

Challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

May 2007

PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.

Psalm 146 — What does life mean?

As I've mentioned in my previous prayer editorials the last bracket of Psalms are really much to do with praise and focusing our lives and hearts upon the nature and character of God. There is no doubt in my mind that as you look at the Old Testament stories like the one about Jehoshaphat going into war with musical instruments and singing praises to God, this highlights to us that there is great power in praise particularly when we praise God. So there are a number of things that the psalmist really talks about in terms of the meaning of life for the Christian and I just want to quickly point out 4 of them as you read through this prayer devotion.

1. Life means praising God verses 1 & 2. Like the previous psalm and the psalms that follow this one, it opens up the idea of building to a crescendo of praise to God. And there is no doubt that God rejoices in the sincere and genuine Holy Spirit inspired praise of His people. The importance of this praise is brought home to us in the fact that the psalmist says that "while I live I will praise the Lord. I will sing praises to my God while I have my being." This brings a whole new priority and urgency to the psalmist's desire to worship the Lord in the whole attitude of praise. This praise can be both general and specific if you look at verse 1. **We can praise God for life and for our existence.** As Paul tells us in Col 1:17; "In Him (that is in Christ) all things consist." The reality is that from the moment we slip from God's thinking is the moment that we instantly return to dust. **We can also praise God for Creation.** This is a constant refrain throughout Scripture where God refers to Himself as the God of Creation or the God who made the heavens and the earth. Again this refers very much to Psalm 145 where the fact that we know and love and worship the God of Creation speaks not only of His power and authority but also of His very character. And then **thirdly we can praise God for Salvation.** I think that this is something each day we need to remind ourselves of the love of God in speaking to our lives and transforming our hearts. I think this is why Paul was able to say that, "the love of God compels me" to as it were communicate the Gospel. Paul was so gripped by this love of God that he just couldn't help himself in terms of communicating the Word of God and the message of salvation. It was much the same with the prophet Jeremiah when he stated that God's Word was like a burning fire in his bones. It was a fire that could not be contained and that he had to speak out as the Lord's witness.

I think as one writer has put it, to receive gifts and not give thanks to the giver is the essence of idolatry.

saving love of God to desperately, desperately needy people.

But the flip side of the coin of course is that those who don't love God it can only be said are looking at a very difficult future indeed. And that's why the psalmist says it rather boldly when he says, "the way of the wicked He turns upside down." A similar verse to that is in **Psalm 1:6** where it says, "The way of the ungodly will perish." That word 'perish' doesn't mean annihilation but rather that you will not be what God has planned for you to be. I rather like that because it highlights the fact that God can do everything that He wants to do to draw you to Himself but ultimately the divine working of God and the free will of man work in that mysterious way to draw a person into a right relationship with God.

4. Then fourthly life means reigning with God. I think it's important for us to recognise that not only shall we reign with God in heaven but we can reign with God here on earth as we serve Him with faithful hearts and a joyous spirit. We can also reign with God as we look to Him to help us overcome life's difficulties and struggles. We can also reign with God as we go about witnessing for Him and being a faithful servant of the living God. We can also reign with God as we are faithful husbands and wives and as we are faithful in our workplace to honour Him and glorify the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We need to see that the truths of this Psalm are not something that is a fad or trend or something that is gimmicky, here today and gone tomorrow but we must recognise that life is all about eternal issues.

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge

Praise Points

1. While Carl and Carolyn Carmody were recently in the USA and South America, we received the following message from a co-worker in Kenya, Paul Dondoh, who wrote "Our prayer team is up the mountain for 3 days fasting and praying for Carl and Carolyn while in U.S.A." Do praise the Lord with us for faithful prayer-partners from what we might usually consider such unexpected quarters.
2. Praise for God's on-going expansion of the ministry. Carl had a good reception in South America, and is trusting for getting papers into Uruguay and Paraguay in the very near future.

Prayer Points

1. Four of Challenge's staff are preparing for an Africa outreach in July. Carl and Carolyn Carmody, Graeme Jacques and Bob Walker will be part of a team of about 30 heading for Johannesburg. Pray for on-going godly preparation for these and others. Some are still trusting for fares and associated costs to be met.
2. Much development has been done on the web-site in recent days. Pray for continuing development of the South African and Argentina (Spanish) areas of the web-site.
3. Pray for on-going prayer and financial support from our American partners.
4. Pray for Paul Dondoh (pictured) who distributes Challenge in Kenya. Several new fellowships have commenced from this work. Pray for Paul's travels through his country, for Bibles for new believers, and funds to cover the cost of Hi-Ace van.
5. Pray for strength and on-going vision for Carl and Carolyn Carmody on returning from a month in North America, and Argentina.
5. Pray for Australia. That the Christian Church may have an outreach urgency for the times in which we live.



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