

Advent 2019

*“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! “May they be secure who love you!””
(Psalm 122:6 ESV)*

*“May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice!”
(Psalm 72:2 ESV)*

*“Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.”
(Psalm 146:3 ESV)*

*“Restore us, O LORD God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!”
(Psalm 80:19 ESV)*

A Song for the Perfect King

December 15th, 2019

Psalm 146

Gary Peysar

¹Introduction:

Good morning church, turn in your Bibles with me to Psalm 146. As you get there, I'll quickly remind you that this year we are working through the Advent Psalms. Simply they are Psalms that are supposed to remind us of the comings of Christ. Past and future. Christmas 1.0 and Jesus's perfect life and death. And Christmas 2.0, the second coming of Christ or in Lord of the Rings Language, the Return of the King Jesus. The first advent this year, we encountered the pilgrim on the way to Jerusalem and the expectation of the CITY of the Heavenly King. Last week we encountered the PRAYER for the Perfect King, the attributes of Him. This week we encounter **a song of Praise for the Perfect King**. So Let's read together the Word of the Lord.

Psalm 146

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

²I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³Put not your trust in princes,

in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

⁴When 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,

¹ Feel free to expand on why this matters.

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!

A Song For the Perfect King

Sounds familiar doesn't it? We can see again the attributes of the Perfect King in this Psalm. This is an advent Psalm after all and so it ought to remind us of last week's message, a prayer for the perfect King. There is a lot of overlap between these Psalms. But like a jewel with many facets, we get to see a different perspective today. If we read carefully we will also see the life of Jesus in this Psalm and bold declarations of what he will do when the King Returns.

If we had to summarize the whole Psalm in one sentence we could say:

“This is a song celebrating the coming King, because He is better than any earthly King, because the coming King is God.” But let's not just leave it there, let's **sing this song** with greater understanding and adoration. So with that in mind there are 3 immediate responses to this Psalm.

1. **Resolve to Sing**

One of the things I appreciate most about the Psalms is how authentic and candid they are. Before the Psalmist can sing this song, he has to coach himself a little bit. Do you see that? He looks inward – he addresses his own heart – and he says: “Praise the Lord! O my soul!” I wonder if some of us need to do that this morning. Were you hurried this morning? Was there strife in the family getting here? Does it seem like the “to do” list is too long this season? Has all this conspired to make your heart a little cold and your mind distracted this morning? Well lets follow

the example of the Psalmist today. Speak to your heart right now.² Command your mind to put your thoughts on hold, compel your heart to soften and your ears to listen. Come, Worship the King as he deserves. Choose to wake, choose to praise. Tell yourself I will Praise the Lord o my soul! This is not soft self encouragement. It is resolve. One commentator says it this way:

“This resolve [this choice to praise] is a mark of the mature believer. The psalmist puts his mind and his will to the matter. His hallelujahs are not empty-headed repetitions, triggered by certain kinds of atmosphere or music. Nor are they songs for the good days only, when he is in the mood.”

Michael Wilcox TBSTOT

Chose to worship the King, that’s the first thing we need to see in this Song. Our next point tells us why.

2. Sing because He is Better Than Any Prince!

We ought also to see in this song that God is Better than any human leader!

“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. **Blessed** is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God” Psalm 146:3-4

Not a King like man! God’s plans will not perish. And his plans are so much **BETTER**. He serves others rather than himself. Blessed, Happy, is he who trusts the God of Jacob! As I read this Psalm it reminded me of a great African American preacher Shadrach Meshach Lockridge. His most famous sermon is “That’s my King”. Who has heard it? I encourage you to check it out. Psalm 146 reads just like it!

Verse 6: He’s the universe creator,
The one who keeps promises forever,
Verse 7: The justice executer,
The oppression reliever, That’s my King, I wonder if you know him!
He’s the feeder of the hungry,
Verse 8: The sight restorer,
The lifter of the bowed down, exalter of the humble AND
The lover of THE Righteous,
He’s the one who watches over the sojourner and dispossessed,
husband to the widow and father to the fatherless,
the one who capsizes the wicked, ruins their plans and calls all out to judgement!
That’s my King. The King who serves others instead of himself.

² Lloyd Jones, Spiritual Depression

Does that sound like your King?! Is he not better? So sing because He is better than any earthly prince

Thirdly,

3. Sing because the Coming King is God

In this Psalm the careful Bible reader will immediately appreciate a couple things. One, notice how each specific item of praise can only be fulfilled by God. Look at verses 6-10. Creation. Sounds like a God thing (John 1:3) Keeping faith **forever** (Heb 7:25). Sounds like an immortal God thing. In fact all 12 point of praise listed in this Psalm, can only be done perfectly and completely by God. But next notice how familiar these activities sound. They sound familiar because Jesus has done them too! The conclusion has to be that Jesus is the King spoken of in this Psalm.

itself.

Listen to verse 7, “He gives food to the needy.” Isn’t that what he did in the feeding of 5000 in Matthew 14:13 with 5 loaves and 2 fish? Jesus was, for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, claiming his Messiahship literally. But there is a spiritual fulfilment too. We find that in John 6

35 Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. John 6:35

And a greater spiritual fulfilment in the communion itself. All the spiritually needy are feed by Christ.

Another example in verse 7 we find, “He sets the captives free.” Literally fulfilled in the case of Peter and Paul in Acts. But there are also spiritual fulfilments in Jesus claiming the Messianic promise of Is 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim liberty to the captives.”

Plumer helpfully notes:

“it is fulfilled in every case where the benefits of redemption are applied to perishing men.”³

Just as the bent over woman bound by Satan for 18 years is a captive, and Jesus sets her free (Luke 13:11). So it is with us anytime the Work and Word of Christ is applied to the bondage of sin. He sets us free. He relieves are guilt. He can make it so we don’t love the things that harm us anymore. Whether drugs, alcohol, illicit sex, pornography, and materialism. He can also set us free from the prisons of fear, anxiety, depression. He sets the captives free!

³ WS Plumer page 1194

Now we don't have time to go through all 12 like this, but fear not! In your sermon outline you have a chart that does. Many of you know my passion for family devotionals at home, as so I've included the groundwork for you dads and moms for this week. Check out these fulfillments, past and coming as devotional content for this week around your advent candles at home.

Now this raises a question: If this is all true, then why doesn't it always feel that way now?"

Singing this Song in the Time In-Between

The problem is we live in the "in-between". Here's what I mean by that. Yes, the Kingdom has come, Jesus said so – "the Kingdom of God is among you". (Luke 17:21). But the ultimate kingdom is not yet consummated. This is the now and not yet character of the Kingdom of Heaven. Remember the parables Jesus told about the Kingdom, he talked about this all the time.

The mustard seed: The Kingdom starts small, but will become large. The tree is not fully grown yet.

The yeast: As yeast works its way through dough, so the Kingdom will slowly work its way through the world and utterly transform it. That's happening now, but not complete

The wheat and tares: wheat – good, weeds – evil will persist till the end of the age⁴

His work is not yet done brothers and sisters...

THIS IS WHY SOME SONGS NEED TO BE SUNG IN FAITH. These promises will come. There will come a day without hunger. There will be an unending age without racism and oppression. But we live in the dawn, light is on the horizon. The morning star Jesus is shining, and he's come once. But the full day is yet to come, the SUN is yet to crest the horizon. THE SON will come soon, day will break and then all remaining darkness will be burned away by his pure light.

⁴ 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." Matt 13:24-30.

That sunrise is in the future, BUT IF WE DON'T READ THIS PSALM PROPERLY, WE CAN BECOME DISORIENTED AND DISILLUSIONED. We can fall into the trap and expect all the promises of the Messiah in the here and now. We get sad, mad and disappointed because this life still hurts.⁵ **BUT HERE'S THE DEAL. WE ARE NOT YET AT THE GATES OF THE CELESTIAL CITY. WE ARE STILL PILGRIMS ON THE ROAD IN A SIN-STAINED WORLD THAT IS BROKEN BY THE ACTIVITIES OF SATAN AND FALLEN MEN.**

That's why for so much of Christian history this Psalm inspired hope and longing. They rightly appealed to this Psalm in expectation. We should to! Read this Psalm in light of Isaiah 9:7 "of the increase of his government and of his peace there will be no end." Christ's rule is increasing, but not fully consummated. Here AND growing, perpetually growing, especially when He returns at the end of the age when it will permeate the very fabric of the universe!⁶

This psalm is for future hope, longing for a better Kingdom, and the Return of THE Better King

How Should We Respond While We Wait for the Return of the King?

I'll suggest 4 ways...

1. Trust God, Not man

Take the advice of the plain text of this song seriously. Believer, don't put your trust in princes, in a son of man. Church can we stop looking to our government for our salvation? Can we stop looking to them to enact policies that force a surface level obedience to the laws of God, leaving the hearts of citizens unchanged? Remember the parable of wheat and weeds. Good and evil will persist side by side till the end of the age. Politics won't cure that. We say if only we can elect the right government – we can stop abortion. If only we find the right candidate we change the

⁵ This is what Theologians call over-realized eschatology. Thinking all the promises of scripture are for the here and now

⁶ As an important aside we ought to remember the words of Peter who explains why Jesus is delaying his return.

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9

So as you contemplate the state of the world, remember that God has more souls to add to his flock. He is patient. He is waiting to gather ALL his people. He desires that none should perish.

course of morality in this contry. If only we can find the People's Champ, everything will be great again. Maybe this King, maybe this president.

BUT HERE'S THE POINT CHURCH, FALSE LEADERS LIE. GOOD LEADERS DIE. THAT VERY DAY THEIR PLANS PERISH. Church, we cannot look to man to do what only God can do! Now, I'm not saying don't vote or be engaged in the political process. I am saying, political leaders, pastors, or anyone else will not bring the Heavenly Kingdom to earth. So don't put your ultimate trust in them. Only Jesus can make the world great again!⁷ Don't trust a son of man in whom there is no salvation, he will return to dust and that very day his plans will perish.

Secondly,

2. **Imitate the King**

The word "Praise" in this Psalm is literally halleluiaah, which literally means to shine light on God. It means boast in the Lord! So how can we do that? Jesus gives us a very plain answer in Matt 5

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that ^[b]they may see your **good works** and **give glory to your Father who is in heaven.** Matt 5:14-16

Praise Him, shine light on Him, spotlight Him **IN RIGHTEOUS LIVING.** Follow his commands, they are good for you and good for the world! Be concerned with his works. Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8). **THIS PSALM TELLS US WHAT A GOOD KING DOES, AND HIS SUBJECTS OUGHT TO BE INVESTED IN THE SAME THINGS.** Seek justice for the oppressed – support the persecuted church with your money and prayers. Feed the hungry with literal food at the foodbank or sponsor a child, but also feed with the spiritual food of the Gospel the starving unbeliever right around the corner. Be concerned for the prisoners in your society. You can't set them free, but you can visit them. Commit your family to visit a prisoner. And don't just think jail, what of shut ins or those in nursing homes? Are they not prisoners in whom you will discover Christ? Be the sheep in Matthew 25 who says, "When did we visit you Lord?" Be friend to the widow and fatherless. Invite them into your home. Bless them with a meal. Give some free babysitting to a single mom!!! Concern yourself with the King's business of compassion.

⁷ Pastor Evan

Those are some very practical ways to “Sing to the Lord.” But this Psalm points to some implications that are not immediately obvious or overtly practical. The eschatological or future emphasis of this Psalm must also cause us to adjust our expectations in the here and now.

3. Adjust our Immediate Expectations

Now this point is not intuitive. I think to be able to properly sing to the King, and invest in his concerns, we need to adjust our expectations. What do I mean by that? Well, for those **ministering** it means, understand **you are not Jesus**. In our context at RCC, it means we cannot fully reach the South Ward. People are endowed with God given free will. Should we then become dejected in failing to see mass conversions here? Is it up to us? No! A young activist type church needs to hear this word. **WE ARE NOT IN CHARGE OF OUTCOMES, WE ARE CALLED TO BE FAITHFUL**. We are not in charge of conversion, we are called to be witnesses and proclaimers. Sounds easy, but can we really do that? Can we handle it if the drug addict returns to his vomit, to the bondage of addiction? Will we give up then? Can we handle it when the marriage collapses despite good Biblical witness and advice? Will we become despondent when the spiritually hungry starve their souls to death refusing the Gospel we offer? **CAN WE TOLERATE THE CHURCHES FAILURE IN THE HERE AND NOW?** Let me explain it another way. Our text mentions single mothers and the fatherless. Ask those mothers if we as a Church can replace those fathers? We can't. We cannot. We are not Jesus! So if we can't be the perfect father to the fatherless and the widow, how can we bring perfect justice, feed all the hungry and all the other things only the King can do?

Now hear me correctly. I am not saying don't try. I am not saying don't be optimistic. I am not saying let go and let God. Our activities matter. Our witness matters. Our proclamation of the Gospel matters:

“how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” Rom 10:14.

I am simply saying we are not God.

Adjust your expectations.

To people being ministered to, the same principal applies. The church is not Jesus. We try to do the things of Christ, and we concern ourselves with His concerns. But don't put your trust in princes. Did you know that Hebrew word means "man of repute" not only Kings. People, even "good people" are not perfect. Are you OK with that? Can you be let down by people of this congregation and still trust in Jesus?⁸ When this Church lets you down, can you still sing to the King? When we studied this psalm by coincidence this September I wrote down what my wife's cogent and terse exegesis of this psalm in my Bible. It was "DON'T TRUST PEOPLE TO DO, WHAT ONLY GOD CAN DO". AMEN.

Once we adjust our expectations of ourselves and the church we are truly freed to praise the King. We say Lord, thy Kingdom come, when we stop looking to ourselves or human institutions for ultimate deliverance and finally start to look to God. **FRUSTRATION can then be replaced by EXPECTATION**. Confessing our dependence on Him, longing for His deliverance, this too is singing sweet praise to the Lord. Praise the Lord o my soul! And leads to our forth point: We sing properly for the King when we build expectation in our souls

4. Heighten our Eternal Expectations!

Channel all the disappointments, sadness, dissatisfaction, pain and suffering you feel into longing for better. This is the heart of Advent. **LONGING**. Like the bride in the last verse of the Song of Solomon we ought to pine for the return of our King:

"Make haste, my beloved and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices" Song of Songs 8:14

John in the book of Revelation says it this way:

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." Rev 22:17

Do you feel that? Do you feel the world is broken? Do you feel shadows deepen? Yes? Then long for, pray for, pine for the return of the King! And remember the words of encouragement of the Apostle Paul "salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed." Rom 13:11

⁸ Luther says "We ought not to trust in any man, not even in kings or princes, nor in the mighty, nor in the rich, as the world do." WS Plummer pg 1195

CRAVE the great reversal. I LOVE that theme of we see hear. Justice for Oppression; Nourishment for Hunger, Freedom for Captives, Sight exchanged for Blindness, Wholeness for Lameness. The prospering Wicked brought to Ruin

And this is the expectation of advent! The coming reversal! Christmas 2.0! Only when Jesus comes back will the ultimate reversal happen and all things will be made new! Long for it! That is the message for the Christian.

Now I realize that not everyone here is Christian. Some were dragged in by promise of pie or better. This next word is for you.

Final Application

What if you can't sing this song? (Gospel invitation to unbelievers)

What if you are not one who can Sing for the King? I'm not a Christian you say.

Maybe you say: "There's a lot of suffering out there, but I believe in the human spirit, we will get better." If our meditation today has done nothing else it should cure you of misplaced optimism in humanity.⁹ Christianity is uniquely the only faith that puts no faith in our abilities to save ourselves. Humanity will never evolve into something better. Plumer says:

"We have more to fear than to hope for from the best man living, if we put him in the place of God." WS Plumer

We need outside help. We need outside deliverance. We need the RETURN of the PERFECT KING, King Jesus.

Or maybe you say: "I think the eastern religions have it right. You know the Buddha says all life is suffering. It's the first of the 4 noble truths." Well Buddha was right in part, life is suffering – Jesus says it this way:

⁹ . Look around, ask the Tutsis of Rwanda think humanity is evolving to something better. Or the 5.4 million Congolese who have been slaughtered in the second Congo War – the deadliest conflict since WWII. To say nothing of Hilter, Stalin or King Leopold II who murdered an estimated 10 million africans at the turn of the 19th century. Put not your trust in princes.

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation [Suffering]. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33.

Where Buddha describes an 8 fold path to enlightenment it is **dependent on your efforts**, Christ says: “take heart, **I have overcome the world**”. We don’t overcome it on our own. Even the best human beings let us down, including yourself! Amen? Here’s the honest truth: YOU are not good enough, smart enough or holy enough to save yourself. The Buddha is wrong! Only God can do what God can do, and overcome the suffering of the world for ever.

Here’s the problem with refusing to sing for King Jesus. We are all required to sing a song at some point according to the Bible. If there is any justice in the universe, and I think there is – evil will be called to account. There will be a judgement, and it will be final.

“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.” Revelation 20:12

IS ANYONE ARROGANT ENOUGH TO THINK THEY ARE SO GOOD A PERSON AS TO **EARN** ENTRY INTO HEAVEN WITH A PERFECT GOD? Have you really been kind enough to the poor? Perfect in your thoughts? Perfect in faithfulness? Nobody is that perfect. So when we are judged we will be handed one of two scripts. One song sheet will contain songs of Praise to the King – people who have admitted sin and turned from it, and trusted Jesus to pay for their sin, will be given songs of Praise like Psalm 146. They will shower Jesus with praises:

“Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.” ⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, Rev 19:4-6

But those who do not put their trust in Jesus will be given a different script

“Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave^d and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, **16** calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, **17** for the great day of their wrath has come, and **who can stand?**” Rev 6:15-17

Plumer says this:

“The world has always been governed, is now governed and shall to the end of time be governed by him who makes no mistakes, and has no vicegerents, and no successful rivals.”¹⁰

Every knee will bow before the King. He has no substitutes. He has no successful rivals. As SM Lockridge says: “ya can’t impeach him, and he ain’t gonna retire!”

So find yourself singing the right song! Get right with King. If your not sure how, come and speak with us! Let us introduce you to our great King.

[consider as a prayer]

Praise the Lord – the King, Praise the Lord, o my soul. LONG FOR THE RETURN OF THE KING O MY SOUL! He is better than any human King. He is perfect in justice, glorious in his gracious forgiveness, and abounding in compassion and steadfast love. He looks after the dispossessed, and the broken. **He is the Author and Finisher of the Great Reversal!** He will come again and make all things new! Halleluiah, praise the Lord who will reign forever! Praise the King!

¹⁰ WS Plummer p1196