

Hallelujah [Psalm 146]

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INTRODUCTION

1. In 1969, the Beatles released Abbey Road, their last recorded album.
 - a. It's now been more than 50 years since the making of the album
 - b. It's viewed as one of the greatest albums of all time.
 - c. The song *The End*, which by the way, isn't even the end of the album . . .
 - 1) Just two lines of lyrics in the entire song, the most prominent.
 - 2) "*And in the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.*"
2. We humans formulate many different worldviews by which we navigate life.
 - a. Some, like the Beatles, choose love; some choose money or other philosophies.
 - b. We, as a fellowship of believers, choose Christ and we seek the Bible to show us more.
3. Today our study takes us to a Psalm near the end of the book, Psalm 146.
 - a. One scholar remarked the Psalm 146 is a journey FROM MORTALITY TO DOXOLOGY.
 - 1) You likely know *mortality*: that's our susceptibility to death; the clock that's ticking.
 - 2) A *doxology* is a song or prayer speaking glory to God.
 - b. Let's see this track as we open up the word of God.

VERSES 1,2

¹ Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, my soul.

² I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

1. Opening **Hallelujah**: word only appears in the books of Psalms (15x) and Revelation (4x)
 - a. Grammatically, it stands alone as a one-word sentence. The meaning:
 - b. Halal=to boast · El = Elohim · Yah = YHWH (YHWH Elohim is THE name of the Lord).
 - 1) Saying "Hallelujah" is you're boasting on behalf of God Almighty.
 - 2) We enjoy boasting about our feats and accomplishments.
 - a) We boost our c.v. and resume; we tweet and Instagram our life
 - b) Hallelujah is a chance to recalibrate our pride.
 - c. **2 Corinthians 10:17** "*Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.*"
2. Verse 2 repeats a declaration of commitment to the God of our boasting.
 - a. In repetitive, poetic form, the singer states love and praise will last a lifetime.
 - b. Making a long-term commitment—for the rest of my life
 - 1) That can be both a powerful and a flippant declaration.
 - a) Think of lifelong commitments that you have made. How have they worked?
 - b) Was it to a job, a relationship, a cell-phone company, or a tattoo?
 - 2) Verbalizing a lifelong commitment is only as good as our follow-through
 - c. There's a pattern in American Christian discipleship.
 - 1) We're investing in youth/student ministry, and asking for them to make life commits
 - 2) And then we lose people as young adults, and this is where some of you were.
 - 3) Where is your commitment now? Will your faith define the rest of your life?

VERSES 3,4

³ Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.

⁴ When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.

1. Understand what these verses aren't: this isn't a decrying of human leadership
 - a. He hold suspicion towards those in authority, but we still should respect it.

- b. **Romans 13:1** "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."
 - c. What verse three literally says: "don't trust in 'Ben Adam'"
 - 1) That's Son of [Hebrew = Ben] Adam; or don't trust in humanity.
 - d. The Issue: We trust in humans and human plans more than even God
 - 1) Even the best-intended human plans will fail.
 - a) Sure, they might succeed for awhile but they will eventually fail.
 - b) Let me give you an inverse example from elsewhere in the Bible.
 - 2) In the earliest days of the church, Jewish leaders discussed what to do with them.
 - 3) **Acts 5:38,39** "Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave [the Christians] alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."
2. What these verses do is has us further explore our humanity
- a. The issue of faith that plagues you and I is a lack of tangibility.
 - b. We trust in people because they are tangible- things we can see and touch
 - 1) EX: Nik Wallenda, the tightrope guy who crossed the Grand Canyon lives by faith
 - 2) Faith ultimately makes me mindful of my mortality
 - c. But this is how we are supposed to live in the Lord. As the apostle Paul said,

2 Corinthians 5:7 *For we live by faith, not by sight.*

VERSES 5,6

⁵*Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God.*

⁶*He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— he remains faithful forever.*

- 1. Verse 5: Happy are those . . . who align themselves with the God of Jacob
- 2. Such people are able to understand the roles of God for humanity's benefit:
 - a. *Creation*: He crafted the universe.
 - b. *Sustention*: He does not abandon it.

VERSES 7-10

⁷*He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry.*

The LORD sets prisoners free,⁸ the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹*The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. ¹⁰The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD.*

- 1. A third role of God: Redemption
 - a. Each of the last verses begins with YHWH, and it's what he does
 - b. Oppressed, hungry, prisoners, blind, the lowly, the foreigner, fatherless, widows
 - 1) This was a listing of those in society who had lost everything.
 - 2) These were people who were most closely connected to mortality.

***THEY WERE THE NEAREST TO DEATH**
 - c. And yet the Lord takes them and makes them new.
- 2. We see this at work in the life and ministry of Jesus.
 - a. In the New Testament, Jesus is in worship and reads from the prophet Isaiah.
 - b. We catch the scene in **Luke 4:18-20**

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then [Jesus] rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

2. And how does this psalm end? PRAISE THE LORD = HALLELUJAH

CONCLUSION

1. This psalm inverts the way of the world but it should highlight how many still feel about it.

a. An anecdote from an unusual place, a song by the band **Fun**.

b. This Queen-esque band released a song called, Carry On

1) The following lyric summarizes the way many people feel.

"And we talked and talked about how our parents will die All our neighbors and wives But I'd like to think I can cheat it all To make up for the times I've been cheated on."

c. Prevailing thought is that you can outpace your own mortality, but it's impossible.

3. The movement within this psalm from Mortality to Doxology is the story of our lives.

a. **Our lives are incomplete until God redeems it.**

b. Where is the hallelujah in the New Testament? In Revelation 19 talking about heaven.

Revelation 19:6,7

⁶Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

⁷Let us rejoice and be glad

and give him glory!