person. When their spirit, departs, they return to the ground, and on that very day, their plans, come to nothing.

It's not talking about, wicked people, who make, who make plans. It's true, of a godly person, if, if trust is put in a person, or something other than God, ultimately, either, either you, you'll fail, by not living up, to the plan you've made, or plans, die with the person.

This is a quick example. If, if someone, is, if someone, is lonely, if someone is lonely, and they, joined us, a, a, a community, which is, would be a great thing, but, but they joined us, because, they wanted to be delivered, from loneliness.

That, ultimate deliverance, does not come, ultimately, from putting their trust, in the community, or one of us, that would visit. Because, what would happen, if, if that person, that was doing all that visiting, passed away?

And what would be a good thing? Ultimate deliverance, actually comes, because the person, who's lonely, needs Jesus Christ, in their life. We can make an idol, of community, and community, won't, won't be lasting, ultimate deliverance.

[17:51] Considering this, what man can't do, amplifies, what God can do. It amplifies, how different God is, and how great, what he does is. It accentuates, the deliverance, and the salvation, that he offers.

It is not temporary. His spirit, will never depart, and return to the ground. He's the living God, who reigns, and whose plans, always achieve, what they were set out to do. Blessed are those, whose help, is the God of Jacob, whose hope, is in the Lord, their God.

That word for help, it has the connotation, of going to someone, when you need help, because your own strength, is insufficient. When you're unable, to help yourself, the help, and the help comes, because of who God is.

And there's three things, I want us to see, as why, we go to our God, for help. The first thing, it says, is that he's the God of Jacob.

And it says at the end, he's faithful forever. Those two kind of things, kind of come together. The God of Jacob, who's faithful forever. They're kind of making, the same point. Because when we read, that he's the God of Jacob, it reminds us, of the promise, God made, to Abraham, then to Abraham's, son Isaac, and then to Isaac's, son Jacob, the God of Jacob.

[19:11] And he made, the same promise, to Jacob. He reminded Jacob, of Genesis 35, God said to him, I am God almighty. Be fruitful, and increase in number.

A nation, and a community, of nations, will come from you, and kings, will be descended, and kings, will be among, your descendants. The land, I gave to Abraham, and Isaac, I also give to you. And I'll give this land, to your descendants, after you. God, came through, on his covenant promise, to Jacob. That is the promise, he is faithful forever, to his covenant promises.

Whereas the plans, of man will die, he's always faithful, to his promises. We see that, in the covenant promises, to Jacob. Because look at, how far, that God, is worshipped, and praised. He's promised, to be with us, he's promised, to give us a land, not a physical land, in Israel, but he's promised, to create a place, for us. He's promised, to bring heaven, to earth, to keep, his covenant promises.

[ 20 : 15 ] And from Judea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, the promises, that God has made, are being fulfilled. And all the promises, in the word, are yes and amen, in him.

He will never leave you, or forsake you. He will work everything, for your good. His love, will never run out. That's the first thing, why we go, why we praise God, because he's, why we go to God, why we're blessed in him, because he's our help, because he's faithful forever.

He is the God, of Jacob. Second thing, who is this God, of Jacob? Well, verse 6 tells us, he's the maker, of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them.

From every atom, every atom, consider this, every atom, that you are made of, to the far-flung corners, of the universe, God is its maker.

And not only that, but it also highlights, that he's the creator, and the maker of time, in which the created, existence is made. Which means, not only does everything, in creation, have its origin in him, but is also sustained, by him.

[ 21 : 24 ] As I speak right now, as I speak right now, he's sustaining my voice box, to create sound waves, which he sustains, to travel through the air. He then sustains, your ear canal, to receive those sound waves, which move along, and firstly, vibrate your eardrum, followed by three little bones, the anvil, hammer, and stirrup.

He's sustaining, those vibrations perfectly, just the right oscillation, that after transferring, from your inner ear, via your auditory, vestibular nerve, to the middle portion, of your brain stem, where you recognize, these vibrations perfectly, to be sound.

He sustains, this by, his powerful word, your brain, in recognizing the sounds, as audible words, which make up sentences, and then from the sermon, is able to, that becomes, the proclaimed word of God.

He then uses, all those vibrations, which you have interpreted, as sound, and made up sentences, to nourish you, spiritually, by the power of his Holy Spirit, as you understand, what I'm saying.

He can only do all of that, because he's the maker, of heaven, and earth, which he sustains, by his powerful word. Isn't that incredible? And he's the maker, of heaven, and earth, and he says, he made the seas.

[ 22 : 49 ] The sea, in the ancient Near East, was always a symbol, of chaos, the unknown, the deep, deep, and spiritual evil. Everything that was wrong, with the world, was, metaphorically, said it was like the sea, because the sea, couldn't be tamed.

But our God, our God, is the one, who made the sea. You think of the, the most powerful waves, you've seen. Every summer, we, just a few weeks ago, we go up to Lewis, and visit Annabelle's family, and one of the beaches there, Dalmore, is known for its, waves and currents, and when we go, we say to the kids, and probably some of the adults as well, that no one's allowed to go near the water, because it's too dangerous.

It's too chaotic. The chaos, and the chaos, in our world, can look like it's uncontrollable, that the sea, is a metaphor, for all the evil, and the chaos, that we see, that seems uncontrollable, just like the waves, that would wipe you out.

But our God made the seas. Our God made the seas, nothing is out of his control, which is why, we can go to him, for help. It's why we go to him, for help.

It's why we praise him, and go to him, for help, and put our hope in him, and we're blessed if we do. We're blessed if we do. Okay.

[ 24 : 13 ] Thirdly, we praise him, because he encourages us, we praise him, because he helps us, and we praise God, because he delivers the needy. God is faithful, to his promises.

But in this third section, towards the end of the psalm, it gets slightly more specific. And what we notice, is that God delivers, the needy. He delivers the suffering, he delivers, the do not haves.

Those, who know, they need to be delivered. It is praising God, because, actually, deliverance, we talk about it sometimes, it can seem like, an abstract construct, but it is not abstract.

It is firm, it is assured, and it meets people with, in, their biggest needs. You look at the list of people, we have here. The majority, are needy sufferers.

The oppressed, the hungry, prisoners, the blind, those who are bowed down, foreigners, the fatherless, widows.

[ 25 : 21 ] It is needy sufferers, who need help. Who know, that their own strength, is insufficient, to help them. God saves people, who come to him, who know, that they are insufficient, to help themselves.

You actually have to be needy, to come to God for help. If you are not needy, then, he won't save you. Because, you don't need him.

You are alright, on your own. You can come to him, but unless you, unless you come, needing him to help you, then why would he, why would he help you, if you didn't need help?

He, he only saves those, who need him, and, tell him, that they need him. God loves, and God loves, he loves to come, he loves to come, and deliver, the needy.

You look, you look, at the people, who Jesus delivers, in the gospels. You look at the type, of people, he delivers, the needy. Mary Magdalene, a prostitute, a prisoner, to the life, she was living, she's delivered.

[ 26 : 26 ] Zacchaeus, a short, lonely man, who's blind, to his own greed, he's delivered. The blind beggar, on the road, has his eyes open, but not only that, he goes from being, lonely, bowed down, somebody that's ignored, and, down in the dirt, who nobody gives a second thought to, he's raised up.

The demonized man, shunned by society, and the people find him, sitting in his right mind, after he cast, after demons, are cast out of him. The 5,000 people, that he feeds, they're needy, they don't have anything to eat, he feeds the hungry.

He comes, and, and we praise him, because he delivers the needy. And we ourselves, we ourselves know, do we not know of countless stories, where we have seen the living God, the Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ, change lives, and set people free.

Where people who, were liars, became actually people who, were truth tellers of Jesus. We've seen, we've seen people who had, alcoholism, and drug addicts, get sober and clean.

We've seen, we've seen, trafficked women, set free, prisoners, of violent criminals, choose peace, when they're inside, as they hear the good news of Jesus.

[ 27 : 43 ] The guilty, are forgiven, the grieving, are comforted. Jesus delivers, the needy. The Lord, delivers the needy.

He delivers the oppressed, the hungry, the prisoners, the blind, those who are lowly, the foreigners, the fatherless. The fatherless, he adopts and says, I'm your father. I'll be the best father you've ever had.

Jesus Christ, is not afraid, to get into the muck, with people, and cleanse, liberate, deliver, set free.

He will wash your feet. He will wash you clean. And we know that as well. Not just because of the testament in the Bible, not just because we've seen what he's doing in our own age, but because of what he's done, in our own experience, that he's come into our own muck, and need, and has set us free.

And that he doesn't just do it as a one-off, when we first come to Christ, but all the way through our lives, he is liberating us. He's redeeming us, again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and he'll never stop.

[ 28 : 56 ] Because there will always be areas of our life, where we need to be set free. And he says, the truth will set you free. And he says, I am the truth. Ultimately, it will ultimately end, in the completely deliverance, from all sin, all death, and all evil, when he brings us home into his heavenly kingdom.

There is no person, that is not looking to be delivered, or liberated from something. Every single person, wants to be delivered, you might even say set free.

This psalm, is a song of praise, that God, is the help, the one, we hope in, who is able, and who has done it for us. We sing to him, we remind ourselves, we praise him, because, who he is, what he's done, and that he will continue to do it, all the days of our lives.

And I wonder today, as we rejoice, as we praise, God, for the power of his redemption, why are there still things, in your life, where you want to be set free? What sin are you frustrated with? What way of thinking, do you want rid of? What plagues you? Because, praise, it praises him, for what he has done, but, as we praise him, it reminds us, and gives us faith, that he can do it again. [ 30 : 14 ] And he can do it for you today, he can continue to do it, every day of your lives, he can set you free, by the truth. Whilst the true, and full, and complete, deliverance, awaits us, he gives us, four tastes of it.

Freedom from shame, freedom from guilt, freedom from, here's a big one, freedom from comparison, to others, what a joy killer that is. We sing this song of praise, because the Lord upholds the cause of the oppressed, gives food to the hungry, sets prisoners free, gives sight to the blind, lifts up those who are bowed down, loves the righteous, watches over the foreigners, sustains the fadless, and the widow.

Praise the Lord. Let's pray. Almighty God, we do indeed praise you, and we worship you, because you're worthy of all worship and praise.

You're the God who helps, you're the God who we put our hope in, you're the God who delivers, and sets free, and redeems, and you've done that for us, and you'll continue to do it, and we look forward to its completion.

And we come to you today asking you, Lord, would you set us free today from the things that we want to be set free from? The sins we're frustrated with, the ways of thinking that we're plagued by, the shame that we feel from things that we've done, the guilt that we feel, the comparisons we make with others.

[ 31 : 44 ] Lord, set us free, and we praise you, because we know, and we trust, and we put our hope, that you can do it, because you're the God of Jacob, who keeps his covenant promises. You're the God of Jacob, who he put promises in.

Where every promise is met, we can find a yes, in Jesus Christ. We ask for this in Jesus' name. Amen.