



# MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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November 4, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

Election Eve

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 146D CW

Lesson: [Romans 13:1-7](#)

Sermon Text: [Psalm 146:3-5](#)

## LIVE LIKE YOU'LL LIVE FOREVER Live a Life in View of God's Kingdom HOPE IN THE LORD

1. Don't put your hope in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Do be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, be a good \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. God's Kingdom: \_\_\_\_\_, has no \_\_\_\_\_, is all about the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

Have you ever thought about the things that you are in control of? This fear of your influence, the things that you can control and if you're like me, I'm pretty good with technology, but as technology gets more and more advanced, do you ever feel like technology is out of your control? I don't know how many times I touch the phone and all of a sudden it's listening to me. Does your phone do that? "Siri, what do you want?" Or "Alexa, I don't want you listening to me," but it's out of our control. We also joke in the school office that the printers have minds of their own. You want to print it on this printer. You want it printed this way. And it does whatever it wants. Technology certainly shows that we're not in control.

Are there other things that you're not in control of? I'd say there are many things. As we look at this election, we'll talk about things in just a minute, but are you in control of the election? You have a vote, but are you in control of what happens tomorrow? No; of course not. We know, though, that someone is in control of all things—our God. So as we look forward to what happens tomorrow and in the years to come, we're not going to put our hope in the things that we're not in control of but we'll put our **hope in The Lord**. He is the one who is in control and guiding all things.

As we look at our text today, we are going to be reminded of what not to do and what we can do, but finally, where to really put our focus when we put our hope in The Lord.

As David writes this Psalm, he begins and says ***“Praise the LORD.”*** “Hallelujah!” Maybe that’s a reminder as we get into this text and today that it shouldn’t be a day of trepidation or worry because it’s been months, if not years, of people telling you “What’s going to happen?!” And commercial upon commercial, and fear but we don’t have to worry. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Put your hope in the Lord. As we put our hope in the Lord, the first thing we are going to do is see what we aren’t going to do.

Notice that David writes, ***Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.*** So what do we not put our hope in? *Don’t put your hope in people, government, or nation.* There are a whole lot of other things to talk about that you don’t put your hope in. We could talk about not putting your hope in yourself. But as we look at the election, these are things we want to look at, to not put our hope in people and in government and nation. But isn’t that what we’ve exactly been told to do?

Go back to the iconic poster of Barak Obama. What was it? Hope. Hope. “This person can save us.” Whatever side you’re on, left or right, the idea is that this person can save us. It’s one of the ads I saw recently. “This person broke it! This person will fix it!” That’s what we’re told to do—put our hope in a person and they’ll fix it. But we know that’s not true. Notice it says: ***Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.*** They are so temporary.

But I think to extend this a little bit, don’t put your hope in the government. Is that a surprising thing to say? How many people are satisfied with the government? That joke always about efficiency or getting things done and government isn’t always very efficient. They can’t agree on anything. It’s like the whole rest of our lives we don’t put our hope and trust in the government, but then at elections, “Oh! This guy is going to fix it! If we vote for that party, they’ll fix it all!” That’s what we’re told and I’d say what we believe in our hearts because we’ve been told so many times that THESE people can fix it. “The government will finally fix it. Once they’re in power, or if they stay in power, then everything will just be fine.” God is saying, “Don’t put your hope in the government.”

Now, in Romans 13, we see all the things that the government is to do. So it’s not that they have no purpose. They are to do all sorts of things; to take care of us, to (like we said in the introduction to the reading) praise the good, to reward the good, to punish wrong-doers, and to create a society where we are safe. That’s one of the most important things of the government. That’s what our prayer is that it does.

But we are also very critical of the government. Are we overly critical sometimes? How many of you are managers? Do you manage other people? Even if you're not a manager, are/were you a parent, are you a grandparent? How hard is it to manage your kids? Think about the idea of what the government is to do—to praise good and to punish evil. How good are you at doing that with kids or your grandkids? When they're crying and "Oh, they are having a breakdown," do you give in to what they want? Yes, so if you as a parent or you as a manager struggle with doing that, or consider even our church. You look around, we're pretty similar. We even believe the same thing but can we make everyone happy in the church? Can we do everything that everyone wants to do? Do some people disagree? Yes. So in the same way that we don't want to put our hope in the government, we also don't want to be overly critical.

But finally, as we look not to put our hope in people or government, we also want to look at nation. Is America the greatest nation on earth? I don't know. I love being an American. I love being here. I'm going to show you three pictures here.



This is Chao Nian Gao. These are take-out dishes. These are pictures I found from my old pictures in China. This is flat rice cakes. There is fried duck in there. So it's rice cake, like noodles with fried duck.



The next one, this is little dumplings called Xiao Long Bao, small dragon dumplings.



Then the next one is Hot Pot. One side is very spicy. You can see all the red peppers in there and then the other side is not a spicy side. I can tell you I love those dishes, but do you know how they taste? Do you have any idea of they are good or not.

I think this is important to think about our nation: can you love this nation? Can you love being an American and can you say "This is the greatest nation around"? Yes, sure you can. But how many of you have been to a bunch of other countries? I know some of you have traveled a lot. It's important for us to understand that God has blessed this country, but do we find our pride in our nation or in our God? I think it's important to look at that and to say "Yes, God has blessed our nation," but we can become so prideful about our nation. Think about those foods and think about if you've traveled or been to other places. Like I said, I love America, but just put it into context. Do you put

your hope in the United States and what we think it is—a Christian nation or some idealist idea about it? God directs us to not put our hope in princes or human beings for the time will come when they end. Will there be a time when this nation comes to an end—possibly? Do I have to put all my hope into being an American? No. We can enjoy it and we're thankful that tomorrow we can go out and vote, but don't put all your hope in that. We'll talk about the difference in God's Kingdom in just a minute.

A few things before we get to God's Kingdom, I want us to think about what we CAN do. We don't want to put our hope in people, in the government, or in nation, so what should we do? The first thing I want us to think about is to be salt and light. Jesus talks about this in [Matthew 5](#). <sup>13</sup>***You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.*** <sup>14</sup>***You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.*** <sup>15</sup>***Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.*** We don't need to put our hope in other things, other people, but God asks us to *do be salt and light*; to be different, to stand out. What that will look like doesn't mean to stand out politically but I think to stand out as Christian and to do some certain things.

What does it look like to be salt and light in our world today? I'm going to say three things. The three things that we want to be are to *be a good citizen, to love, and to pray*. To be good citizens, you go back to that idea of what God asks us to do with the government. Notice what He says. ***Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.*** As citizens we are to honor and respect and pay taxes, and to not do so grudgingly but to do so in peace. Not out of compulsion but because we know it is the right thing to do. What is the hardest on that list? I heard the presenter talk about this at one of our men's conferences and he said, "Is this a complete list of what Paul would write to American Christians and American citizens?" We, as citizens in America, have different roles and different jobs as citizens. Did the people at Paul's time have the ability to vote? No. So do you think today if Paul was writing to us, would he maybe include "If as a citizen your job is to vote, vote"? He possibly would. I'm not telling you that you have to vote, but is that what we get to do as a citizen? Is that part of what it means to be a citizen of this nation? I think so. So whatever is on there that you might struggle with, ask God to help you to do that; to honor and respect the government and to vote, if you are struggling to vote; even if it's hard. One thing to remember; who is not on the ballot? Jesus isn't on the ballot so it's not an easy thing to say "Well, I'm going to vote for Him." We have to vote when we get to do that as citizens.

But then not just being citizens in the revenue and honor in our relationship to the government, but how can we also be good citizens but to love one another. We, of course, know that is what we are to do as Christians. It's in the Commandments. Love

God and love others. Love your neighbors. Do you know what is included in loving your neighbors?—loving your enemy; not just those who are your enemies but those who disagree with you, those who vote different than you, those who believe different than you. Can you love those people? Can you treat them with respect and honor? We are supposed to respect our government but can you love those who have different political opinions than you? My prayer is that you can. And it's what God tells us to do.

And what I'll tell you is I got to teach Christian ethics and Christian morals in a class full of Chinese students. The professor (who is a Christian) always said the teaching that other religions and other cultures always struggled with or always brought him the most attention to Christianity was the idea to love your enemy. No one else talks about that. No other religion says to love your enemies, those who hate you or believe something different than you. The truth is, though, why is it important to love those who disagree with you? Is your job to win an argument? Is your job to win an election or to prove someone right or wrong? What is our job as Christians but to love others and to get them to know Jesus? Sometimes when you're so worried about winning an argument, step back and ask yourself, am I winning them for Jesus? Essential to all of this is to understand my hope is not in people and winning someone over to a political idea or proving someone wrong but with a focus on His Kingdom.

So that's why we also pray. God encourages us to pray for our government, to pray for those that we disagree with, to pray for those that we agree with, but then to pray for the good of this nation, to pray for the good of the people here. I love the idea of being salt and light and loving and praying because we see the two aspects of what it means to be a Christian. Can I put my hope in God by praying and saying "God, you are in control. God, you are guiding. God, I'm asking you to take this and help me not to worry about it," but am I asked to not do anything as a Christian? I'm asked to be a good citizen. I'm asked to love, so I can't just say "Well I prayed and now I can hate those people around me that disagree with me." Those things are in major contrast. So God asks us to do but also to know that He is doing it and He is in control.

Finally, we see what it's all about to live in view of God's Kingdom. ***Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God.*** In contrast to what people do because people return to the ground and that very day their plans come to nothing. They are temporary and their plans are short. But if we have a view of God's Kingdom, what is true about God's Kingdom? God's Kingdom is eternal, so this nation is amazing and we've had hundreds of great years and our prayers have lasted many hundreds of years, but we don't know. Kingdoms rise. Kingdoms fall. But what does Jesus say about His Kingdom? Jesus, before the rulers of His time, before Pontius Pilate, what does He say? He says this in [John 18:36](#). ***Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."*** It's not an earthly kingdom but an eternal kingdom and He says it's not here or there, you can't see it, but

it's within us and it's in heaven. It's eternal. So we put our hope in Jesus, who, as [Isaiah writes](#) (as we are going to look at this in Advent and Christmas), ***For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*** Not a temporary but an eternal, everlasting kingdom.

But then what does that also look like in contrast to the things that we often put our hopes into? What does God's Kingdom look like? We mentioned one of them just a little bit ago, but there are three things to focus on again. *God's Kingdom, that is eternal, has no borders, is all about the Gospel and salvation.*

We talked about Jesus says that the Kingdom is not here or there. You can't point to it. Our nation and all nations, they have borders. This is what is amazing about God's Kingdom. There are no borders and God describes what it is here—that the Gospel will go out to every language, nation and tribe. And what will heaven look like but every people from every color, every nation, language and tribe, no borders. It crosses over all the dividing lines and even the political lines. There are no borders, no separation, no 50-this 50-that, no House, no Congress, and all the divisions of this nation and all the nations. It is united in Christ.

But the most important thing is our hope is in the Lord. We said that people cannot save, so what does that mean? It means Jesus and His Kingdom is about salvation and the Gospel. The nation and the government and people, their focus is Law. It's all about making laws and helping people to do the right thing. What is the focus of God's Kingdom? It's the Gospel. It's about Jesus coming into this world to live and to die. He submitted Himself under the rule of nations, under the rule of God and His Law, to suffer and die and to bring salvation. It's so important to look at this because we put our hope and our salvation in so many other things. But all those things are temporary.

It reminds me, on Sunday night we are reading the book [3 Words that Will Change Your Life](#). It talks about the "This!" is all the greatest things in your life, all the things that bring you so much joy. The greatest vacations you've gone on, your wedding day, the birth of your kids, graduations, whatever. [Psalm 84](#) talks about how one day in His Kingdom is better than a thousand elsewhere. Think about a thousand of the best days of your life, but being in God's eternal Kingdom is better. That's what Jesus means. That's what putting our hope in the Lord and eternal salvation is about.

So to end, I want to give us one more thing. We began talking about what we are in control of. I want us to end with a prayer that talks about understanding what we are in control of and what we are not in control of. It's called a "Resiliency Prayer." There are a

bunch of copies in the back for you. I'll read it to you. But my encouragement is that this is something you can look at daily. This is something that reminds you that you are not in control of everything, but who is? Your God is. You are also not exactly in control of all the emotions of what happens in your life, but you can control what you do with those emotions and what you do with those actions. That helps us to then think about how I can be a good citizen and love others. So we look at this prayer.

### RESILIENCY PRAYER

Lord, I know that I am **loved** and **forgiven**, a precious child of God, bought by the blood of Christ.

It's important you start with who you are; your identity. Yes, you're an American. Yes, you get to vote. But most importantly, you are a child of God.

I know that today (tomorrow) events will happen, some good and some bad, some that are in my control but most that aren't.

I know that these events will trigger thoughts (why me, this shouldn't happen to me, poor me) and those thoughts will produce feelings that will impact my behavior.

So when these events happen help me remember that you have **promised to never leave me or forsake me** ([Hebrews 13](#)) and that you will work it out for my **eternal good** ([Romans 8](#)), so that I can have feelings of **hope, peace, confidence, and joy** with the goal that my behavior brings you glory in all I say and do, Amen.

This prayer is one that we have been taught in my CrossTrain programs that I hope can be a blessing to you as you look and see all the things that we are not in control of but understand God has your eternal good in mind. So whatever happens tomorrow, it seems like the good that you want is going to happen or not, you know God has your eternal good in mind and you can have peace and hope in the Lord and encouragement to always put your hope in the Lord. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** ([Philippians 4:7](#)) Amen.