

Psalm 33

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Date: 08 October 2023

Preacher: None

[0:00] Please turn again to Psalm 33. It's on page 463.! That your spirit would call us to attention.

That we would hear your word. That we would obey it. And that we would approach you in reverence. And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. God is like a choir master in this psalm. Or he's like a conductor. God is like a musical conductor. And he has all humanity in this choir in front of him. You, your friends, your family, your colleagues, your teachers. Every human being is in this choir in front of him. And God is conducting them. And you know sometimes conductors tell one instrument, like the violins, to play on their own over in this section here.

And then he'll turn to everyone and say, everyone else join in. And you know how conductors have that little stick thingy. It kind of looks like a wand from Harry Potter. I had to Google it. It's called a baton, apparently.

[1:30] And the conductor points at the violins. And the violins play. And then he turns to everyone else. And everyone else joins in. Well, this is what God is doing with this psalm. And he's conducting the whole choir of humanity.

In this psalm, God is telling us that we all need to do something toward him. There's a response that needs to come from humans toward God.

He says to everyone on this planet, you can't be silent. You can't fold your arms all your life. You need to do something. And at first, he points, not to the whole choir, not to all humanity, but a portion of it, his church.

And he says, you church, you need to praise the Lord. So look at verse 1. Shout for joy in the Lord. Oh, you righteous. Praise befits the upright. He's speaking here to the righteous. And in the psalms, the righteous are God's people.

[2:42] It's the church he's speaking to here. And not because they're perfect, but because God clothes them with his righteousness. And God says in this psalm, a response needs to come from the church toward God.

The church cannot be silent. We must praise him. And then, in this psalm, God turns to all the choir of humanity.

He points his baton at every Christian and non-Christian, everyone, and says, everyone on this planet needs to fear the Lord.

Look at verse 8. Let all the earth fear the Lord. In this psalm, God is saying something needs to happen on this earth.

A response must come from all humans. We all must fear the Lord. And so whether you're a Christian here, or not a Christian, or you would say maybe you're an atheist, or you're not sure, or you're following another religion, whoever you are, God is addressing you in this psalm.

[3:53] And I want us to leave here tonight realizing that we all have a duty. We must do something. We must fear the Lord. But let's begin where God begins.

What does God, the conductor, say tonight? Well, he turns to his church at first and says, you, church, praise the Lord. That's my first point.

Church, praise the Lord. So look what God commands his church here in verse 1. Shout for joy in the Lord. O you righteous, praise befits the upright.

Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre. Make melody to him with the harp of ten strings. Sing to him a new song. Play skillfully on the strings with loud shouts. It's hard to capture what's written here,

because we don't really act like this in our country, do we?

Just look what's going on here. Shouting for joy. Praise. Giving thanks. Making music. Singing loud shouts. When do we do this?

[4:57] When do our emotions, our responses, ever reach this level? I think the closest we've ever got to this was back in 2018 at the World Cup, when England beat Colombia in penalties.

Do you remember that? It's probably the high point of English culture. And have you ever seen those videos of the crowd reactions from pubs and parks and bars?

Sometimes I watch it just to feel good. And if you watch those videos, people go ballistic. They're shouting praise, joy, singing.

Well, they say, it's coming home. Well, that's the type of response God is commanding here. God is commanding the church, commanding us here, from the depths of your heart and with all your strength, praise the Lord.

Give thanks to the Lord. Sing to the Lord. And this might seem an unusual thing to do. I mean, we're British. We don't do this except for football.

[6:03] But look at verse 1. Praise befits the upright. This response befits you, Christian. It's part of you now.

It's natural to you. It runs in your bloodstream. It's something that the church cannot help but do. Well, why? Verse 4.

For because the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness. The Lord needs to be praised because he's spoken to his church, and his word is upright.

It's good. It's true. I think we can take for granted what we have in front of us right now. We have in our Bibles the divine voice of the Lord written for us in this book.

In a world that is lost and confused and has no direction, no guidance in this world, in a world where we have to go to podcasts just to see how we should live our lives, and we have to watch YouTube videos to figure out how to deal with the misery of this life, in this dark world, the Lord has not left his people in darkness.

[7:24] He's spoken. And in this crooked world, his word is upright. He's given truth and direction and salvation.

And what must happen? We must praise him for that. The Nobel Prize for Literature was handed out last week, if you saw that in the news. We praise people for their words, don't we?

When you get a good mark on an essay, people are praising you for your words. When someone's words are excellent, they deserve praise.

Well, God has spoken, and it is glorious. It's upright. It's good. It's true. And he deserves our praise. And not just that, but verse 4 again.

And all his work is done in faithfulness. All that the Lord does in this world, he does it for the glory of his Son, and for the love of his church.

[8:29] God works all things in this world, and controls all things, not as a cold, detached creator, but he does all things in faithfulness for the love of his church.

All of God's work in this world, from spinning the galaxies to the movement of tiny atoms, he does this not just mechanically overseeing it, but he does this in faithfulness to you, Christian, in steadfast love for you.

He runs this world in love for you. And that deserves a response. We can't be silent about that.

We can't keep our arms folded. We need to praise the Lord. And it's not just because he does things for us either, but simply because of who he is, he deserves our praise.

Look at verse 5. We need to praise the Lord because he loves righteousness and justice. Do you see what the psalm is saying?

[9:42] We need to praise God, not just because he does good things for us, not just because he redeems us and speaks to us, which he does, of course, but we need to praise him simply because of who he is, because in his very character, he loves righteousness and justice.

He's a God who doesn't just do righteous things and doesn't just uphold justice. He does all these things because in his very being, he loves righteousness and justice.

He is a good God. And God is so good, so pure, so holy, so just, so righteous, so supremely excellent in his very being that we can't acknowledge him without praising him.

He's not someone to study. He's not someone to just hear about on a Sunday. He's someone to praise. And that is precisely why we're here tonight.

This is the reason why the church around the world woke up on a Sunday morning. We're here to worship the God who loves righteousness and justice.

[11:08] God is the conductor and he commands the church, come and praise the Lord. He deserves our praise. It's in our bloodstream church.

And so we aren't here tonight because it makes us feel good. We aren't here tonight because Paul Levy forces us. We aren't here tonight because it's just a nice thing to do.

We're here tonight because the Lord is good and he deserves our praise. He's spoken. He loves righteousness and justice. We simply, we can't be silent.

Church, praise the Lord. But this psalm isn't only for the church. God the conductor, he now picks up his baton and he turns to all humanity, everyone, and says, verse 8, let all the earth fear the Lord.

And this is the second point tonight. Everyone fear the Lord. So look at verse 8 again. Let all the earth fear the Lord.

[12:23] Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. And now we need to understand what the word fear means here. Fear, it means utter respect and reverence and feeling small before the Lord.

Have any of you ever been caving before? You know, when you get a kind of a head torch and you go underground and you're exploring a cave. Well, I went caving in the Lake District a few years ago and it's an amazing experience.

I'd recommend doing it. But when you're in the cave, in the depths of the cave, you get this sense of fear that this psalm's talking about. You go into the darkness of that cave and you realise there are millions of tonnes of rocks above me.

You realise, man, a mountain is sitting on top of me right now. If this collapses, I can do absolutely nothing. I'm at the mercy of this cave around me.

And so, you get this sense of fear. And it's not like fear when you watch a scary film. But it's this respect, this reverence, this sense of awe.

[13:41] You think, wow, I know I can't mess around in here. I am nothing compared to this cave. I need to tread very carefully.

A massive weight looms over me right now. Well, that's the fear going on here. Let all the earth fear the Lord.

But not because a mountain looms over you, but because the almighty Lord looms over you. This psalm is telling us, don't mess around in this life.

Tread carefully in this world. Don't take your existence lightly. The weight of the Lord sits over your life, and we need to fear him.

And look at verse 9. Look who this Lord is. For he spoke, and it came to be. He commanded, and it stood firm. The Lord created every single thing in this universe.

[14:48] By his voice, he commanded the universe. This planet, he commanded your life. He commanded all things into existence. All things exist by the voice of the Lord, and all things belong to him.

There is a power behind this universe. There is a power sustaining this universe that is beyond your imagination. It is the Lord, and he plans and directs all things in this universe, all things in your life. Verse 10. The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing. He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever.

The plans of his heart to all generations. We all have plans for our lives, don't we? You have plans for what GCSEs and what A-levels you want to take, what uni you want to go to, plans to hopefully get married, plans to have children, plans to buy a house, plans to raise your kids in a certain way, plans for retirement.

But many of us know that our plans don't always work out, do they? In fact, our lives almost never work out how we plan it. We get frustrated, and maybe you're feeling that frustration right now.

[16:15] This world, it's too big. The future is too unknown. There are too many things going on. We all have plans, but we barely have any

control over them.

Our plans get frustrated all the time, and why is that? Well, it's because there's an ultimate plan playing out in the universe, and that plan wins over all other plans.

Verse 11, the counsel of the Lord stands forever. The plans of his heart to all generations. History is playing out how God says.

It's playing out how God has planned it. All the timeline of this world, all that's ever been, all that's happening, all that's going to happen, all the future going into eternity, it's already been written.

God's already planned the future. Everything in your life, everything to do with politics, and wars, and the stock markets, and Israel, and Gaza, and Ukraine, God's planned it all.

[17:25] He's done it already, and nothing, nothing can change it. We so easily think that our lives are our stories, don't we?

But they're not. We're living God's story. The Almighty looms over this world. He looms over your life and your plans.

So we must, fear Him. Live your life knowing that the mountain of divine majesty towers over this universe, and we aren't in control of our lives.

He is. Which means He sees all that we do. Verse 13. The Lord looks down from heaven.

He sees all the children of man. From where He sits enthroned, He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth. He who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds. Your life isn't private.

[18:34] What happens behind closed doors isn't unseen. The Lord looks down from heaven and He sees every deed that we do.

You know that thing that you think that nobody saw? God saw it. He knows. And He sees into our hearts.

He's made every single one of our hearts. Our desires, our thoughts, our intentions. He sees them all. All the secrets of our hearts from our deepest joys to our darkest, most sinful thoughts.

They're not hidden. It's all open and spread before the Lord. And if you're not a Christian here today, you might think, well, I'm not a believer.

I don't have much to do with God. Well, that isn't true. You have everything to do with God. Your whole life exists before the Lord.

[19:39] He made you. He sees you. He's planned your life. You aren't your own person. You are God's creature. Your whole life exists in front of Him.

And that means you're accountable to Him. You need to answer to Him. You have a responsibility toward Him. A response must come from you. You need to fear the Lord.

So, this isn't a suggestion in this psalm. He isn't saying join in if you feel like it. No, this psalm is a compulsion. The conductor demands it.

He says, let all the earth fear the Lord. The Almighty looms over you. He's not a force to be reckoned with.

Your life is like being in that cave. The weight of divine majesty and divine power presses down on you and you can't escape. You can't mess around.

[20:44] You must tread carefully in this life. Don't take God lightly. The weight of the Lord sits over your life and we need to fear Him.

and one day we will all stand before Him in judgment and there's nothing any of us can do to stop His power. Verse 16.

The king is not saved by his great army. A warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a false hope for salvation and by its great might it cannot rescue.

whether you are a Christian here or not there is nothing that you can do to stop God's judgment.

You could be Vladimir Putin with all his great army and his nuclear arsenal.

You can store up wealth and power and a nice house and powerful friends in this life but when you stand before the Lord it's all nothing.

[21:48] It cannot help you escape His sight or His judgment. But this psalm it's not meant to just leave you quivering in your boots.

This psalm shows us that yes the Lord towers over all people but He's chosen a people a special people and He doesn't just loom over them He comes down to them and He loves them and He cares for them and He gives them hope.

And it's my third and final point today. The eye of the Lord is on His people. The eye of the Lord is on His people. Look at verse 18. Verse 18 Behold the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him on those who hope in His steadfast love.

So did you notice in this psalm in verse 13 the Lord looks down from heaven and He sees all the children of man every human but here in verse 18 it says that He doesn't look at all people the same way.

It says His eye is on those who fear Him and hope in Him. It's a bit like after the service everyone goes to the lounge don't they go get coffee and all the kids what do they do?

[23:15] They run up to the shutter waiting for the biscuits it's only two remember maximum of two and my daughter my daughter Lydia she's usually straight up there waiting for the biscuits and so I'll go into the lounge with my daughter Lydia following her and I'll everyone comes into the lounge and I'll look out onto the lounge and see everyone there just kind of see oh I think that person is a visitor I need to speak to that person say hi so I see everyone in the room but my eye is on someone particular my eye is on Lydia she's the one I love and I care for and the one I especially protect and then she probably legs it out and I've lost sight of her but you see what I'm saying I see everyone but my eye is on Lydia well that is how the Lord is with his church with those who fear him and hope in him if you come to the almighty and fear him and respond how you should to him

God treats you in an amazing way he does not crush you like a mountain no he loves you as a father he sees you in a different way he protects you he even delivers your soul from death the infinite power of God the one who commands neutron stars into existence when you fear him he comes down to you and he becomes your help and your shield in this life so yes God looks down from heaven at all people but he's come down from heaven for his own people the almighty has come to us in the Lord Jesus and Jesus has not come to crush you with his power he's come to have compassion on you to bring you hope he's not come to frustrate your plans he's come to transform them to make the Lord's big plan for the universe he's come to make that plan your plan the Lord

Jesus is making a people for himself that he protects and cherishes just like a big brother a people that will join in with the Lord's big plan for this universe the plan to restore it and have a people that will praise him on this earth for all eternity Jesus is calling all the people of the earth come fear your creator and come praise him as your saviour Jesus is the one who has all authority over this world he commands all that happens all the physical forces all the spiritual forces of this world they're all under his control he's the almighty he is your creator we confessed that earlier and the Lord Jesus he calls you today to fear him as your creator and if you do you will find that you can hope in him as your saviour on judgment day kings will not be saved by their armies but we will be saved by the Lord

Jesus so come to the Lord and fear the Lord and for those of us that do Church of Christ let us praise the Lord Amen let me pray let me pray let me pray let me pray let me pray let me pray let me pray let me pray let me pray let me pray let me pray