

## Psalm 146:1-10 – Praise for a creative, just God

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<sup>1</sup>Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! <sup>2</sup>I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long. <sup>3</sup>Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help. <sup>4</sup>When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish. <sup>5</sup>Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, <sup>6</sup>who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; <sup>7</sup>who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; <sup>8</sup>the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. <sup>9</sup>The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. <sup>10</sup>The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!

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Hope can seem trite. Cute. Naïve even. In the past, I have often wanted to scoff at those who would raise the notion of hope in the context of what I considered to be terrifying realities. Hope seemed like a form of denial (still can sometimes). But I now believe that hope, true hope, does not deny tragedy and suffering. True hope, that roots itself in God, takes a deep breath as she looks around, wipes a tear from her eye and says this too belongs to God.

In Psalm 146, there is a wonderful intermingling of words like praise, hope, and trust. We are challenged to not put our trust in human rulers. Rather, we are instructed to practice hope by trusting in the liberating God of all Creation. We praise God because She has made the sea, the heavens, and the earth. We hope in God, because our Lord executes justice. It is interesting to see how strongly the psalmist emphasizes the activity of the Lord. Over and over we are reminded that *the Lord* releases the prisoners. *The Lord* watches over the stranger.

I believe that God has a vision, a hope, for this world. And this divine hope calls us to search for that tenuous balance between blindly trusting in God in a way that leads to denial and irresponsibility (you know, the “God will take care of it....I don’t need to feed the hungry” sort of way), and trusting so heavily in humanity that we drown in our despair over our inability to solve all of our world’s problems.

Even amid wars, climate change, and a series of broken political and economic systems, this is still our Father’s world, and our God has promised to be with us always. It is in this truth that my hope lies. Praise the Lord!