

November 1, 2020

## “The Reality of God in the Face of an Election”

### Psalm 146

**FCF:** Confusion, consternation, and division over this election

**PROPOSITION:** (anchor) The LORD has revealed Himself to us.  
(magnet) We must let that shape our approach to this election.

#### **SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:**

Elections present us with opportunities. Opportunities for us to choose ballot initiatives and candidates to serve in various offices. Opportunities for us to ponder our priorities and to evaluate our deepest values. And such opportunities to choose and evaluate are good and vital.

But elections also present opportunities for us to be exposed. And we see that with what we are experiencing today. I’m thinking in particular of this ugly presidential campaign and the unappealing choices most voters feel have been thrust upon them. There is widespread confusion as to what to think, consternation as to what to do, and division in so many quarters.

We’re in need of wisdom and the LORD’s rich mercy. We all are. With that in mind, let’s take a moment to stop, breathe, and consider the reality of God in the face of an election.

**SCRIPTURE READING:** [Psalm 146](#)

#### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

#### **SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

Our current mood is reflected in the news. Consider these three stories. The first has to do with the record number of early voters. Last week, those numbers had already reached half of the total votes for 2016. Which takes us to the second story. There has been an interesting surge in a particular search query on Google, “How can I change my early vote?” So there’s obviously both a great deal of concern about the election coupled with a great deal of uncertainty as well. Which takes us to the third story - the bracing of urban centers for demonstrations once the results for the presidential election are released. Police departments across the country are being told to get ready. Which, understandably, has led to passionate calls for restraint and civility.

One has the sense of a coming storm, of great winds and waves. How do we prepare for this? Specifically, for disciples of Jesus, what would it mean for us to serve those around us, to be salt and light in the midst of all this? We don’t have to guess. He’s told us. This is hardly the worst or the first of times the church has seen such a moment. The LORD has revealed Himself to us. He has revealed Himself to us. And we must let that shape our approach to this election.

“How would such a revelation shape our approach?” you ask. In at least these three ways. First, in our perspectives. Second, in our priorities. And, third, in our convictions.

#### **I. OUR PERSPECTIVES**

First, our perspectives. ([READ Psalm 146:1-2](#)) A high view of God and call to praise.

##### *A) The Folly of Looking to Man*

Why? Two reasons. First, the absolute folly of looking to man ([READ Psalm 146:3-4](#)).

1. Who this is

Who is spoken of here? “Princes” are those with power and influence. A “son of man” is simply another human being - a mortal, finite and fallen, no matter their class, station, or status in life.

2. Why this is

No matter who they are, their breath will depart. Their end will come. Which puts a limit on all their plans and promises. So the lesson is, “Don’t put your trust in them. They can’t help you.”

*B) The Wisdom of Looking to God*

It is folly to look to man. But there is wisdom in looking to God (**READ Psalm 146:5-9**).

1. God of all goodness

He is the God of all goodness. The God of all grace, the God of Jacob, the God of a liar and a cheat who was befriended and transformed. The God of all mercy as vv.6-9 lay out so well.

2. God of all greatness

He is the God of all goodness. And greatness. He is the God of creation, all things made by His word. And with such power, we are assured of His grace and mercy. For He does all He wills.

That’s who He is. And that’s what He does. Which points to our perspective. How?

*Application:*

As v.5 says, He is our help. We have no cause for panic. Our help is not in politics or the outcome of an election. The focus of our hope is not in city hall or a capital square. Our Savior does not come on Air Force One. Nor is He up for re-election. Our help is the God of Jacob.

So what does that mean for this Tuesday evening? Balance. We have no need to collapse low in defeat or to trumpet high in victory. Either extreme would be utterly wrong, disconnected from our text, and expose a real misunderstanding of who and where our hope actually lies.

The LORD has revealed Himself. That must shape our perspective on this election.

## **II. OUR PRIORITIES**

That’s the first thing, our perspective. The second thing has to do with our priorities.

*A) The Needs of the Defenseless*

And we get a sense of that here in vv.7-9 with this list of the needs of the defenseless.

1. Who they are

Who are they? The oppressed, the hungry, prisoners, the blind, those bowed down, sojourners, the widow and fatherless. These are the vulnerable, suffering through the effects of the Fall.

2. What they need

And what do they need? Sympathy and action. Some strong initiative coming from the outside.

*B) The God of the Defenseless*

Which then takes us from the needs of the defenseless to the God of the defenseless.

1. What He does

What He does then matches those needs - executing justice, giving, freeing, opening eyes, lifting up, loving, watching over, and upholding. His response, His initiative is fitted to each need.

## 2. Why He does it

But why? Why does He do this? It's a reflection of His character. As is all He does and says.

This is who He is. This is what He does. Which points to our priorities. How so?

*Application:*

As I said, all He does and says is a reflection of His character. It flows out of who He is and, given that we are made in His image and claim to be His followers, it tells us something as to what our priorities should be as well. It tells us what makes for our non-negotiable stances.

This goes far beyond what would ease our personal lives to the changeless imperatives of our King - justice, mercy, and faithfulness. And those imperatives then press into such matters as marriage, life, and religious freedom. That has to form our grid. And is clear from our text.

The LORD has revealed Himself. That must shape our priorities in this election.

### **III. OUR CONVICTIONS**

It has to shape our perspectives, our priorities, and then, finally, our convictions.

#### *A) The Reign of the LORD*

(**READ Psalm 146:10**) The psalmist concludes with this reminder of the LORD's reign.

##### 1. The king

That is, this God of goodness and greatness is the rightful sovereign King. And there is no other.

##### 2. His rule

He is the King and His rule is eternal. It is without cessation, termination, limitation, or end.

#### *B) The Grounds for Our Praise*

And, given this King is the God of all goodness and greatness, that is grounds for praise.

##### 1. The cycle broken

For the cycle of disappointment is now broken. His are not promises made and forgotten. With Him, our hopes are never raised and dashed. With Him, our trust is never given and betrayed.

##### 2. The way forward

That cycle of our experience with all other saviors has been broken. So we have a way forward.

Which is grounds for our praise, praise which displaces our fear. And that allows and forms our convictions, the ways we will press forward no matter who wins or what comes.

*Application:*

By such convictions, I mean these three things. First, a humility towards our stances. We have to learn to acknowledge the limits of what we know and the certainty of our conclusions. The LORD is King. We are but doing the best we can in this season - a broken situation, falling far short of the ideal - with more factors in play than most of us can even begin to process.

So, first, a humility in our stances. Second, honor towards one another. The fact of the matter is there are wise godly people taking different positions. Good people can disagree. So we need to listen. Don't assume the worst of another and the best of yourself in such days.

So a humility in our stances and honor towards one another. And hope no matter the outcome. We have no idea what the headlines are going to be on Wednesday morning. So how will we respond? May we hold to and live out Psalm 146. The LORD is our help and our hope.

The LORD has revealed Himself. That must shape our convictions in this election.

**CONCLUSION:**

Friends, there is no sacred-secular divide. The Bible speaks to all of life. And we need to let it speak. The Psalms - as all the Old Testament - point us to Jesus. The Psalms have rightly been called “the songs of Jesus” in that they come from Him, are sung by Him, and drive us to Him. “How so with Psalm 146?” There is a Prince we can trust, the Son of Man in whom there is salvation. His breath departed but He returned from the earth. He is our help. He is our hope. And He reigns even now. Think long on this. Psalm 146 points us to Jesus and our need of Him.

How then should we vote? Well, the LORD has revealed Himself to us. We must let that shape our approach to this election - in our perspectives, our priorities, and our convictions.

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