Psalm 146: 1-10 (ESV): Put Not Your Trust in Princes

Main point: Trust in God, not in man.

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: A praise song.

Focus of the study:

1 Praise the Lord!
2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
3 Put not your trust in princes,
4 When man’s breath departs, he returns to the earth;
5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
6 who made heaven and earth,
7 who executes justice for the oppressed,
8 The Lord sets the prisoners free;
9 The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
10 The Lord will reign forever,
Praise the Lord!

Questions:

1. What is the instruction that the writer gives at the start of this psalm? How often is this instruction repeated?
   a. Praise the Lord! Repeats “praise” 4 times in the first 2 verses
2. For how long is the writer going to praise the Lord?
   a. v. 2: “as long as I live”, “while I have my being”
3. So that’s the writer’s attitude as he starts this psalm: Praise God! That’s the most important thing I can do in my entire life! What is the next instruction for the reader?
   a. v. 3: put not your trust in princes or men – I wonder what that means? Who are “princes” and “sons of men”?
      i. People who appear to be powerful here on earth
4. But what does the writer say is true about every single human being?
   a. v. 4: “when man’s breath departs, he returns to the earth” – in other words, when a man dies, that’s it. He has no more power.

5. Then the writer turns from human rulers (princes) to God: what does the writer say is true about God?
   a. v. 6: God made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them
      i. What does this include? Look around … use descriptions…
   b. God keeps faith forever
      i. How faithful is God? For how long will God be with you?
   c. v. 7: God executes justice for the oppressed
      i. Who is the only one who judges fairly every single time, who looks out for the downtrodden?
   d. God gives food to the hungry, sets prisoners free
      i. What does it mean to be hungry, or to be a prisoner? (Literal and figurative.)
      ii. What is it like when you’re chained up? And then how does it feel to be freed?
   e. v. 8: God opens the eyes of the blind, lifts up those who are bowed down
      i. How does God take care of people? How has God taken care of you in your life?
   f. v. 9: God watches over the sojourners
      i. What’s a sojourner? Traveler, wanderer, someone not at home.
         1. Have you ever felt like you’re not really “at home”? Not settled?
         2. Where and with Whom is our true, eternal home? With God in heaven
   g. v. 9: God upholds the widow and the fatherless
      i. What’s it like for widows and fatherless? Sadness, powerlessness, feeling alone.
      ii. What does God do for those people? Upholds them – in the palm of his hands – safe, secure, seen, taken care of

6. Will any president, dictator, king or queen on this earth rule forever? What has eventually happened to every president, dictator, king or queen since time began?
   a. They all pass away – “When man’s breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish”

7. So why do you think we should not put our trust in earthly rulers?
   a. People, even powerful people, cannot save in any permanent way
      i. Back to the beginning of this psalm, v. 3: “in whom there is no salvation”
   b. These “powerful people” only have temporary power; they have no power in or compared with God’s eternal kingdom

8. Who will reign forever and ever?
   a. v. 10: “the LORD will reign forever, to all generations”

9. So how trustworthy and safe is God for your life today AND for your eternal salvation?
10. What should be our response to this good news?
    a. Again back to verse 1: Praise the Lord! What would you praise the Lord for today? (generate as many ideas as possible)

    • Ask for any other prayer requests for today.
    • Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
    • End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace
Psalm 146

1 Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord, O my soul!

2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
   I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

3 Put not your trust in princes,
   in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

4 When man’s breath departs, he returns to the earth;
   on that very day a man’s plans perish.

5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
   whose hope is in the Lord God,

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;
   The Lord 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!