

“Unrivaled Praise”  
Psalm 113  
(Preached at Trinity, August 19, 2012)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Think of the things you enjoy the most; the things that bring you the most pleasure.
  - A. There are certain foods I particularly savor. A good steak, well-seasoned, juicy & pink. Or fresh salted peanuts.  
But if these two things were all I had to eat year after year they would soon become ash in my mouth and I would begin to loath them.  
Manna was food from heaven, sweet like honey to the taste. Yet it became loathsome to the children of Israel.  
**Numbers 11:5-6 NAU** - "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, <sup>6</sup> but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."
  - B. You might have a particular song you enjoy, but if you had to listen to it over and over without pause you would soon come to despise it.
  - C. People get a new car but soon grow weary of it.
  - D. Pat and I take an annual cruise. It is a wonderful time of rest and refreshment. But if we were forced to remain on the boat week after week it would become a prison. I asked one young hostess if she grew weary of the monotony of facing the same surroundings day after day. Her answer: "Tell me about it."
2. But can a Christian ever grow weary of praising God? There are some church goers who have never praised God. Their hearts have never been lifted up in adoration and amazement of our God. But this doesn’t describe the people of God.  
The Psalter is filled with praise. It was Israel’s hymnbook.  
The word “praise” occurs 160 times in the Psalms.
3. So it shouldn’t surprise us to find another psalm with praise as the central theme. But it also shouldn’t weary us. In fact, our hearts should leap. It is one of the chief traits of a Christian. Thanksgiving explodes into praise. Gazing upon God’s splendor and majesty fills our hearts with praise. As we marvel at the goodness of God the consistent response is praise.
4. **Psalm 113** begins a series a psalms that were sung annually at the Passover. The series was known as the Egyptian Hallel. Hallel is the Hebrew word in these psalms for praise.
  - A. These psalms celebrate God’s mercy upon the downtrodden. They mark God’s redemption that was demonstrated in Egypt but would spread to the nations.
  - B. By custom **Psalms 113-114** were sung before the Passover. **Psalms 115-118** were sung after the Passover. **Psalm 118** was probably the hymn our Lord sang before His crucifixion.  
**Matthew 26:30 KJV** - "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."

5. **Psalm 113** begins and ends with Hallelujah – Praise the LORD.  
We find the word “praise” three times in **verse 1**. It isn’t just needless repetition.
- A. There is a focus upon the people of praise—the servants of God. Those who praise God are of a unique sort.
  - B. Then we find that praise has content. "praise the name of the LORD."  
I’ve pointed out many times that the Hebrew understanding of “name.” For us it is just a label. For them it was an identity. The name of God points to the fulness of His Divine essence—the fulness of God. A contemplation of the fulness of God always leads to praise.
6. As we move into the body of **Psalm 113** we find it only has two divisions.
- I. **Verses 2-3** - Unending Praise
  - II. **Verses 4-9** - Unrivaled Praise
- I. **Verses 2-3** - Unending Praise
- A. The psalmist continues his declaration of praise  
"Blessed be the name of the LORD"
    1. We cannot add to the blessedness of God. But our hearts sing forth the desire that His blessedness shine forth with infinite brightness upon the earth.
    2. The word בָּרַךְ literally refers to kneeling or praise.  
The Greek Septuagint uses the word εὐλογέω which refers to speaking well of or extolling. We get our word eulogy.
    3. In other words, to bless God is to praise and exalt His name. It expresses a declaration of God’s greatness.
  - B. The Psalmist declares this high praise to be unending.  
"from this time forth and for evermore."
    1. It was a present activity – “From this time. . .”
    2. It was a continual activity – “and for evermore.”
  - C. He also expressed the continuing priority of praise throughout the activities of the day - "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same"
    1. We should begin our day praising God – morning prayer sets the pattern for the day. Even a brief time before God praising Him reminds us of His rich blessings.  
**Psalm 103:1-5 KJV** - "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *bless* his holy name. <sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: <sup>3</sup> Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; <sup>4</sup> Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; <sup>5</sup> Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things*; so *that* thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."
    2. Praise continues as we go through our day as we continually reflect upon His goodness and tender mercies.  
**Psalm 34:1 KJV** - "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth."  
**Psalm 16:8-9 KJV** - "I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved. <sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope."
    3. And then we praise God at the end of the day as we close our eyes in rest.

## II. Verses 4-9 - Unrivaled Praise

- A. The Psalmist reflects upon God's greatness
1. Meditation upon God always results in praise
  2. He reflects upon God's unrivaled greatness as well as His amazing condescension to man.  
Derek Kidner – "Nothing is too great for Him, no one is too small."
  3. His conclusion: **Verse 9** "Praise ye the LORD."
- B. The unrivaled greatness of God
- Psalm 113:4-5 KJV** - "The LORD is high above all nations, *and* his glory above the heavens. <sup>5</sup> Who is like unto the LORD our God"
1. God is high above this world. He is infinite. Everything upon this earth is finite.
  2. God is of infinite worth. Everything upon this earth is temporary and passing. Sin has caused everything to lose its value.  
**Romans 3:10-12 KJV** - "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: <sup>11</sup> There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. <sup>12</sup> They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable"  
ESV - "together they have become worthless"  
**Isaiah 40:15 KJV** - "Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing."
  3. Our every thought regarding God should extol His infinite holiness. He is high above all of creation.  
This is reflected in the "Lord's Prayer" (**Matthew 6:9 KJV**) – "Our Father which art in heaven"  
    - a. He is high above where He dwells in majesty, splendor, power, and dominion and where He is worshipped with myriads of angels. Our thoughts of Him are always upward. A contemplation of Him always draws *us* upward.  
Upward in praise.  
Upward in holy, upward living  
**Colossians 3:1 KJV** - "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."
    - b. And He is holy. "Hallowed be thy name."  
This is the first petition. It is a prayer that God's great holiness would be declared upon the earth.
      - (1) By holy it doesn't mean that God is sinless. He is, of course. But this isn't making an ethical statement. It is a declaration that everything about God distinguishes Him from His creation.
      - (2) There is an infinite distance between God and humanity. His perfections are infinitely above us.

4. A consideration of God's infinite greatness can only lead to one conclusion: "Who *is* like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high"
- a. Jeremiah echoes these words:  
**Jeremiah 10:6 KJV** - "*there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might.*"
  - b. Paul understood this:  
**Romans 11:33-36 KJV** - "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! <sup>34</sup> For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? <sup>35</sup> Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? <sup>36</sup> For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen."
  - c. He is greater than the angels
  - d. He is greater than the greatest of men.  
Listen to Abraham:  
**Genesis 18:27 NAS** - "behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am *but* dust and ashes."
- C. But after declaring the transcendent greatness of God the Psalmist then marvels at God's condescending grace and mercy  
**Psalms 113:6 KJV** - "Who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven, and in the earth!"
1. The wicked give little consideration to this. They dismiss the presence of God and they consider themselves worthy of every blessing.
  2. God's condescending grace has always been the amazement of God's people  
**Psalms 8:3-4 KJV** - "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; <sup>4</sup> What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"
  3. He gives several examples in **Verses 7-9**
    - a. The point is first to declare God's absolute sovereignty over the affairs of this world. He governs all things.
    - b. But then it is a declaration of God's tender mercies  
**Psalms 113:7 KJV** - "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust"
  4. Remember, these psalms were sung around the Passover. They celebrate God's great redemption of His people. They were slaves under cruel masters. God redeemed them and raised them up.
- D. This points to God's ultimate condescension
1. Jesus humbled Himself entering into our condition – He became a man  
**Philippians 2:6-8 KJV** - "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: <sup>7</sup> But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: <sup>8</sup> And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

**Hebrews 4:15 KJV** - "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."

2. Jesus Christ, who dwelt in majesty and splendor, in light inaccessible, in glory beyond comprehension, lowered Himself to our condition.

Conclusion:

1. What wonderful implications our great God has upon our lives.  
He is always present. He lifts us up when we are downtrodden.  
**Psalm 91:1-2 KJV** - "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. <sup>2</sup> I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."
2. But the greatest glory is His redeeming grace. That He would look down and lift us up from the pit of our sin.
3. Can you consider these things without being overwhelmed with praise?  
**Psalm 113:9 KJV** - "Praise ye the LORD."  
Spurgeon: "The Psalm is a circle, ending where it began, praising the Lord from its first syllable to its last. May our life psalm partake of the same character, and never know a break or a conclusion. In an endless circle let us bless the Lord, whose mercies never cease."