

## Daily Devotional, July 28, 2021 Music that Soothes the Soul

***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. Psalm 146:1-2 (NIV)***

Music has always been such a joy and a great stress reliever for me and has a unique way of shaping my thoughts and my feelings. Having grown up in a Lutheran grammar school setting, music was woven through the very fabric of my childhood. When I was about seven years old, I started singing in the church children's choir and continued throughout my teenage and adult years. Even today, I enjoy listening to a variety of music, but when I listen to Christian music, my spirit is uplifted and recharged. However, no matter what type of music, each style has the incredible power to bring healing to the mind and the heart.

King David was a poet and musician to whom many psalms are credited. When David was a boy, he played the harp so beautifully that he was recommended to King Saul who took him into his service. Whenever Saul experienced mental agitation, David played the harp to bring peace to the King's mind. Music was also an important part of the life of the ancient Israelites, especially in their worship of God. In addition to bringing peace, music was used to mark Hebrew events on the calendar. For example, on the day of Jubilee, the sound of the horn proclaimed freedom to the slaves and the return of forfeited land to their owners.

Psalm 146 begins and ends with the words "Praise the Lord!" (in Hebrew Hallelujah!). The psalmist emphasizes that the Lord is the only one in whom we can truly place our trust. God is the maker of heaven and earth. God's faithfulness keeps the universe in operation. Although great in power, God cares deeply for humanity, especially the poor and downtrodden. God upholds the cause of the oppressed, gives food to the hungry, heals the sick, and sets the captives free. God loves righteousness and hates evil. This is the God we trust and praise.

According to theologian and pastor, John Piper, "we praise what we enjoy because the delight is incomplete until it is expressed in praise. If we were not allowed to speak of what we value, and celebrate what we love, and praise what we admire, our joy would not be full." Today, only a portion of us gather in worship face-to-face; however, the spiritual practice of reading Scripture and praising God with our voice can be grounding for us, and it can help us be resilient during this difficult time of moving beyond isolation. We praise God that all things in heaven and earth will be brought under God's authority." The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations."

***Lord, thank you for opening the eyes of the blind and lifting those who are bowed down. I come into Your presence with thanksgiving and bow before You this day. I exalt Your name, for You are great and worthy to be praised. All honor and majesty, strength and glory, holiness and righteousness are Yours. Amen.***