

Psalm 146

¹ Praise the LORD.^[a]

Praise the LORD, my soul.

² I will praise the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

³ Do not put your trust in princes,
in human beings, who cannot save.

⁴ When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
on that very day their plans come to nothing.

⁵ Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God.

⁶ He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
he remains faithful forever.

⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets prisoners free,

⁸ the LORD gives sight to the blind,
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,
the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹ The LORD watches over the foreigner
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

¹⁰ The LORD reigns forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the LORD.

Old Testament Reading - Isaiah 35:4-7a

⁴ say to those with fearful hearts,

“Be strong, do not fear;

your God will come,

he will come with vengeance;

with divine retribution

he will come to save you.”

⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer,

and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.
⁷ The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.

Epistle Reading - James 2:1-10, 14-18

Favoritism Forbidden

² My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. ² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself,"^(a) you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Faith and Deeds

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

Gospel Reading – Mark 7:31-37

Jesus Heals a Deaf and Mute Man

³¹ Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.^h ³² There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

³³ After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. ³⁴ He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "*Ephphatha!*" (which means "Be opened!"). ³⁵ At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

³⁶ Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. ³⁷ People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."