

Text: Psalm 146:1-10

“Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit departs, he returns to the earth; In that very day his thoughts perish. How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the Lord his God...”

“We’re going to change the world!” Those were the words that echoed through the auditorium, at a political rally. The audience erupted in enthusiastic applause, as their candidate finished his speech, and waved to all his faithful supporters. They began to chant the candidate’s name over and over again, as he stepped down from the podium.

Standing in the crowd, was a young man named Frank, who couldn’t help but get caught up in all the excitement. Frank had recently graduated from college, and was an idealist. Despite all of the problems in the world, he was determined to make a difference. That rally inspired him to get involved in the world of politics. Frank decided to volunteer for the campaign, making phone calls, and passing out literature, trying to persuade as many people as possible to vote for his candidate in the upcoming election. He had every t-shirt and bumper sticker that was available. He knew all of the talking points. He could hold his own in a debate. Frank was thoroughly convinced that his candidate was the right person for the job. “If only we can win this election, the future will be so much brighter. But if we lose, dark days are ahead.”

One evening Frank turned on the news, to see where his candidate ranked in the latest polls. Instead of receiving good news, Frank was disappointed to learn that his candidate had been implicated in a scandal, and was dropping out of the race. Frank was devastated. Now what? For months he had looked up to this leader, confident that this was someone worth following. Now he didn’t know what to believe. His dreams were crushed.

“I’m never going to get so caught up in politics ever again!” he muttered. But a few days later, he found himself engrossed in the debates, and had already found another candidate to support.

It is easy to get caught up in the political frenzy, especially during an election season. There are so many problems in our world we become desperate for someone who can offer real solutions. We wonder:

- Isn’t there someone who can set things right?
- Isn’t there someone who can give us hope the future?
- Isn’t there someone I can believe in?

Pretty soon, a charismatic leader comes along, making all kinds of wonderful promises, and we are tempted to join the crowd and jump on the bandwagon.

What we often forget is that no earthly leader can fix what is broken in the world. It doesn’t matter how wise or noble their intentions might be. The solution we seek can only be found in God. --That is the message of our passage this morning.

Psalm 146 a psalm of praise. It begins and ends with the same Hebrew word: hallelujah, (which means “Praise the Lord!”) The Jewish people used these verses as part of their daily prayers, in the synagogue, and we can see why. As a nation, Israel went through many times of crisis, and the people would have been tempted to look to the ability of their leaders, for a sense of security. They needed to be reminded, each day, to rely on the Lord. He is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, and he is the only one who will never fail.

The psalm compares earthly kings with the one who reigns on high, and when we examine them side by side, we realize that there really is no comparison.

**It is pointless to place our confidence in earthly rulers;
instead, we should trust in the Lord.**

1. Unlike the rulers of this earth, God is a King who reigns forever.

Look at verses 3-4. *“Do not trust in princes, in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit departs, he returns to the earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.”* Even the greatest of kings are mere mortals. They wield tremendous power, for a little while, but are just as helpless in the face of death as the rest of us. Sooner or later, kings must surrender the crown, and their kingdom is left for another to rule. When a king dies, people from all over the kingdom will gather, for the funeral. If he was a good king, the nation will mourn his passing. They will wonder: “How in the world can anyone replace him?” If he was a bad king, the nation might feel a sense of relief. They look at each other and say: “Whew! I thought we would never see the end of him.” Either way, there is uncertainty about the future.

Israel would have many kings throughout her history. Some were good. Others were not so good. Some ruled for a good long time. Others lasted just a short time. But there was one thing they all had in common: every one of them died, and someone else took their place. Not even King David, who reigned for forty years, was able to hold on to his position forever. David’s time eventually came to an end. There is a recurring phrase in the books of Kings and Chronicles that says: “...he slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David... and his son...reigned in his place.”

We don’t have kings, in our political context in this country, but we have leaders, and the same is true of them, as well. Their rule does not last forever. They are elected for a period of time, but their term eventually expires, and their seat is left vacant for someone else to fill. Whatever plans or ideas a ruler might have vanish with him, when he goes. He may spend years putting together policies that he believes is in the best interest of his country, but the moment he is gone, those plans are brought to an end.

How can we find assurance in a king who will be here today and gone tomorrow? We can’t. If they’re only temporary, then their plans are temporary, their authority is temporary, their influence is temporary.

Imagine showing up for work one day, and the boss calls a meeting: “I just want everyone to know that our company has been bought out by one of our competitors, and I’m not sure how much longer I will be your manager, I might be gone tomorrow or by the end of the month, to be honest I don’t think any of our positions are secure.” What kind of atmosphere is that going to create in the office? It will be one of panic, and concern. Everyone will go home that evening and start looking for another job.

How comforting it is when we realize that the Lord’s authority will never end. Verse 10 tells us, *“The Lord will reign forever, Your God, O Zion, to all generations.”* God is eternal. His power will never fade. His term will never end. He is still just as mighty, today, as He was when the world first began. God can never be voted out of office. There’s not a force in the universe that could overthrow His kingdom. He reigns forever.

Just think about how many kings have come and gone, on the face of the earth, over the course of history. Think about how many empires have risen to a place of power, for a period of time, before collapsing again into obscurity. God was, and is, and forever will be.

Aireanah will be starting kindergarten next month, and she loves hearing stories about how I went to her school when I was a kid. I went to Ada, and she is going to Ada. But they kids are fascinated when I tell them that the school building where I went, isn’t there anymore. It’s been torn down. They built a new building, and an empty field is all that is left of my old classrooms. It kind of makes me sad, when I drive past, but at the same time it is nice to see many of the same faces, teachers who are still there when I was student. It doesn’t matter how much the world around us might change, God is still there, still in control, He is still rules over heaven and earth. Nothing in this universe lasts forever, except God. If you turn back a page, to **Psalm 145:13**, Scripture tells us: *“Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations.”*

If God’s rule will last forever, we don’t have to be afraid of what tomorrow might bring. I don’t have to worry about the future. But what if the candidate gets elected this fall? (To be honest, I’m not sure there is a good candidate). God is still sovereign. He was king before the United States was founded. He will be king long after it is gone. I can trust Him with my future. I can look to Him for assurance. So don’t be alarmed. The NT assures us:

- *“...Jesus Chris is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”* (Heb. 13:8)
- *“...He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”* (Luke 1:33)

2. The psalm also shows us that unlike some rulers: God is a King who values justice.

Verse 6 describes Him as the one *“Who executes justice for the oppressed...”* The passage goes on to show us how much He cares for the weak, the poor, and the helpless, those who are often overlooked by society. People who no one to defend their cause, find a champion in the Lord.

Verse 9 tells us, *“The Lord protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, but He thwarts the way of the wicked.”* God always promotes what is right, and He stands against those who would exploit others for their own gain.

The concept of justice is important throughout the Bible. This particular word is used more than 400 times in the Old Testament. In **Deuteronomy**, God commanded the Israelites to appoint judges and officials, when they entered the Promised Land. God warns them, *“You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”* (Deuteronomy 16:19-20)

The judges of Israel would find themselves in situations that would test their integrity. There would be people who offered bribes, to sway their ruling. There would be men who tried to manipulate the system to their own advantage. But God wanted rulers to govern His people who led with conviction and were committed to doing what was right, no matter what.

When a person is entrusted with power, it can be enticing to use that power, inappropriately, for one’s personal gain. They say that power corrupts, and that can certainly be the case when one is not anchored by a strong sense of ethics based on God’s Word. A society that does not value justice, will crumble from within.

Later on, the prophets would rail against the evils of their society. The further people drifted from God, the less concerned they became for the rights of their fellow man. **Zechariah 7:9–10** reads, *“Thus has the Lord of hosts said, ‘Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.’”*

Our tendency as human beings is to think of ourselves, and to ignore others. That might be the way the world operates, but it should not be true of God’s people. It is easy to talk about justice, but not always as easy to practice it. In fact, it has become more of a slogan or a buzzword in our world today. People try to divorce truth from justice, and it comes out distorted. Every politician claims to be on the side of justice, as long as it garners votes or helps their reputation. But if it costs them in the polls, or makes them less popular to stand up for what is right, it becomes easier to remain silent. And the same is true for all of us. It’s easy to speak up, and take a stand, when we are surrounded by others who share our convictions. But if we’re the only ones speaking out, and we have to stand alone, what will do?

How refreshing it is to know that God cannot be bought, He doesn’t take a bribe, and He cannot be swayed by anyone. It doesn’t matter if we are rich or poor, powerful or weak. God is on the side of justice. He cares about what is right, and true. He expects His people to share these concerns. Where are the weak and the helpless? We can serve them with Christ’s love. Don’t just look out for your own interests, but show concern for the interests of others.

3. Psalm 146 goes on to show us that unlike many earthly rulers: God is a King who always keeps his promises.

In our passage, Psalm 146:6 tells us that God is the one “*who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever.*” That last phrase assures us that God is faithful. His word is sure. He says what He means and means what He says. He will never mislead us, in any way, or affirm something that isn’t true. He doesn’t tell us only what we want to hear, so that we will follow Him. He doesn’t change His mind or switch His position on an issue. He tells us the truth, even when we might not want to hear it.

We know from experience that this is not always the case with earthly rulers. They make lots of promises. They tell us all of the wonderful things they are going to do, if elected to office. Meanwhile, they know full well that many of these are beyond their ability to keep. But we don’t have to worry about whether or not God is able to keep His promises. There is nothing beyond His ability. And He doesn’t forget His Word.

There used to be a day when people could do business with a handshake. They honored their word. If you told your neighbor you would be going to sell him your horse for a certain price, and he could pay you at the end of the week, you honored that agreement. You didn’t think about going behind his back and selling it to someone else for more money. We don’t do business that way, today. You need a contract and it has to be signed and notarized, and everyone gets a copy to make sure that each party upholds their end of the bargain.

God keeps His word. Ever since the world began, He has never broken a promise, and He’s not going to start now. You could go through the Bible and start counting all of the promises God made to different people:

- God promised Abraham that he would become the father of a great nation; his descendants would be more numerous than the stars in the heavens. It happened exactly as God said it would.
- He promised Jacob that one day, his family would inherit the Land of Canaan. It wouldn’t happen for generations, but eventually that promise became a reality.
- God promised Moses that He would deliver the children of Israel from the hand of the Egyptians. Even though Pharaoh was determined it would never happen, God made good on His Word.
- God promised David that one of his descendants would inherit the throne, and rule forever. It seemed like an impossible promise, and more than once it looked as if the Davidic line would come to an end. But the birth of Christ fulfilled that promise.
- Over and over again, throughout the OT, God promised to send a Savior, who would provide forgiveness and redemption. Those promises were fulfilled in Jesus.

I read somewhere that there are more than 2,500 prophecies in Scripture, and about 2,000 have already been fulfilled. If that’s the case, doesn’t it stand to reason that God will one day fulfill the remaining prophecies?

Deuteronomy 7:9 says *“Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments”*

Conclusion –

We’ve looked at a number of reasons why we should trust in King the of kings, as opposed to putting our confidence in the kings of the earth. But I think the biggest reason of all, is that only the Lord is able to save. V.3 tells us *“Do not trust in princes, in mortal man, in whom there is not salvation.”*

There are so many problems our earthly leaders try so hard to solve. How can we reduce crime? How do we stop violence? How can we win the war on drugs? How can we end hunger? How do we overcome racism? How can we guard against terrorism? These are all issues that leaders wrestle with, trying to come up with solution. And they should wrestle with these issues, and do what is possible to address them.. But no matter how hard we try, these are problems that never seem to go away. That’s because no earthly government is able to eradicate the evils of society. No matter how many plans we make, or how many programs we put in place, there is an underlying cause that remains untreated. These issues are only the symptom, of a deeper issue that exists in the human heart. The Bible tells us that this is sin. Only God can deliver us from evil, and repair the brokenness caused by our sinful hearts.

That’s why the psalm tells us, in verse 5, *“How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God.”*

Do you want real hope? Do you want real change? Do you want you want to be able to look to look the future without fear? Then trust in God. Vote for Him as the king of your life, and the one you will follow.

Don’t trust in earthly rulers. That’s not to say that Christians should not be involved in politics, or that we shouldn’t vote. That’s a privilege we have in this country. We have a unique opportunity that people in other parts of the world don’t have, so by all means go to the ballot box and vote for the leaders who most align with your convictions. But politics can become an idol if we’re not careful, if we forget that Christ is King, the only one who can bring lasting peace to our world.

Regardless of who wins the next election, our God is still on throne. He knows the problems of this world, and He is the only one who can fix them.