

14 The Lord Lifts Up

PSALM 146:1–10 | Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD, my soul.

I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God.

He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—he remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the LORD.

Consider This

Advent is the perfect time to reset our priorities. The one priority for the follower of Jesus is to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

It's one of the reasons I love Psalm 146. There's a phrase tucked right into the middle of this psalm that has become a favorite antiphonal refrain between one of my closest friends and me. And speaking of antiphonal refrains, they make an excellent way to practice Scripture with other people. We have a few we use around the house frequently as a family. Every morning as I let my children out of the car and send them into their schools I say, "I love you, LORD," and they respond, "my strength" (Ps. 18:1). This summer as we worked with the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, we would practice them using this "Bible hack" (a better term for antiphonal refrain). I would say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and they would say, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). I would say, "Blessed are those who mourn," and they would say, "for they will be comforted" (Matt. 5:4), and on we would go. It's actually a lot of fun and it offers a natural way to "rememberize" Scripture.

Note: *Rememberize* is an ingenious word coined by one of my children who was trying to say "memorize" at the time. To rememberize something is to commit something to memory slowly over the course of time rather than by cramming it all in at once. While memorizing can be effective, it often only sticks around in the short-term memory. Rememberizing has a way of getting the Word deep inside where it finds its way to our memory for the long haul. It's how people with Alzheimer's are still able to sing the old hymns when they can't even remember their name.

It brings me back around to Psalm 146 and the little phrase that led me to the rabbit trail of the practice of remembering. The little phrase my friend and I enjoy speaking back and forth to one another is this: one of us will say, “The LORD lifts up,” and the other will respond, “those who are bowed down” (v. 8). It’s our way of reminding one another of our priority.

Remember, repentance is whatever it takes to get our lives back to the priority of seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. I find this little phrase, “The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,” to be the beginning point of repentance. Repentance is the essential posture of humility and the pathway to true humanity. It’s a mark of mature faith.

“The LORD lifts up” . . . your turn.

PEOPLE, GET READY. JESUS IS COMING!