

Psalm 113

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[0 : 00] And turn again in your Bibles to Psalm 113. It's on page 510 of the church Bibles.! Psalm 113.

We all have something playing on our minds right now. Something that has been taking up your thoughts and your energy over the past week, months, maybe years. It could be your children, your family, your health, your next steps, your finances, your exams. Or maybe it's your past.

Something is occupying your mind. Something is weighing on your heart. And it can feel like this huge thing filling up the space in your head. Or maybe you're just flustered.

And you've just been trying to get the kids out of the door this morning. Get here to church and just trying to get through the day. And maybe you can barely think at all. Well, whatever is occupying your mind right now.

[1 : 15] I want us to stop. And breathe. And I want us this morning to turn our minds to God.

I want our thoughts to be filled with God. My hope here now is to take our minds off the things of this world. The things that occupy our thoughts and weigh on our hearts.

And I simply want us to turn our minds to God. To think upon God. This morning for us to reflect upon who he is.

What he is like. And just how great he is. Because whatever is filling your mind right now. However big it feels. God is bigger.

God is greater. And so I want us to do this. Not to escape the burdens of our life. Not to ignore them and sweep them under the rug.

[2 : 17] But to transform them. To take whatever is filling your mind. Place it next to God. And to realise how much bigger God is.

How incomparably greater he is than anything in this world. And from that, for us to praise God. Because the opposite of a heart weighed down is a heart filled with praise.

Praise is always the goal. And this is exactly how this psalm begins. It begins with a command. Three important words. Praise the Lord.

And this opening is telling us something about God. Something about who he is. How big and great he is.

And the psalmist wants our minds to be filled with what God is like. And what is the Lord like? The Lord must be praised.

[3 : 19] And as we turn our minds to God today. This is the first thing that should fill our thoughts. The Lord must be praised. The Lord must be praised. This psalm opens on a command.

It's telling us to do something. Verse 1. Praise the Lord. Praise, O servants of the Lord. Praise the name of the Lord. Have a look.

What is the command we are to do? Praise. That means celebrate. Cheer. Worship. Go ballistic.

We don't see this often in our culture, do we? Us Brits would rather just give a gentle nod than even shake someone's hand, you know. But I think that the closest we get to this is when a football club wins the Premier League or the Champions League.

But what does that team usually do in their home city? They go around in their open-top bus, don't they? Parading through the city with their trophy in hand. And what do the crowds do around them, lining the streets?

[4 : 21] They praise the team. Shouts, cheers, confetti, smoke grenades, lifting up this team and praising them. I saw in the news, you might have read it a few days ago, scientists recorded the moment where Liverpool won the Premier League.

And they recorded tremors in the earth. That's what's going on here. That's the command here. Praise. But praise what? Praise who? Praise the Lord.

Praise the name of the Lord. Now, the name of the Lord is just who he is. His identity, his character, who he has revealed himself to be.

Both mean the same thing. The Lord in himself must be praised. And when? When is the Lord to be praised? Verse 2.

Bless the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. The Lord must be praised right now and forever into eternity.

[5 : 32] And where must this praise take place? Verse 3. From the rising of the sun to its setting. The name of the Lord is to be praised. From the rising of the sun in the east to its setting in the west.

That is where the Lord must be praised. So, take a map of earth. Go as far as you can to the right to the east. And as far as you can to the left to the west.

All of that and everyone in between, everyone in it must praise the Lord. So, that means everyone, everywhere, at all time, to eternity, forever, must praise the Lord.

That is what is owed to the Lord. Now, I don't necessarily want us to think about how we can obey this command and what that looks like.

That is important. But instead, I want us to think about what this command tells us about God. It tells us the Lord must be praised.

[6 : 40] The Lord, in himself, who he is, he is owed praise. So, think of this. If I gave you the best, tastiest burger in the world, and I tell you, eat this burger.

Go on, pick it up and eat it. What does my command tell you about this burger? It tells you that burger is there to be eaten.

It exists. It is there to be eaten. So, we don't eat everything. We don't eat rocks. We don't eat mud. Those things aren't worthy to be eaten.

But this burger is worthy. It's there for you to be eaten. It must be eaten. Well, God is there to be praised.

This is why this command is here. Who he is, in his nature, it is so fitting. It is so necessary for the Lord to be praised by his creation.

[7 : 45] The Lord cannot exist and not be praised. The Lord and praise, they go together. So, just think. There exists a being so great, so perfect, so pure, so deserving, so compelling, he must be praised.

Burgers must be eaten. Water must be drunk. Air must be breathed. The Lord must be praised. Just think of the angels. What can the angels not help but do?

What do they do around the throne of God? They fall on their faces and cry out blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might.

Be to our God forever and ever. When the angels themselves encounter God, they cannot help but praise.

They are like the football fans crying out to the open top bus. Creation cannot be neutral about God. There's like this magnetic pull, this demand, this compulsion upon creation.

[9 : 03] The Lord simply must be praised. And notice that this praise must be everywhere for eternity.

From this time forth and forevermore. This is why God created the universe. This is why there exists anything at all.

It is why you exist. It is so God can be praised everywhere forevermore. We do the kids' catechism in our house.

We try to do as much as we can. So kids, let me try and test you now. We might have different wording, but let's do our best. Who made you? Good. God.

But what else did God make? God made all things. Why did God make everything? For his own glory. Or another way of saying that, for his praise.

[10 : 05] This is why this psalm commands us to do this. We exist for God's praise and so he must be praised. And this, this is why God is saving mankind.

This is why Jesus came. Because is, is everyone everywhere praising him?

Is this command being obeyed in this world? No. Sin has caused a deadly silence in this world.

And so salvation exists. The church exists. So that this command, this psalm would be fulfilled. The father is seeking worshippers.

So that God would be rightly praised from this time forth and forevermore. And that's why when you read Revelation. And you read the end of the story of salvation.

[11:08] How does it all end? It ends in praise forevermore. And so just fill your mind with who God is right now.

In his very being, who he is to the core, he's praiseworthy. The Lord must be praised. But on top of all this, that this psalm gives a specific reason why the Lord must be praised.

Because he is far above everything. And I want us to fill our minds with this next thing about God.

The Lord is far above everything. The Lord is far above everything.

So we go from seeing the Lord must be praised to why in verse 4. The Lord is high above all nations.

And his glory above the heavens. Just look. How does God compare to all the nations? To every person, every country, every people and king and ruler and president and government.

[12:20] How does God compare to them? He is high above them. Now this doesn't mean that God is just floating on a cloud a few miles above the nations.

This isn't talking about his location. It's talking about his greatness. His power. His glory.

God, in his being and his power, is infinitely superior to all nations. So, add up all the power of every army in this world and every nuclear arsenal.

Gather together the glory of every king and queen and emperor that has ever existed. Put together all the best thinkers, the smartest minds, the richest billionaires, the most cunning politicians.

All their power and influence and ability. Add it all together in this world. And still, God is far more powerful. Far more influential and glorious.

[13:32] His glory is above the heavens. It's off the scale. It is this otherworldly, beyond your imagination glory. It's like God's being and his power.

It's like he's in a different league to what we even know. There's the power of this world. The things that we see and fear and worry about and fill our minds with.

And then there's God. He's a different league, a different category. And that's why the psalmist asks, Who is like the Lord our God?

Who is seated on high? It's like the psalmist's poetry and metaphors just has to stop and he says, I can't even capture what God is like for you.

Who is like the Lord our God? That there's nothing in our experience, nothing that we can encounter that is like God. Because look at verse 5.

[14:37] He's seated on high. That is the language of a king reigning. Sitting on his throne and ruling and commanding and owning everything beneath him.

But what does the Lord rule over? What is the kingdom that he commands and it listens to his voice? The heavens and the earth. The Lord sits enthroned above all creation and it all belongs to him.

He owns it. And he has utter, utter control over every minute aspect of it. He knows where every atom and electron is right now.

He detonates supernovas in distant galaxies. He's commanding the earth to orbit around the sun as we speak.

He is ordering angels to come and go between heaven and earth and they bow to his commands.

He has written the flow of history and the decree of the king cannot be changed.

[15:54] Every single moment of your life and your future, it's all spread out and known before the almighty. Who is like the Lord our God?

Nothing is like that. He's utterly incomparable. There is only one God, only one example of him. And so, who is like him?

He's the creator. How can anything in creation compare to him? And look at verse 6. He looks far down on the heavens and the earth.

It's like God's, God is so big, so vast, so great. He has to peer down beneath himself to even view creation.

It's a bit like how we see ants. So, next time you're in your garden or you're on the street and you see an ant below you, and you have to look far down to acknowledge it.

[17 : 00] They're incredible little animals, aren't they? But just think, how much greater are you than that ant? How much more do you know?

How much more can you do? How much more powerful are you than that ant? It's hard to even compare the two. The distance between us is so huge.

Well, the distance between us and God is even greater than that. Infinitely greater. Our greatness is closer to an ant than it is to God.

That there's a danger of thinking about God as if he's basically like one of us, but just kind of a bigger, better version of us.

Or he's basically, he's kind of like a superhero. He's kind of like Superman out there in space, looking down and helping us now and again. But no, look at this psalm.

[18 : 03] That is not our God. Our God is far above that. Our God is simply beyond the powers of this world. Beyond the categories of this universe.

We can be tempted to think, God doesn't know what he's doing in this world. We can feel like he's forgotten about us, or maybe Ealing isn't really on his radar.

Or we can think, politics is too complicated for God to do anything about that war. Or we can think, God's plan isn't really wise enough.

Or he isn't really in control of my tomorrow. But when we think that, we are thinking that God is like the things around us.

The things that disappoint, the things that fail, the things that let us down. But our God is not like those things. Who is like the Lord our God?

[19 : 15] He is far above, far more than you can even imagine. His majesty is incomparable. And what can we do before such a majestic God?

It is useless to challenge him. It is pointless to fight him. It is outrageous to question him. And so what must we do?

We must praise him. To simply tremble before his greatness, bow down and praise him.

But notice something. And don't miss this. Notice. The Lord does look down upon the heavens and the earth.

God isn't hidden up there. He doesn't ignore us. He isn't blind to us. He isn't this detached creator from his creation. No, the Lord is kind enough to look down and care about his creation.

[20 : 27] And even from his heights of splendor, the Lord actually comes down to us. And this is the next thing to think about God. The Lord comes down to us.

The Lord comes down to us. When it says the Lord looks far down in verse 6, it actually means more than it seems.

It doesn't merely mean that God is on the edge of this universe and he kind of just looks down on us with a really big telescope. No. Looking far down, it has this note of humility, of kindness and compassion to it.

It kind of means stooping down. God, in all his majesty and might, being far above us, he doesn't need to look down.

He doesn't need to acknowledge us. God doesn't owe us his attention. He could just make us like ants and leave us to it. But he doesn't. He doesn't ignore us.

[21 : 36] Instead, he kindly looks down and he cares about his creatures. He cares about what is going on in this world.

It matters to him what is going on in your life. When all the things in your life and future are spread out before him, it isn't just facts to him. He knows it and cares about it.

King David writes in Psalm 8, what is man that you are mindful of him? He's saying, who are we, ants to the almighty, that you actually care about us?

That you have made us in your image, that we aren't mere ants to you. But you have put your law in our hearts. It matters to you how we live.

You've given us souls to last into eternity. You've given us dominion over this world that you own. Who is like you, Lord, that you look down on us?

[22 : 40] In fact, you have come down to us. Look at verse 7. Look what God is like. He raises the poor from the dust.

And lifts the needy from the ash heap. The Lord is not like a king who sits in his palace. And just kind of peers out the window at his people below.

And just turns a blind eye. No, the Lord looks down. And comes down. From the majesty of his palace. And picks up his people from the dust.

He sees the suffering and pain of his creatures. The helpless. The needy. And he lifts them up from the ash heap. In fact, ash heap doesn't quite do the justice of this word.

It's more like a filthy, rotting pile of rubbish. The Lord lifts the needy from the rubbish dump. This is a vivid picture of us in our sin and guilt.

[23 : 47] If you want to know what sinners look like. What the world looks like in the eyes of God. We are not these shiny, perfect humans. That God is basically pretty chuffed with.

And God owes us lots of favours. No, we are poor and helpless. Needy, helpless beggars.

Lying in a stinking rubbish dump. Needing rescue. Needing forgiveness. Needing transformation.

And what does the Lord of glory do?

The one exalted above the nations. His majesty incomparable. Too pure to even look at. What does that God do?

He comes down. And he lifts us from the dirt. And that is exactly what Christ has done for us. In the Lord Jesus, the exalted God has come down to us to pick us up from the dust.

[24 : 55] In fact, he became dust. Human flesh. In order to pick us up from the dust. The Lord Jesus, in his life.

As he walked and touched the dust of this earth. As he saw and knew and lived among the dirt of our lives. And in his death.

As he bore the filth of our sin. And bled on that cross. And his blood hit the dust of this earth. That was the incomparable Lord.

Sticking his hands in the filth. And picking us up in his arms. And what does he do with us? He raises us.

Do you see that language? He lifts us. The Lord up there. Comes down here. To bring us up with him. And to where?

[26 : 00] Verse 8. To make them sit with princes. With the princes of his people. The king of creation.

Makes us royalty. Princes and princesses. That's what's happened in salvation. That's what Christ does with sinners.

You come to him in repentance and faith. A helpless beggar in the dirt. Before the king. Nothing to offer. And he makes you royalty.

Sons and daughters of the king. My Lydia. She loves to be a princess. She'll always dress up as a princess. She loves to be a princess.

It's her dream. Well look. The dream has already come true. The Lord does not just stay on his throne.

[26 : 58] He comes down and he lifts us up. And makes us sit with princes. That is what makes our God incomparable. Who is a God like that?

Who is a saviour like that? And he gives us life. Look at verse 9. He gives the barren woman a home.

Making her the joyous mother of children. This is a picture of giving life. A woman with no family. The pain of barrenness.

He takes. And transforms her into a joyous mother of many children. And for those in Christ. This is precisely what the Lord has done with you.

He's come down for you. Raised you from the ash heap. Made you royalty. And given you life. And so whatever may be consuming your mind right now.

[27 : 58] Whatever is filling your thoughts. And occupying your heart. Realize. This is your God. Fill your mind with this God.

And realize he is far bigger. Far greater. He is far more loving. Than you could possibly imagine. His love for you is incomparable.

Who is like the Lord our God. So all your thoughts. All your needs. Are known to him right now.

If sadness is filling your thoughts right now. The Lord can bring healing to your heart. He can turn barrenness. Into joy.

If worries. If worries. If worries. And anxieties. Occupy your thoughts. And the future is daunting. The Lord. Of heaven and earth.

[28 : 55] Is your king. And you are his prince. His princess. If you feel like you are in the dust. In the ash heap. The Lord is the one who comes down to raise you.

And so nothing. No one here. Is beyond his reach. The one who is far above everything. But the one who comes down. And who raises.

This is your God. Stop. Breathe. And fill your mind with him. And if this is who God is.

And if this is what he has done for us. What must we do? We must praise him. This God.

Our Lord. He is worthy of praise. The one far above everything. But the one who has come down for you. And raised you. And is here for you. Right now. Who is like the Lord our God.

[30 : 00] Praise the Lord. Let's pray.