

Troubled Times

Slides for slideshow:



We have so much to be thankful for. We can meet in safety, free from fear with all the basics and more of life available for us; so much to praise God for. Let's read Psalm 146.

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.

When we look at our world, we can be overwhelmed. There is so much need both at home and abroad - so many situations of evil beyond imagining going on *right now* in so many places of the world, not only in the places our media currently reports. It's easy to understand the psalmist in Psalm 10. Let's read.

Why, LORD, do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
**In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak,
who are caught in the schemes he devises.**
He boasts about the cravings of his heart;
he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD.
**In his pride the wicked man does not seek him;
in all his thoughts there is no room for God.**
His ways are always prosperous;
your laws are rejected by him;
he sneers at all his enemies.
**He says to himself, "Nothing will ever shake me."
He swears, "No one will ever do me harm."**

Imagine how a holy, just God feels, looking at our world. The psalmist goes on to say "But you God, see the trouble." It's good to remind ourselves that for good reason God says "vengeance is mine." Let's read further on in the same Psalm.

**But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted;
you consider their grief and take it in hand.**
The victims commit themselves to you;
you are the helper of the fatherless.
**Break the arm of the wicked man;
call the evildoer to account for his wickedness
that would not otherwise be found out.**
The LORD is King for ever and ever;
the nations will perish from his land.
**You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted;
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,**
defending the fatherless and the oppressed,
so that mere earthly mortals
will never again strike terror.

It's a reminder to not lose heart, but to keep on keeping on as we remember Paul's exhortation in Galatians 6:9. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

One of my favourite verses is Micah 6:8. "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

As we ponder this, let's bring situations and people to God either silently or out loud.

As we finish, let's say the Grace together.

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of
the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.**