



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

Learning to Trust God in Panic: God's Character and My Confidence

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts: Psalm 116, 86, 56, 146; Ex. 34:6; Deut. 10:17-18; Psalm 10:14, 18; Ps. 68:5-7

These four psalms—116, 86, 56, and 146—come from different seasons and different crises, but they all circle back to the same center: *Who the LORD is becomes the foundation for how I trust Him*. They're not polished religious speeches; they're raw prayers from people on the edge. They're praying with ropes of death around them, enemies hunting them, hearts divided, and rulers failing them. And right there—in the fear, confusion, and pain—they remember that God's character is not an idea; it's their anchor.

Psalm 116 begins, *"I love ADONAI, for He hears my voice, my supplications."* (Psalm 116:1, TLV). Literally, "I love—because He heard." Psalm 86 shows a weak, needy worshiper saying, *"Watch over my soul, for I am godly... save Your servant who trusts in You."* (Psalm 86:2, TLV). Psalm 56 has David seized by the Philistines, saying, *"In a day when I am afraid, I will put my trust in You."* (Psalm 56:4, TLV). Psalm 146 lifts our eyes from failing "princes" to the God who reigns forever and defends the weakest. The thread running through them is this: God's character and my confidence. Faith is not pretending I'm not afraid; faith is bringing my fear to the God who is gracious, compassionate, and overflowing in *chesed*—in Love.

1. WHEN I'M OVERWHELMED, I CRY OUT... BECAUSE HE IS GRACIOUS

Psalm 116 opens with a heart cry: *"I love ADONAI, for He hears my voice, my supplications."* (Psalm 116:1, TLV). The Hebrew flow is, "I love—because He heard." The only thing the psalmist has done here is cry out. In verse 3, he describes how bad it was: *"The ropes of death entangled me, and the torments of Sheol found me; I found trouble and sorrow."* (Psalm 116:3, TLV). This isn't inconvenience; this is life-and-death distress. His response? *"Then I called upon the Name of ADONAI: 'ADONAI, save my soul!'"* (Psalm 116:4, TLV). Out of that cry, he discovers afresh who God is: *"ADONAI is gracious and righteous; yes, our God is compassionate. ADONAI protects the simple-hearted. When I was brought low, He saved me."* (Psalm 116:5–6, TLV). He rescues the lowly, the weak, the "simple ones" who have nothing to bring but their desperation.

Ps 56 gives the same picture in David's life. He's in Gath, seized by the Philistines: *"Be gracious to me, O God, for man has crushed me—fighting all day he oppresses me."* (Ps 56:2). He doesn't hide the fear: *"In a day when I am afraid, I will put my trust in You."* (Ps 56:4). Real faith doesn't deny fear; it decides where to take it. God is so attentive that He *"put[s] my tears in Your bottle... Are they not in Your book?"* (Ps 56:9). Then David says, *"This I know—that God is for me."* (Ps 56:10). In Ps. 116, the psalmist speaks to his own soul: *"Return to your rest, my soul, for ADONAI has been good to you."* (Ps 116:7). Trust shows up in v10: *"I trusted, even when I said: 'I am very afflicted.'"* He didn't stuff it down—he brought his panic to the Lord. That's real prayer... real faith.

2. WHEN MY HEART IS DIVIDED, I ASK HIM TO UNITE IT... BECAUSE HE IS STEADFAST

Psalm 86 is the prayer of someone who knows two things: "I am weak and needy" and "I am one of Your *chasidim*—Your loved ones." *"Turn Your ear, ADONAI, and answer me, for I am weak and needy."* (Ps 86:1). *"Watch over my soul, for I am godly"*—literally, *"for I am chasid, one of Your covenant-loved ones"*—*"You are my God; save Your servant who trusts in You."* (Ps 86:2). His

confidence is not in his strength but in God's character: *"For You, my Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You."* (Ps 86:5). He keeps crying, *"Be gracious to me... for to You I cry all day."* (Ps 86:3). He is leaning the full weight of his need on the goodness and chesed of God.

But even knowing all this, he feels the pull of a divided heart. So he prays one of the most honest prayers in Scripture: *"Teach me Your way, ADONAI, that I may walk in Your truth. Give me an undivided heart to fear Your Name."* (Psalm 86:11, TLV). Literally: "Unite my heart." "I don't want half of me trusting You while the other half is ruled by what I see." The outworking of that prayer is worship: *"I praise You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Your Name forever. For great is Your lovingkindness toward me; You have delivered my soul from the lowest part of Sheol."* (Ps 86:12–13). Even when the proud and ruthless rise up (Ps 86:14), he comes back to who God is: *"But You, my Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth."* (Ps 86:15). So he prays, *"Turn to me and be gracious to me... make me a sign for good."* (Ps 86:16–17). When your heart feels split—between faith and fear, obedience and self-protection—the way forward is not to "try harder," but to pray: "Teach me Your way. Unite my heart. Make my life a sign of Your goodness."

3. DON'T LEAN ON PRINCES, LEAN ON HIM

Psalm 146 opens with praise: *"Halleluyah! Praise ADONAI, O my soul! I will praise ADONAI all my life, I will sing praise to my God yet again."* (Ps 146:1–2). But right away, praise turns practical: *"Do not put your trust in princes, in a son of man in whom there is no salvation."* (Ps 146:3). In other words, "Don't lean your full weight on human rulers, systems, or 'security nets.'" Why? *"His breath departs, he returns to his dust—on that very day his plans perish."* (Ps 146:4). No matter how powerful they look, they are still dust. Their plans, budgets, policies, and promises can vanish in a moment. We are all tempted to trust "princes"—people, money, platforms, institutions—more than the living God.

Then the psalm makes a sharp turn: *"Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in ADONAI his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps truth forever."* (Ps 146:5–6). Why is it safe to shift all our trust to Him? BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS. He cares for the vulnerable: *"He executes justice for the oppressed. He gives bread to the hungry. ADONAI sets prisoners free. ADONAI opens the eyes of the blind. ADONAI raises up those who are bowed down. ADONAI loves the righteous. ADONAI protects outsiders, upholds the fatherless and the widow, but thwarts the way of the wicked."* (Ps 146:7–9). This is consistent with Deuteronomy 10:17–18, Psalm 10, and Psalm 68: God is the Father of orphans, defender of widows, lover of the outsider. Psalm 146 ends: *"ADONAI will reign forever—your God, O Zion, from generation to generation. Halleluyah!"* (Psalm 146:10, TLV). Princes fall; God reigns. And He now cares for the oppressed, hungry, outsiders, and broken through the hands and feet of those who truly trust Him. Real faith doesn't just pray differently; it lives differently, especially toward the vulnerable.

CONCLUSION

Put these psalms together and you see what real faith looks like. Psalm 116 says, *"I love ADONAI, for He hears my voice."* (Psalm 116:1, TLV) and remembers how God delivered his soul from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from stumbling (Psalm 116:8). Psalm 56 shows David saying, *"In a day when I am afraid, I will put my trust in You."* (Psalm 56:4, TLV), and then, *"In God I trust—I will not be afraid."* (Psalm 56:12, TLV). Psalm 86 shows a weak worshiper asking for an undivided

heart and to be made a sign for good. Psalm 146 calls us to stop trusting “princes” and to trust the God who reigns forever and defends the least.

At the center of it all is the unchanging character of God: *“compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.”* (Psalm 86:15; Exodus 34:6, TLV). He bends toward the simple, the weak, the outsider, the orphan, and the widow. He listens when you cry. He keeps your tears in His bottle. He doesn’t tell you to “get over it”; He invites you to bring it to Him. Raw prayers are not the opposite of faith—they are often the clearest expression of it. The question is: Will you let who He is become the foundation for your confidence again?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In Psalm 116 and Psalm 56, how do the psalmists show trust in God *while* admitting fear and distress? How does that challenge or free you in how you pray?
2. Where do you see a “divided heart” in your life right now—pulled between trusting God and trusting what you can see or control (Psalm 86:11)?
3. What are some “princes” (people, systems, or safety nets) that you are tempted to lean on more than the Lord (Psalm 146:3–4)?
4. How does God’s special care for the orphan, widow, and outsider (Psalm 146; Deut. 10:17–18; Psalm 10; Psalm 68) shape what real faith should look like in your daily life toward vulnerable people?
5. Can you name a specific time when God “delivered your soul from death, your eyes from tears, and your feet from stumbling” (Psalm 116:8)? How can remembering that story help your heart return to rest in your current circumstances?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Abba, we come to You just as we are—weak, needy, sometimes afraid, sometimes angry, sometimes numb. Thank You that You are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. Thank You that You hear our cries, that You bend Your ear toward us, that You keep our tears in Your bottle and record our wanderings. Thank You that You have delivered our soul from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from stumbling.

We confess that our hearts are often divided. We say we trust You, but we lean on our “princes”—on people, systems, and our own strength. Forgive us for putting more weight on dust than on You, the God who reigns forever. Today we ask: teach us Your way, ADONAI, that we may walk in Your truth. Give us undivided hearts to fear Your Name. Unite what is fractured inside of us and bring our hearts back into one piece before You.

Make our lives a sign for good. Let those who watch us see that You have helped us and comforted us. Use our hands and our feet to reflect Your heart for the oppressed, the hungry, the prisoner, the outsider, the orphan, and the widow. Help us to love You because You have heard us, and to keep calling on Your Name all our days. We declare: in God we trust; we will not be afraid. In the Name of Yeshua our Messiah, the full revelation of Your gracious and compassionate heart, we pray. Amen.