

Written Copy: Psalm 146:3-6 “Who Are You Trusting In?”

Proper 27-25th Sunday @ Pentecost

Sunday, November 10th, 2024

Text: Psalm 146:3-6

³ Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.⁴ When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish. ⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, ⁶ who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever

Exegetical Statement

The Psalm writer calls us and the whole earth to praise the LORD, not just on Sunday morning, but certainly then. Not just with our singing and worship, although certainly with that. He calls on us to praise the LORD, the One true God of Heaven and earth, who created all things and to this day sustains all things, to praise Him and worship Him with our whole life, with all that we think, say, and do. As Creator and sustainer of all we are to put our hope and trust first and foremost in Him. We are not to put our hope and trust in earthly rulers and influential people. They are not eternal like the LORD God, and their plans and purposes will end with their life. In them there is no salvation, and no deliverance, as all these things come from the LORD God alone. Happy and blessed are those whose trust and hope is in the LORD. He rules over all things yet comes alongside each of us who are His baptized children, in right standing with Him by faith. He provides for your daily needs, He comes alongside you and lifts you up when life gets too difficult for you, waking with you. He sets you free when you're imprisoned by sin and guilt, He opens your eyes to see both His temporal and spiritual blessings. He loves and protects the sojourners, the widows, and the orphans. But the wicked, and those who oppress His children, will be judged and brought to eternal ruin.

Focus Statement:

Our LORD Jesus Christ is the only One worthy of our hope, trust, praise, thanksgiving, and faith. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all. He became to address our greatest need, victory over sin, death, and the devil, providing that by becoming our atoning sacrifice and giving us His right standing with God. He loves and cares for the whole of creation as well as the individual, YOU! HE does not promise heaven on earth now. Instead He provides what He, in His infinite wisdom, knows is best now, so that you remain in faith throughout your pilgrimage in a fallen broken world all the way to life everlasting.

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

We put our trust in earthly rulers, thinking that while God is in charge of the big picture, someone else needs to address our temporal needs. We put our trust in politicians and political parties, so much so that we either have false hope or unfounded despair over the election results. There is no hope, or salvation in earthly rulers or political parties, and putting our hope in them is akin to worshipping Satan.

What the hearer should do as a result:

Don't put your hope in trust in the donkey or the elephant. Trust in the LORD Jesus Christ, not to answer all your demands as you see fit, but to allow whatever is necessary to keep you in repentant faith toward Him now and unto eternal life

Subject Sentence: Your hope and trust belong only in the Lamb

Introduction

Well, how are you doing post-election? I've noticed three different attitudes and reactions to what transpired last Tuesday. Some of you are euphoric, some are upset and very worried, others just really don't care anymore. Especially in the days immediately following the election results being made known, it seemed as if our nation, as well as members of Lamb of God were suffering from Post Election Hangover. As I was contemplating the state of our divided nation, Psalm 146 struck me as the LORD speaking to me, and to you.

In what I'm about to share with you, there are some convicting words of law and there is a no-holds barred stark reality about where this world is headed. But if that is all there was to say, you needn't bother listening nor me preaching this message. What makes this worthy of your time is the great Gospel hope and promise that I want you to take home with you. I'll summarize it with this sentence: No matter who you voted for, no matter whether your candidate was elected or not, ***CHRIST WINS, AND IN HIM SO DO YOU!***

Now I truly believe most of you know that and agree with that. The problem comes when the voices of our culture, and the worries and fears of our sinful heart, serve to turn our focus away from Christ to focus our hope and trust elsewhere. In particular, the political rhetoric, political ads, and speeches have turned both our country, and members of this Church to place their trust and hope not on the Lamb, who is Christ Jesus, but upon the donkey or the elephant. We have placed our hope and trust on political parties and candidates. And this misplaced trust and hope has caused unwarranted fear as well as a false idea about what the future holds.

With that in mind, I'm not here to speak about the positive or negative policies and plans of political candidates or parties per se, but to give you the reason why your hope and trust belongs only in the Lamb.

Those Whose Hope Is in the Donkey

Let me address first those of you who voted for the Democratic candidate. When your candidate didn't win it was somewhat natural to feel disappointment. I'm hoping you gave prayerful thought to your choice in hopes that your selection was for the good of others and in keeping with God's will. I am not here to fault you for your choice. What I do want to talk about is the reaction among many in our country, and even in this congregation, that has gone beyond natural disappointment, to fear and dread so great that some felt ill, some lost sleep, some expressed worry that the end of the world was at hand. That end is coming, but it will be when you least expect it, and it will happen according to God's will and plan, not the plan of any man.

In the world I've seen the reaction of anger, as well as those who have expressed the desire to renounce U. S. citizenship and move to Canada or the United Kingdom. I am hoping none of you have had that extreme a reaction. But the greater the negative fearful reaction, the stronger the sign that your hope is in the wrong place, in a political party, and their candidate. This is true not just because she lost but it would be true even if she won.

Those Whose Hope is in the Elephant

Some of you, after the election, have experienced a different set of emotions. You feel happy and grateful that the candidate you selected as the best one for the job was chosen in a fair election. But for some this emotion has gone beyond that and given rise to speech and rhetoric that is not useful in a country that has been deeply divided, and where divisiveness has infected even the Church. In some there is the same kind of attitude that is better suited to your football team winning a great victory, how we all might feel if the Lions won the Super Bowl. It's normal to be happy and thankful that your candidate won the election. But it's going to far when you engage in repeating the political rhetoric that amounts to trash talking the candidate that lost the election and her supporters. Remember, your brother and sister in Christ sitting in the pew next to you may not feel the same way about the election results as you do. Nonetheless they are still your brother and sister in Christ, who needs to live and minister with you now, and will live with you forever in eternal life where politics and candidates will be a forgotten thing of the past. If you are struggling to see this or accept this, or if you believe that one man is going to be able to turn things around and create heaven on earth in a broken sinful world that is getting darker by the minute, then you are putting your hope and trust in the wrong place.

. Why Your Hope Should Not Be in the Donkey or the Elephant

Both parties, the Donkeys and the Elephants have used scare tactics in their rhetoric to trash each other and to scare you into voting for them. Instead of speaking about what their plan is to turn things around and improve the country they are busy calling each other liars and have either insinuated or come right out and said that if the other candidate was elected your life will become a living hell. Buying into that rhetoric means that you are putting your trust in someone or something where it does not belong.

Psalms 146:3-4 ³ Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation. ⁴ When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.

Our Psalm spells out clearly why placing your trust in the Donkey and its candidates, or the Elephant and its candidates is hope wrongly placed. Each one is a "son of man", or more literally translated from the original Hebrew a "son/daughter of Adam". They are human beings, and unworthy of your hope and trust. Being mortal their take and assessment on what is going on right now and the best way to address it is limited by human knowledge.

No one can know everything. And what about the past? One can read about it or recall what they have experienced, but there is far more to what happened in the past and how it affects us today than one person or one group of people can understand.

What about what will happen tomorrow? You can have the best plan to move this nation forward in regard to how things look today, but what about tomorrow? Who can take into account all the variables about what may or may not happen? What looks like a good plan today may not be that good with what tomorrow brings. What are some of the factors that can ruin the plans one makes today? War, famine, disease, natural disasters, economic downturns and crashes that happen unexpectedly. And whatever plan or plans your candidate would put in place, those come to an end when their breath departs and leaves this world.

Both political parties make grand and glorious promises. But hoping in, and trusting in either the Donkey or the Elephant means you're trusting in, and hoping in the wrong person. They are not powerful enough to provide the salvation that is needed, not in a temporal sense, and most especially not in the spiritual sense which the whole world needs. Neither the Donkey nor the Elephant can provide that, but our LORD God has already done so.

Why Your Hope Belongs Only in the Lamb

Your hope, your trust, and your faith belong instead only in the Lamb, first and foremost. Let me give you the "political pitch" from the God's Word on why this is the absolute truth.

Psalms 146:5-6 ⁵ Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, ⁶ who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever

You are not only smart to put your hope and trust in the Lamb, but you are also blessed! Why? Because the Lamb is the person of the Trinity through whom all things were created. The Lamb is the Word that said, "Let there be", and everything came into being by the power of His Word. Not only did He create all things, but in His place ruling over all things at the right hand of God, the place where we saw Him symbolically described in our First Lesson from Revelation Chapter 7 last week, He is sustaining all things. He keeps the earth rotating on its axis, the earth circling around the sun, the rain falling, the seasons changing.

He is the One who lives outside of time and exists throughout time. He not only knows all that happened yesterday all the way to eternity past, He knows the future. He not only knows everything that will happen tomorrow, the next day, and all the way to the Last Day, He is the One who is the cause behind all of it happening. He allows and sets into motion everything that God has declared must happen according to His will before Jesus Christ returns on the Last Day. And those things that are destructive and hurtful, He controls and moderates them so that they serve His purposes.

And what are His purposes? That all who stand against Him and refuse to believe in Him receive the judgment and justice they have earned for themselves. Even then His Spirit is at work in all those whose trust is placed in the wrong thing or person, showing them that a political candidate, or elected official is not capable of saving us from the destructive forces around us, and calling them to turn and place their trust and hope in the only One that can save them, the Lamb. He uses bad destructive things to turn hearts and minds to faith in Him before it's too late. And what about we who are trusting in the Lamb? He uses these afflictions and destructive forces to strengthen our faith, hope, and love for the Lamb and away from trusting in any political party or human being whose plans and purposes end with their death.

Psalms 146:7-9 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; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

Who is the source of true justice in this world? The Lamb. Who feeds the hungry and provides for all of our needs today, tomorrow, and the next day? The Lamb. Who heals the body when it is afflicted with disease, blindness, and is broken and hurting? The Lamb. Who cares for the homeless, for those who have lost their spouse and are in mourning? The Lamb. Who cares for the orphans and works to find them a home? The Lamb. Who comes alongside you when the pressures and afflictions of this world become too hard to bear? The Lamb. Who is the One who puts people in power, and executes His will through believing rulers and even unbelieving rulers? The Lamb. Case in point, the Jewish exiles in Babylon were not released and allowed to return home by a believing king, but by unbelieving King Cyrus through whom the LORD worked so that His will was done and the exiles returned home just when He declared they should.

The Lamb is not like the Donkeys or the Elephants who concern themselves with making the majority happy so they can be reelected, or the movers and shakers who can fund them and keep them in power. He cares about everyone, even the unborn who can't speak or vote. He cares about you.

He is God the Son who became the Son of Man so that He could set you free from the prison that is sin, death, and hell. He did it by offering the perfect sacrifice to atone for all your sins that would keep you imprisoned forever, all the ways you trust in yourself and the princes of this world instead of trusting in Him, the Lamb. He Himself became your perfect sacrifice by taking all your sin upon Himself and dying to remove it forever. Then He rose again from the dead to foreshadow your eternal victory to come. He has earned your trust, your love, your hope. And through the gift of His Spirit He gives you the power of faith to keep you trusting, hoping, and loving only Him. As our Psalm states He is the One “**who keeps faith forever**” He moved heaven and earth to set you free. He is not going to forget about you, abandon you, or let you go.

The Truth About What is To Come and Who Holds the Future

Both the Donkeys and the Elephants love to make grand and glorious promises about how they will make your future bright again. The problem is, the Lamb who sits on the throne has revealed a different truth. Although things may get a little better, as they have in the past, the overall trend throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century is that things are getting worse. Natural disasters are getting worse and more frequent. Crime and violence are getting worse. Economic problems are getting worse. The lack of respect for authority, even down to the level of the family, is getting worse. Man’s inhumanity to his fellow man is getting worse. And no matter which party is in power, this will continue as we get closer to the Last Day.

The devil is hard at work. He is hard at work within the Donkeys and the Elephants. And what Revelation teaches is that before Christ returns, he will have infiltrated and corrupted all human institutions to work for his goal, which is to move as many people as he can away from trusting in the Lamb to trust in anything or anyone else. That’s because he knows that all who do will join him in eternal damnation. But when your trust, your hope, your love, and your life are centered on the Lamb, you have all the power of heaven, the very power of the One who creates, and sustains all things protecting you each and every day of your life.

Conclusion

So, what is the cure for your election hangover? Don't put your trust in the Donkey or the Elephant, or their human counterparts. Truly they cannot and will not help you or save you. Instead, put your trust, hope, and faith in the Lamb. He is the one who works through earthly means provide and care for you body, soul, and spirit. He has called you into His own party, the Christian Church, where He provides for you and cares for you in Word and Sacrament. Don't waste your time spouting the hateful rhetoric of either party. Instead, witness through your words and actions the hope, the trust, and the love you have for the Lamb. Give witness to those around you why He is the Only One who can save us now and going forward all the way into eternal life. And pray for all those in power governing our country, that they would come to see and trust in the Lamb as we do. Pray that the LORD would work through them to allow us, the Church, to continue to share our Gospel witness of the Lamb who is reigning on the throne over all things, now and in the world to come. Amen.