

An abstract image featuring a large, dynamic splash of blue ink or paint against a light, off-white background. The ink forms intricate, swirling patterns with varying shades of blue, from deep navy to a lighter, misty blue. The overall shape of the splash is roughly horizontal, filling most of the upper half of the frame.

IN THE FACE OF JESUS

Sermon Growth Guide

August 10, 2025
There is Self-Control



Sermon Growth Guide

October 26, 2025

Lasting Impact

Psalms 146:1-10

Key Verse: Psalm 146:2 “I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live”

Big Idea: We were made to worship God.

Foundations

This week we end our sermon series, “How to Get What You Want.” We have looked at some of our deepest desires and longings. We have learned how to reorient our lives to long for more of God and His Kingdom. We have seen what all of humanity struggles with and soaked in biblical responses.

We cannot be sure of who authored this psalm. There’s no accreditation given. We do know that this, too, applies to all of humanity, for each person faces their mortality and the impact they will have. Psalm 146 focuses on trusting God and the reasons to, rather than earthly leaders. God alone proves trustworthy. Throughout time, leaders have volleyed for power, trying to prove themselves worthy of being adored. But, as mentioned in the sermon, only God Himself is our Creator, Sustainer and King.

The following psalms continue to praise God and list multiple reasons that He has shown Himself loving, consistent, omniscient and omnipotent. All of creation praises Him. These last psalms consistently proclaim God. Instead of thinking of what we want, these psalms reorient us to proclaim what we have – a loving God who transcends and is involved in everything. Our sermon talks today about lasting impact – our desire to leave a legacy. Pastor Tim talks about the purpose of our lives – we were made to worship God. Our worship is our impact.

Understanding God’s Word

Together, read Psalm 146:1-10.

As Pastor Tim mentioned, this Psalm starts and ends with Hallelu Yah, or Praise the Lord. This is the first of the last 5 psalms, and each has this same bookended cadence. How does it change your reading to have the overarching theme be “Praise the Lord?”

This Psalm consistently mentions reasons to put your trust in God, rather than trusting in mortal men. What are some reasons you read here to trust in God? Is there one that resonates with you more?

Applying God’s Word

The Psalmist lists reasons to worship God in this passage, from creation to upholding the cause of the oppressed and beyond. Which part of the psalm did you most need to hear today? What resonated with you?

How do these traits prove God’s trustworthiness?

Witnessing God’s Word

We are called to be like Christ. Think of the trait of God that resonated with you. Is it something you’re drawn to emulate? Pray about how God might use you in a similar way here on earth. This is what makes a lasting impact. How can you worship God and witness to others by your actions today? This Psalm speaks to God’s hands in everything and love for all people. How might that alter your prayers?

Who wants to live forever? Tricky question. Do you mean keep growing older forever? Do you mean being remembered forever? Or do you mean eternal life with Christ? Three different things, aren't they? Today we wrap up a series called How to Get What You Want. People have been trying to live forever, forever. Extending our days, trying to unlock the secret to long life or, literally, unending life. Scientists are working hard to invent mind uploading, digital immortality, where you upload your mind to the cloud. Some say it will come by 2045! Others say it might take longer. Is that eternal life? What do we want? Others try to make their mark, to be immortalized. Names on buildings, statues in the park, a body of work that is unforgettable. Andy Warhol said, "The idea is not to live forever; it is to create something that will." Or maybe you prefer this quote: "I intend to live forever, or die trying." -Groucho Marx. The last desire we are talking about in this series, the last want of the human heart is this: we want Lasting Impact. We want to know it all mattered, that we won't be forgotten when we are gone.

This is a profound thirst. Look at all the ways we are trying to unlock the code to timelessness, to find the fountain of youth and live forever. Actually, God implanted this desire in us. "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end." (Ecclesiastes 3:11) We have eternity set in our hearts as an expectation. So, we reject death. Philosophies and religions from Stoics to Buddhists to modern atheists have tried to get us to accept death, to embrace the idea that it all blinks out at the end and we return to the soil, or the ether, or the One Soul, or whatever, but something in us revolts! "Rage, rage against the dying of the light." Eternity is planted in us. We long to have a lasting impact, to overcome death, maybe by making our names great so that all will remember. But this world is passing away, with its desires. "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." (Psalms 146:3-4) How do we truly participate in the eternal?

This Psalm is a call to worship, an invitation to give all praise to God. It begins and ends with "Hallelujah," "Praise the Lord." That is a communal call to the congregation, "Hey, you all, praise the Lord." The Psalm writer responds, "Yes, I will. I will give praise to the living God." "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." (Psalms 146:1-2) I will. Yes, I will. We issue the call to worship here at this church. We prepare these hours of worship, but the worship is not what we do up here. It's what you do out there. God is worthy of honor and praise and has appointed one day in seven to step aside to give him worship. Will you? "Yes, I will," says the Psalm. "Yes, I will praise the Lord." You were made to do it. People look all around for purpose, the purpose of your life. Here's the secret. You were made to worship God.

Praise the Lord. Why? The Psalm makes three claims. Praise the Lord, he is God the Creator. Praise the Lord, he is God the Sustainer. Praise the Lord, he is God the Great King. Praise the Lord, he is God the Creator. "Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God." (Psalms 146:5) Quick side note: that word "help" is the same word used to describe Eve at creation. Here is Eve, your help. Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob. God is this kind of help. It doesn't exactly mean "servant" does it? That's a side note. Where is your confidence? Where do you look for help and salvation? Blessed and happy are those who are not putting their hope in princes and human beings who cannot save. Chuck Colson used to say, "Salvation doesn't come on Air Force One." We put too much hope in politics sometimes, as important as it is. Where is your help? Happy are those whose help is the Lord. "He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and

everything in them— he remains faithful forever.” (Psalms 146:6) This is his world, don’t forget. His world. He made it. God is God and I am not. Praise God the Creator.

Praise God, he is God the Sustainer. “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.” (Psalms 146:7-9) God is not absent. God is at work. Look at what God does. This is a five-part song of praise. List the action verbs, he upholds and gives, the Lord sets free, the Lord gives sight, the Lord lifts up, the Lord loves, the Lord watches over, praise the Lord! Praise the Lord. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and hungry. No situation is final, see, because there is a God in heaven. Daniel was tossed in the lion’s den and King Darius and the nobles pressed their signet rings in the wax to seal the stone. Why? So that Daniel’s situation might not be changed. Well, if there is no God in heaven. Your situation is set. You are stuck, you are sealed, nothing can change. But there is a God in heaven, Amen?

The Lord sets free, gives sight to blind, lifts up the bowed down, loves the righteous. God is not silent. God is at work. The Lord watches over the foreigner—how vulnerable it is to be an alien in a foreign land. This is not saying lawlessness is wise, but it is saying God is watching how people are treated and has an eye on those who may be hidden, unseen or disregarded, abused by human traffickers or poorly treated by the system. The orphan, the widow, you are not alone. God is with you. Look at this list. What does it remind you of? “Jesus, how do we know it’s you? How do we know you are the Lord?” The Lord upholds, the Lord feeds the hungry, the Lord gives sight to blind, the Lord lifts up the downtrodden, the Lord! I think it’s Jesus, don’t you? Praise the Lord, God who sustains.

Praise the Lord, God the Great King. “The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord.” (Psalms 146:10) The Lord reigns. Who’s in charge? Who’s the boss? The sovereign rule of God our King never ends. His reign is forever. The greatest of kings and kingdoms, the greatest of princes and powers, they all come to that last day. They all come to an end. How do I participate in something that lasts forever? What you are looking for is the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom that never ends, and you can have it. You are invited to it. You can enter it. It comes with calling Jesus Savior and Lord. The Kingdom of God is where God is the King—that can be your heart, your life, your soul, the moment you honor Jesus for who he truly is: God the Great King. Praise the Lord.

For, with us, with the greatest among us, the least among us, the truth is the same. On that very day our plans come to an end. We have all these desires, all these wants. We have all these plans and intentions to match those desires. On that day they come to an end, and what will we have regretfully sacrificed to those desires? Are we too much in the world, this passing world? “For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” (1 John 2:16-17) The world and its desires. How do I get what I want? Jim Carrey said once, “I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it’s not the answer.” He got everything he wanted, and it was not the answer. Fame doesn’t do it. 57% of the rising generation say they want to become online influencers. Fame won’t do it. Are we too invested in this world and it’s passing desires? But whoever does the will of God, whoever bends the knee, a subject of the true Kingdom, whoever enters into life with Christ as Savior and Lord, can know life eternal.

We can be part of eternal things even while we are living mortal lives. One way, (and you knew this was coming, it's Stewardship Sunday), but one way is through our thoughtful, intentional investment in the work of the Kingdom—our commitment to give to the work of the church for next year. Some trust in princes, in mortals whose plans don't last. Here is a tangible way to submit and participate in the Kingdom that does last. When someone comes to the Lord, that's an eternal thing. When a kid is raised in the Lord, that's eternal work. We are asking covenant partners or members to commit to at least a 5% increase in giving next year. Maybe you need to do that. Maybe you need to do more. I'm bold to challenge you because I know the national statistics, and I imagine they are not far off among us. Giving is declining. The number of Americans who give to charity has dropped from two-thirds to under half in the last twenty years. 37% of regular churchgoers give nothing to their church. That's not good for you. Less than 10% are actually tithing (giving 10% of their household budget). The average gift per member in American churches is \$17 per week. Do we want strong churches? Do we want to see Gospel ministry advance in 2026?

It's not a fundraiser; it is a moment to declare that there is no other King than Jesus in your life. Money doesn't get to be king. It is that moment for me too. You know I preach to a mirror when I'm talking about this stuff. I'm preaching to myself as much as you. I watch my numbers too much. Monday there was that big interruption with Amazon Web Services and lots of financial services were suspended or inaccurate. I checked my retirement account on my phone after dinner. It was 25% less than it should be, than it was the day before! I thought, "Okay, Lord. Here's a test. Can I sleep?" I asked Abigail, "Do you think we've been hacked? Do you think we've been

robbed?" She said, "Oh, it was never ours to begin with." Hmm. Where is your hope? Where is your trust? It all worked out. It was a technological glitch was all. Can we trust the Lord with our finances?

Praise the Lord. We can be part of his eternal Kingdom right now. Not by writing a check. That's just one symbol. By trusting Jesus. Praise the Lord, he is God the Creator. Praise the Lord, he is God the Sustainer. Praise the Lord, he is God the Great King. Praise the Lord. Jesus upholds. Jesus gives help. Jesus gives sight to the blind. Jesus feeds the hungry. Jesus has eyes on every immigrant, every widow, every orphan. Jesus lifts up the bowed down, love the righteous, and frustrates the plans of the wicked. Do you know him today? Praise the Lord.