

Psalm 146  
June 6, 2010

“Spring Cleaning”

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If you haven't all ready begun, let me break the bad news to you. It is Spring Cleaning time. Yes that time when we actually move furniture and vacuum behind it. We dust under things. We drag out drawers and clean out closets. You can go online and search for “Spring Cleaning” - many checklists will pop up to make sure that you have more work than you ever imagined. While online you can discover many simple, child safe, pet safe, environmentally safe alternatives to toxic detergents.

I recently cleaned out a walk in closet in our house. It is 6 foot by 5 foot and it was so jammed full and unorganized it was really more of a Crawl in and take your life in your own hands closet.

But after a few hours, removing boxes, tossing trash, filling a couple bags to take to donate, there was actually space and everything that was left had a place. And I felt the joy of accomplishment. Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord. Say it with me out loud, “Praise the Lord.” A Simply little phrase. It rolls off our tongue. It is pleasing to the eye, and just rings and rings in your ear when you hear it. Such a simple, little, joyous phrase.

We say Praise the Lord for giving us strength to carry on in our daily lives. When we get an answer to a problem. When we see beautiful landscape. When we sense God is near us. When we get good health news. We might even say Praise the lord when we finish our Spring cleaning!

Psalm 146 tells us about some of the marvelous things God has done. God has rescued the slaves and healed the blind. God has given life and love, joy and hope to people in trouble. It is easy to see God's marvelous works. For hope in the midst of hopelessness, strength in the midst of brokenness, wholeness in illness, for a way out when there seems to be no way out, for answering our prayers, we are driven from deep inside to say, Praise the Lord.

But we folks are collectors. Just check our closets, our garages, our basements, also known as -- personal subterranean landfills. Some people collect baseball cards, or special coins. Other people collect salt and pepper shakers or cups and saucers. In our home a quick look and you would see we collect books and music. It seems we just find ways to collect, gather, and store up things.

This is mostly harmless until we start putting god-like trust in our things, or worse yet when we begin to put our hope in our ideals or our systems, when we start believing they will protect us, they will save us. All of a sudden we have more faith in nationalism, or we think that our educational, economic, military, medical or scientific systems are going to save us.

These are our modern day princes that we put our trust in. So we might each ask ourselves, who are the princes I put my trust in? When times get really tough, when I am scared, when I feel attacked, who or what do I turn to? The author of Psalm 146 has clear answers for us this morning.

Jesus the Christ was at his best when he was empty, we read in Philippians 2, one of the oldest passages in the New Testament, “Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a servant, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn’t claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.

Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God.”

So what should fill us? I can’t answer that for you this morning but I can reveal again what Scripture says so we can tune our lives to its truth. In our Psalm we are told to trust God. It is God who executes Justice. It is God who feeds the hungry. It is God who sets the prisoner free. It is God who gives sight to the blind and cares for the widow. It is God who watches over those who are suffering physically, mentally, or emotionally.

Well hmm, that sounds pretty easy doesn’t it? We can just sit back and say God will take care of it, God will do it. But. . . not so fast. The Psalmist slips in a phrase, “but the way of the wicked God brings to ruin.”

We tend to think of the word wicked today as a word we use to describe someone, or some situation that is categorically bad. That isn’t the meaning the biblical writers had in mind, they were speaking about well-intentioned people, who just weren’t being faithful, or made unfaithful choices or decisions, or took sinful actions.

So this little phrase reminds us that we are called to accountability in our relationship with God and one another. When we start buying one new fair trade or non-GMO or organic product we honor our accountability to our Creator and to all creation. When we add one windmill or solar panel to our property we honor our accountability to one another. When we send a thank you card to a former teacher. When we support local owned and family owned businesses. When we stand in solidarity against discrimination or with immigrants. When we welcome people who have never felt welcomed anywhere. When we are generous beyond our own expectations; then we are participating in God’s redemptive, transformative action in the world. We are practicing our accountability to our Creator and to all Creation.

And when we make these kinds of changes in life, we will find new reasons to thank God, to offer our deepest gratitude for a joyful life, we will find more and more reasons to say, "Praise the Lord."

AMEN