

Praise The Lord

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[0 : 0 0] Well do take a seat and please turn with me to Psalm 113. We're looking at Psalm 113 this morning As you if you've been here the past few weeks, you'll know that we've been looking through The Psalms that around the theme of praise the Lord that either have that the beginning or the end that goes from Psalm 111 to Psalm 118 so Psalm 113 Praise the Lord praise those servants of the Lord praise the name of the Lord Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore From the rising of the Sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised The Lord is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens who is like the Lord our God Who is seated on high who looks far down on the heavens and earth He raises the poor from the dust and he lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with princes with the princes of his people He gives the barren woman at home making her the joyous mother of children praise the Lord

Well, have you ever wondered why we sing on a Sunday? Why do we gather once a week or maybe twice a week to to sing and in particular to sing praises to God?

You know those of you who've maybe grown up in church or have been in church for many years That might sound like a strange question because you think well, that's just what we do You've done that all your life, but imagine if you're coming into a church for the first time time I mean, it's not often that people will just stand up altogether and launch into song I mean the closest thing is probably in a football stadium where you have everyone maybe singing one thing But even more odd if you were to come week by week in the church, you'd realize that there's just one theme and That's praising the God of the Bible So why do Christians think I?

Mean that's a question for us all to consider whether we'd call ourselves a Christian or not Those of you who say that your followers of Jesus the question really for us as we sing as we read Psalms and is Why should I join in?

Why on earth should I make this song my own? And if you're still considering the things of Christianity if you're here for the first time or online Well, then the question for you as well is why should I join in?

[2 : 2 4] Why on earth should I take any interest in what they sing? Why do we sing praises to God? That's the question the right of our Psalm is seeking an answer to this morning Psalm 113 is as I said one of those psalms that begin or end with that phrase praise the Lord Which in Hebrew is hallelujah, that's where we get our word hallelujah from Anyway, the song was written to be part of the worship of ancient Israel and actually Psalms 113 to 118 were traditionally sung around the time of Passover So this is probably a song that Jesus sung on the night before he died And the aim of the psalmist as we said is that aim of is our aim this morning The psalmist wants to move our hearts to join in that praise not just that we sing it But that our desires are that we want to praise God We're gonna look at this song just under three short headings this morning first of all we praise the Lord for he is worthy of all praise

We praise the Lord for he's worthy of all praise and first a brief note on singing and we're gonna talk about why we praise the Lord But why on earth do we sing you know cuz some 113 isn't just is a song. Why don't we just?

Chant why don't we just read the psalm? What's so special about singing? I mean in short singing not only expresses the truth But it's also really important because it excites our emotions to feel the truth. I Mean very often in the Christian life. We don't the truth that we believe doesn't necessarily always align with our feelings does it?

God's word might tell us to rejoice in the Lord But actually in our hearts, we don't feel that it like it that at all sometimes we just feel tired Maybe we just feel pretty emotionless. Maybe we just feel pretty raw In fact, some of you probably sitting here listening and thinking look the last thing I want to do this morning is saying I've had to do already get up and do it twice and I don't really want to do it once more We don't we don't feel like it. Maybe there's other things on your mind. Maybe you're in pain. Maybe you're anxious Maybe you've got all these other kind of things in the week and they seem far more important than singing and your heart isn't in it at all Our psalmist this morning would say try anyway You'd say try anyway because singing is something quite special singing helps to focus our minds But singing also moves our hearts, you know sometimes, you know It helps you can bring dry truths to life The very act of singing, you know, we sing praise God my soul with all my heart that can move our hearts to make us actually want to praise

When we sing what some of the Psalms of confession like oh my god have mercy on me in your steadfast love I pray that helps moves up move our hearts as well to make us feel that way So singing is powerful, I just wanted to note that As we begin singing is powerful. So can I encourage you to sing even when you don't feel like it?

[5 : 27] Especially when you don't feel like it. So that's why we sing but a Big question really this morning is why do we sing praises to God? And in short we praise God because he's worthy of all praise We praise people who we think are great. Don't we we think have done great things so we saw an example of that last week when England made the history we made history by winning their first the England women's team by winning their first major tournament in the euros But equally historic not only was there wind but where the crowds that watch there were 81,000 people 81,192 people packed into the Wembley Stadium There were 19.1 million 17.9 million people watching from their living rooms and there was a Three-day party in Trafalgar Square with thousands of people watching You know that was historic that was monumentus because it showed something it showed that you know Women's football was being taken seriously that it was worthy of praise that it was worthy of watching

Well in Psalm 313 We see that God is worthy of praise first by seeing the size of the party So first of all this party would clearly break the limits in Trafalgar Square because if you look at verse one It's all people are invited. Everyone's invited to join in Because he praised the Lord is that is what we have there But we don't have a plural you in English. Otherwise, they would be if you were to maybe translate this into South southern The southern states like Texas American English you have this as Yael praise the Lord. That's the command come on everyone It's an invitation to everyone to join in God's praise Everyone is called to join in male or female people from every nation. No one's excluded everyone is invited God isn't just to be praised by Christians. He's to as the creator of the world. He's to be praised by everyone A second this isn't just a three-day party in Trafalgar Square. He's been praised for all time if you look at verse two

Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore The psalmist is clearly thinking more than just praising God a few times singing a few songs on a Sunday It's even bigger than a three-day party. God is worthy of unending praise all time all our lives And third the party isn't just in one place It's over the whole earth everywhere first three from the rising of the Sun to its setting The name of the Lord is to be praised Now that could be talking about time again, but people who understand the Hebrew far better than me Said that some way that they used to refer to the whole earth You know as the Sun goes across the world every people every country that it travels over In their cosmology that's every place it touches should be praising God Every single place every people should be will be singing God's praise all peoples all time all places It's a big party

And that's because of who's at the center of it. I mean, let me just read those first four First four lines again praise the Lord praise those servants of the Lord praise the name of the Lord Blessed be the name of the Lord the Lord the Lord the Lord that's the charm That is being repeated again and again the charm by the crowds That's God's name The Lord in capital letters as we've got it in our Bible. It's Yahweh in Hebrew It's the personal name that God gave his people to remember him by And a name loaded with meaning. I say no one you say he built the Ark I say Hadrian and you say he built a wall I say Boris and you say I don't know he had a party But you say Yahweh to an Israelite and they would tell you about who God is and what he has done The name is filled with meaning and that's why they'd say he's worthy of praise And that's what the psalmist now continues to do in verses four to nine, which is our second point

Praise the Lord for he is highly exalted and yet stooped low First the Lord is exalted. Did you notice all of the high up language again in verses four to six?

[9 : 46] The Lord is high above all the nations his glory is above the heavens Who is like our God who is seated on high who looks far down to the heavens and the earth?

God isn't a physical being on these words, of course our metaphor to describe Not God's location, but God's status You know ancient kings. I mean kings still today or Monarchs You know they have their throne up on many steps. You know this these steps here on the status These are just so that you can see me But like you know kings would have had their seat high up so they're looking down on people people would have People would have made made temples and pyramids and we think like the Aztecs the Mayans Babylonians these pyramids and they stick their God's temples on top to show their status to show their power Well, the psalmist is using that kind of imagery to show us God's status He rules not over one nation, but over all nations He is so great that his throne is higher than the heavens that heavens is what the Hebrew People called the sky God is higher than the sky God is so exalted in his royal power that he has control and he has authority over all things

It's what theologians often call God being transcendent is the word God is above all things. He is exalted And there's something that we read of from the very first pages of scripture, isn't it? Without any effort God just calls creation into being He just speaks and it is What other way shows that much power we can make stuff with other stuff God just speaks and creation comes into existence Some 33 verse 6 says by the word of the Lord the heavens were made by the breath of his mouth all their host In all those the new telescope, I've got what it's called They just launched into into space to look at all the stars and we can they see stars coming into existence Because it takes liars thousand trillions of light years for the light to travel so they sees stars the birth of stars That's coming into existence Well, some of those stars God just spoke and they came into existence and we're only just seeing that now We looked at God's transcendence with the kids didn't we?

He's the one who could just take a scoop full of water and that's all the earth all the oceans of the earth He can just weigh the mountains Who is like him there is none like him that's that's the psalmist point in verse 5 Who is like the Lord our God? He is so exalted And God's transcendence God's be God's exaltedness or whatever that sets him apart from creation God isn't like us Jim LaValle one of the first three astronauts to fly in the air One of the first three astronauts to fly and orbit the moon described how as the earth came into view Through the window of the space capsule that he put his thumb out next to the window and he realized he could hide the entire earth behind his thumb All of those back then it was about six billion people Every person he knew all the places that he had been everything that was significant to him 240,000 miles away was all hidden behind his thumb

And that's a bit like God's perspective there in verse 5 or verse 6 God looks far down on the heavens and the earth We're tiny compared to him Like we said to the children compared to God we're like a drop in the bucket God is highly exalted there is no one as powerful and so he's worthy of praise but the psalmist doesn't end there does he?

[13 : 32] We've still got another three verses to go because God's transcendence his exaltedness doesn't mean that he's distant from creation The God who created the world didn't just leave it and have nothing more to do with it that's what's called deism So wrong view of God it's not a view of the Bible God didn't just leave the world and go off and do his own thing The God who is exalted is also the God who stooped slow The God who is very present in his creation We see that even in just the fact that God looks down on the world The glorious creator unbound by time and space actually takes notice of the world He pays attention to what's going on to us you know billions of people who are smaller than astronauts down God notices We see that even more in verses 7 to 9 if you look at those with me He raises the poor from the dust He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes with the princes of his people

He gives the barren woman at home making her the joyous mother of children Praise the Lord The God who is far above also stooped slow and is intimately involved in our lives He doesn't just pay attention to national politics either He doesn't just pay attention to the celebrities who make the front pages or the people who go viral He stooped down to the lowest rung of society You see that the poor, the needy, the barren God notices the people that even we forget He notices that you know that person on a shop window covered by cardboard because they got nowhere to sleep He notices the old woman whose housebound feels completely forgotten by her friends and family He noticed that in caste systems in some countries there are people known as untouchables When I grew up in Nepal I remember seeing kids by the side of the road picking through rubbish looking for something to sell or recycle Side by side with the stray dogs who so often carried rabies and God notices that The people that so many people might view as untouchable God notices that

He sees the woman who's been unable to have children Just that in itself is incredibly difficult Incredible source of grief But to add on that some societies will see that woman as cursed As someone who matters less because they can't bear children But God notices I mean even just the fact God sees women We've made significant progress which is brilliant in our society Treating women as more equal but still so often women are still less treated as less important than men But in God's eyes He notices everyone everyone is equal Equally precious and loved But God doesn't just see he acts and that's our third point We praise the Lord because he raises up Verses 6 to 9 contain powerful pictures don't they Of how God raises up the lowly He raises up the poor and the needy and he makes them sit with princes

This is the stuff of Hollywood and Bollywood Think of Aladdin, think of Slumdog Millionaire, it's rags to riches We see God doing that throughout the Bible If you're to flick through your Bible even quickly You'd see so many instances of God doing that Whether it's from taking Joseph from the dungeons And making him the Prince of Egypt, Pharaoh's right hand man Or taking David, the nobody who's watching sheep, the youngest of the brothers And he makes him the greatest king that Israel has ever known Or maybe most iconic of all, he takes Israel, the people of Israel who are slaves in Egypt You could say they are the lowest caste there And he makes them into a great nation That's the whole focus of Psalm 114 that comes next He lifts up the barren woman giving her a home and children Again and again we see God do that across the Bible Think of Abraham's wife Sarah or Jacob's wife Rebecca You might know the story of Hannah, the mother of Samuel who was barren And who was being mocked and abused by her husband's other wife

I mean how on earth that happened is terrible anyway But God answers her prayer and gives her Samuel Fast forward to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist You might say that raising up the lowly as you look through scripture, that's what God does God's actions are so often characterized, not by visiting the rich But by going down to the poor and raising them up No wonder the psalmist says who is like our God One of the God, one of the celebrity, one of the politician or sports star Is so exalted and yet comes so close, so near to us I mean, no, the rich and famous so rarely mixed with, I don't know, nobody's like us I mean maybe you're somebody I just don't realize But they rarely mix with nobody's and when they do it makes headlines doesn't it All Prince William has to do is sell the big issue for an hour And suddenly he's gone viral and he's on every single newspaper the next morning God did more than that The creator of all things became a creature, became man

[18 : 53] And you'd think that kind of thing would be breaking news That he would even make the local gazette or even be featured on the local whatsapp group at least But when God became a man he became a baby A baby born to a virgin out of wedlock, a baby born in a shed And he went further still as we read in Philippians earlier on Jesus humbled himself to the point of death Even death on the cross The God who is so powerful that he can measure the waters, he can weigh the hills And allow himself to be pinned to a cross The highest of high became the lowest of low And he didn't do it to promote a charity He's stupid to raise the lowly, not the physically poor, those who are spiritually poor We think that physical poverty is a bad thing Well God says, think about, look at your spiritual poverty You see by nature we're all spiritually bankrupt We've got nothing good to offer the exalted God See we owe him an infinite debt of praise

We're called to praise him That's not just an invitation, that is a command We owe God an infinite debt of praise and worship But generally we live our lives without reference to him, don't we? We very often as well just deliberately ignore his commands And some of you might, this morning might feel very aware of your own spiritual poverty You know over the last week you might think about how you've lived and think And just be counting in your minds the many ways in which you've gone against God Which you sinned in the last week Maybe you've fallen again and again into the same pattern of sin that you're just trying to put to death Maybe you've lost your temper and you can't take the words back Maybe you've been looking at pornography and it's just something that makes you feel dirty Maybe you've acted selfishly and you've hurt those you love in the process Or whatever you've done or you've failed to do The good news of the Gospel Is that Jesus came for those who know their poor In the Sermon of the Mount Jesus said,

Blessed are the poor and spirit for theirs, is the kingdom of God The God who is seated on high, stooped low, not for the rich righteous But for the spiritually poor Those who know that are absolutely bankrupt Those who recognize their poverty Romans 5 verse 8 We read that God demonstrates his own love for us And that while we are still sinners, Christ died for us And that's a promise for you if you recognize your own spiritual poverty That's a promise that you can have assurance That Jesus died in your place if you recognize that that's you There will be others here though who aren't yet ready to admit their spiritual poverty Because naturally it's hard to admit Naturally we think that actually yes I might need God's help But surely I've got something to offer as well Think of all the things I did this week Think of all the bad things I chose not to say Even though I had the chance

Think of all the good things I did to help others The good things I said Honestly we often just tell ourselves that we're not helpless However if we weren't totally helpless just to I mean very simply if we weren't totally helpless Jesus wouldn't have had to die There would have been another way So can I urge you if you're someone who doesn't Can I urge you to be honest with yourself God sees your heart God sees every one of our hearts And actually without Jesus we're like an empty bank vault Actually worse than that we're like a bank vault that is empty We're like a bank vault that has been filled with stolen praise and worship Praise and worship that belongs to God There's nothing worthy in there All our good works are tainted and stained by sin But God can deal with that If you humble yourself if you repent The Bible tells us that the exalted king became sin for us For you if you're lonely asking

He paid the debt that we owe And one John 1 verse 9 He promises that if we confess our sin he is faithful and just To forgive us our sin and cleanse us of all unrighteousness Jesus not only pays off our debt but he raises us up The promise of the Bible isn't that God just brings us to zero But that God credits into our account all the righteousness of Christ Everything is in the Bible But that God credits into our account all the righteousness of Christ Everything, all that Christ is, all that he has done All of his perfection God credits that to our account He says you're righteous in my sight And he makes us children of God if we trust in him So why is God worthy of praise?

[23 : 54] Why is God worthy of praise in all time by all people in all places? Well because Jesus Christ the exalted God Stopped down to die on the cross for sinners like you and me God is worthy to be praised By all people for all time in all places and he will be In Revelation the apostle John gets a glimpse of what heaven is like And what the new creation is like And this is what he sees A great multitude that none could number from every nation From all tribes and peoples and languages Standing before the throne And what are they doing? They're praising Jesus Saying worthy is the Lamb who is slain God is worthy to be praised by all time for all time He will be So the question is will we join in?

Will we praise him in song? But more importantly will we praise him in worship And every day of the week With all that we are With all that we have Will we offer our whole lives to God in worship?

For God is worthy of all our praise That's what we see in this song For the God who is exalted made himself nothing for us Well let's pray And then we'll sing Psalm 113 together Heavenly Father we thank you that your word cuts deeper than a knife Lord thank you that it cuts to our hearts Thank you that it shows us our spiritual poverty But Lord thank you that it doesn't just leave us like that Lord we thank you that Christ came for the spiritual poor Lord we thank you that Thank you that Jesus could say that the kingdom of heaven is for those who recognize their spiritual poverty And so Lord we pray that this morning That you would encourage us That you'd comfort the hearts of any who feel unworthy Of any who feel that there's nothing in your sight

Lord we thank you that Christ came for the people who realize that there's nothing And we pray that you would build us up You'd help us to remember that if we're trusted in Christ That we're righteous in your sight That we're children of God So Lord we pray that you build us up You send us out with this good news of the gospel this morning We pray all this in Jesus name Amen Well we're going to close now and sing Psalm 113 And as I said at the beginning of the sermon Can I encourage you to join in Even if we don't feel like it Let's let the, let's let singing the song help us to feel it The doll's going to lead us So let's stand and sing Psalm 113 So let's let the doll's help us to feel it The doll's going to lead us Psalm 113