



Kirknewton and East Calder Parish Church of Scotland

Minister: Rev Dr André J Groenewald

8 Manse Court, East Calder, Livingston, EH53 0HF

Tel: 01506 884585, Mob: 075 888 458 14, email: groenstes@yahoo.com

www.knec4jesus.org.uk



Date 6th June 2010

Sermon Rev Dr André Groenewald

Reading Psalm 146

The text verse for the sermon verse 1: "HALLELUJAH.

Praise the LORD, O my soul.

² I will praise the LORD all my life;

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

Have you ever been at a concert where the people did not applaud the cast on the stage? Well, no, I have never seen it in my life!

You applaud the people on stage to show your appreciation no matter what.

To understand this Psalm is to look at the concert of life where God is at the centre of the stage of life where He controls everything in a loving and creative way. This Psalm is the applause of someone who showed his appreciation and thankfulness to the Giver of all life.

His applause is not silent and in the background. No, he is on his feet applauding God by starting and ending his Psalm with words of praise, with the same word: Hallelujah! He does not hold back. He thinks of each and every episode of his life where the Giver of Life provided and still provides for him.

He says he praises God with his soul or, in our understanding, with his whole life. In the Old Testament times they regarded the soul as something that we call the main artery today. The meaning was simply to state if you cut the artery, you die. It is the key to life. God is the ONE who created him and gave him life's breath.

He recognises that God is perfect while the human race is imperfect. He says no human can be trusted with anything. People are finite and return to the dust they were made off. Only God can be trusted because He made everything. He is reliable.

A person that realises that God is the only one to help, is indeed blessed. Jacob is a poetic way of referring to the people of Israel. Anyone who takes God seriously as the one helper close at hand is indeed lucky, happy, and blessed.

The Psalmist's applause becomes even louder when he thinks of all the reasons why God can be trusted.

God is the maker of heaven and earth. His creation is a masterpiece of excellence and perfection. God remains faithful to his creation. He sustains and nourishes it. Although He is the Almighty God He rules with love. He loves all those that have been marginalized:

- He takes care of the oppressed.
- He feeds the hungry,
- He sets the captives free,
- He gives eyesight to the blind;
- He helps everyone that is distressed or troubled,
- He looks after the righteous, those who serve him in full obedience;
- He watches over the aliens,
- He sustains the fatherless and the widows;
- He acts justly towards the wicked;

God is forever in power. His kingdom has no boundaries. His actions continue forever. The curtain of the stage where God plays his central part in everything never goes down. God's actions were seen by the Psalmist and we who live so many years after this Psalm was written still experience it too.

WE can whole heartedly agree with the Psalmist that God can indeed be trusted especially because we live after God's amazing act in Jesus Christ where He came to set us free from the captivity of sin. He made us see that He is a God of love. He made us aware of the plight of the oppressed, the hungry, and the troubled. He looked after those who follow him in a big way by forgiving and saving them from sin, death, and hell. He focussed our attention on everyone that needs help and care like the orphans, the aliens, and the widows.

In Jesus God made sure the wicked of this world do not have the last say. He is in charge and will be in charge forever more!

We are the witnesses of everything that is mentioned in this Psalm. We see, daily, the miracles of life. We experience every moment of every day how God is providing and looking after us. We still hear more positive stories than bad ones. It is just a pity that we live in a culture where the negative, the bad, and the ugly are always over emphasised.

Maybe the time has come for us too to openly applaud the work of God in an open albeit not threatening but loving way by our actions of forgiveness, love, justice, and peace. Maybe we too like the Psalmist, should say more Hallelujahs instead of complaining about everything that does not work out the way we wanted. Maybe we too must make a deliberate attempt this week during gala week to change the attitudes of people with our positive actions of love, faith, mercy, and hope!

May we be a beacon of hope to everyone that is distressed or troubled!

If you are troubled, alone, sick and in need of a helping hand, look beside you! There is someone sitting close to you who can help.

They say that the first Christian martyrs totally confused their captors. Every time the soldiers took the Christians to be burned alive, they sang Hallelujahs to the glory of God. They say that the soldiers were so amazed that they also became followers of the Triune God.

No applause can be stopped. If someone starts it, it almost mesmerises you to do the same.

Andrew and Pauline you are applauding God this morning by your bringing of Emma-Janice to the waters of baptism. May your applause never ever stop because if you stop, Emma-Janice will never ever see and experience the miracles God can do!

Let us start now and applaud God by our actions of faith, forgiveness, peace, justice, mercy, friendliness, hope and love. Let us do it like the Psalmist did by not missing one single piece of God's actions in this world.

Hallelujah!

Amen.