

Who is Like Unto the Lord Our God?

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[0 : 00] All right, please turn in Psalm 113 in your copy of The Words of Life. What a great song, you know, based on the end portion of John 6, John 6, 67, when answering where else could we go, but Jesus has the words of life.

And it's the greatest joy of my life to get to share with you the words of life right here, the Bible written to change our lives, not just for knowledge. And so we come here tonight together around God's word to let it conform us into his image.

And we're in Psalm chapter number 113, and we're going to read it together responsibly. I'll read a verse, and then you'll read a verse. This psalm, special interest, very likely one of the psalms that Jesus and the disciples would have sung as they left out that night of the Last Supper together, and that dark night in which he would be betrayed.

And so there we have several chapters here that they would have taken that song from. So I'll read verse 1, and you read verse 2, and we'll work our way through this chapter. Psalm 113.

Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord. Praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord, who is the sign of the Lord, and forevermore.

[1 : 13] From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high?

Who humbly himself to behold the things that are not in the earth. He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunk hill.

And he is a savior of the princes, and he is a savior of the princes of the people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.

Heavenly Father, we come tonight, and we say with the psalmist, Who is like unto the Lord our God? And Lord, we just sit here in silence, knowing that nobody will ever be able to answer that question.

For there is none like you. You're high above all that we could ever ask, think, or imagine. Lord, we love you. We thank you for your word, constantly bringing us back to a proper perspective upon life.

[2 : 17] We're turning our hearts to a place of worship. We're helping us value the things that should be valued in this world. Father, I ask that you'd be with us tonight, as we rejoice in the truth of your word.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Psalm 113 is a great chapter to look at. If you're helping, as we should, people have an inductive Bible study. The questions that you would ask, the five W questions, and then the question of how.

The who, when, where, why, and then how. Those four W's and the one how question. First of all, who is to praise God? The answer is the servants of the Lord.

When is God to be praised? Forevermore, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun. How is He to be, that's where is He to be praised? That answer is there for us. Not only forevermore, but everywhere that the sun would touch.

As it goes down in one country and rises in another. And why is God to be praised? And then, in the ending of the chapter, we have that He is supreme. His humility, His mercy, His pity upon us.

[3 : 20] And then the question we ask ourselves tonight is, how should this change the way that I think about God? Just a wonderful chapter for us. First one, praise ye the Lord. The third psalm in a row that started with hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. And then who is to praise the Lord? It's the servants of the Lord. We should praise His name. As I mentioned, three psalms in a row here that starts off with that.

Praise the Lord. And that's what we gather here the night to do. I enjoy listening to us as we sing at the beginning of Thursday night. And I really enjoy listening to us as we sing one song as we leave.

Because God's servants have gathered here to sing praises unto His name, to speak of the truth of His word. And so there's an exhortation to worship. An exhortation that we should declare as works, because we're being referred to as servants.

That helps us give the perspective on who it is to praise the Lord. I hope you would readily accept your position as the servant of the Lord. As I've been working with Dylan and Matt, they'll be preaching on Sunday nights through the book of James.

[4 : 25] We see James, the brother there of Jesus, and he calls himself the servant of the Lord. He could have used any other description for what he want, but is there anything sweeter that we could refer to ourselves as the servant of the Most High God?

And then the praise the Lord. So the servants, we declare His works. We praise the Lord. Then we give the Lord the glory that's due unto His name. So we praise the Lord, and we do it by praising His name, and then ascribing the glory unto Him, to declare His worth there, to worship Him.

You know, worship is about stating value. Simply worshiping is value in God. It's treasuring God more than anything. So when we say that we come here tonight to praise you the Lord, we do it through song.

We do it through responding to the Word. We do it in conversation in the foyer. We do it by you leaving whatever was going on in your life and coming here to give priority to the Word. There's many ways in which our lives ought to be given to Him in worship.

I'm going to read a quote to you, and every time I read a quote, I hear my wife tell me, slow down, all right? So I'm going to try to slow down because I just really love what this tells us about worship from a book called Wired for a Life of Worship.

[5 : 38] It says, think of it this way. Worship is simply about value. The simplest definition I can give is this. Worship is our response to what we value the most.

That is why worship is something that we all do. We're all about it in any given day. Worship is about saying this person, this thing, this experience, this whatever is what matters most to me.

It is the thing of highest value in my life. That thing might be a relationship, a dream, a position, a status, something you own, a name, a job, some kind of pleasure. Whatever name you put on it, the thing is what you have concluded in your heart is worth most to you, and whatever is worth most to you, you've guessed it, is what you worship.

Worship is the essence declaring what we value most. As a result, worship fuels our actions and becomes the driving force for all we do. We're not just talking about the religious crowd, the Christian, the churchgoer among us.

We're talking about everybody on planet Earth, a multitude of souls proclaiming with every breath that is worthy of their affection, their attention, their allegiance, proclaiming with every step what it is that they worship.

[6 : 48] Some of us attend the church on the corner professing the worship of the living God above all. Others who rarely darken the church doors would say that worship isn't a part of their lives because they're not religious. But everybody has an altar and everybody has a throne.

So how do you know where and what you worship? It's easy. You follow the trail of your time, your affection, your energy, your money, and your allegiance. At the end of the trail, you'll find the throne. And whatsoever or whoever is on that throne is one of the highest value to you.

In other words, on that throne is what you worship. Sure, not too many of us walk around saying, I worship my stuff, I worship my job, I worship this pleasure, or I worship her, or I worship my body, or I worship me.

But the trail never lies. We may say that we value this thing or that thing more than any other, but the volume of our actions speak louder than our words. Now, when you came here tonight, you should have not started your worship.

You should have not started your praise unto the Lord, but it simply should have been a continuation of the life in which you've been living, of giving praise unto His name. God's servants have a special reason to praise Him.

[7 : 52] Servants are people that are devoted to the Master's will. And as I already mentioned, I hope you'll find your identity in it. In Ezra chapter number 5, verse 10 and 11, I love the response that is given here when they say, they come upon a job set and they ask these people, who do you think you are?

We ask their names, verse 10, also to certify that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them. And thus they return their answer. Can you imagine somebody walking up, maybe Robert has somebody coming up and wants to know, you know, do you have a permit for what you're doing here today?

Who gives you the right to do this? So Robert answers and says, we are the servants of the God of heaven and earth. And then Jeff has to go bail them out of jail because they did not find that answer to be appropriate.

And they built the house that was built of this many years with the great king of Israel, builded and set up. What a great answer for us when somebody is saying, what motivates you? Why are you here?

What are you doing? And we would say, we are the servants of the Most High God. In Acts 16, verse 17, New Testament, the same fellow Paul and us cried saying, these men are the servants of the Most High God.

[9 : 01] So same description used, Old Testament. We're not building any more here a wall. We're not building a house that was given there. But what are the servants of the Most High God doing?

In Acts 16, 17, these men are the servants of the Most High God which show unto us the way of salvation. And so that is our work, right? That is the work that we are going about doing, whether it be in South Korea or down the road or wherever you're at.

The servants of God have always done what the Master has given. And in this time, and this is what we are given to do in sharing, proclaiming the message of the risen Christ.

I love them. Dirk Kinner says that, worship is the loving homage of the committed to the revealed. The loving homage of the committed to the revealed.

God has revealed Himself to us. We know His will in this life, and we should be so grateful for it that He has laid it out. We know what the will of the Lord is. I mean, we even have verses like that that says, and this is the will of God, you know, that we are told throughout the Bible.

[10 : 03] He does not make it unclear for His servants how to live out what He has given us to do. And we should be so grateful, and we should be so committed to the will of our Master.

Then it says, blessed be the name of the Lord. When we're having lunch or something, I sometimes kind of get tongue-tied when I ask somebody, and I'll say, bless the food. I mean, ask the Lord to bless the food.

Because I can't decide, am I asking you to bless the food? Do you have any blessing ability about you? Or am I asking that you would ask God to bless the food? Or are you blessing the Lord as you pray?

And so I often get confused, because I remind you, when we use the word, the bless, we're expressing gratitude. There's nothing about us that can make the Lord stronger or better off.

That's what the Lord does when He blesses us. Deuteronomy 8, 10, when thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He has given thee. The Lord gives blessings upon us, but our blessing, when we say bless the Lord, O my soul, what we're saying is express your gratitude, express your worship unto the Lord.

[11 : 07] Bless the name of the Lord. Express your gratitude. Psalm 34, 1, I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. And so we praise the Lord.

Matt Minster took me to a country buffet that exists in Alpharetta. I didn't know it was there. I would tell you guys, but if I told this Baptist church, we would never be able to get back into it, okay? This is a little gym here.

And we had Matt ask him when we went to check out. He says, let me ask you, you know about Baptist potlucks, don't you? This restaurant's based on it, isn't it? And the guy says, oh, I know all about it, all right? And so we went to the Baptist trough today, to the country buffet.

And I told Matt before we sit down, I said, let me ask God to bless the food because I know that I'm more grateful for this meal than anybody else here in this restaurant. Blessing the Lord at all times, not just at the buffet, not just before the meal.

The first step that we ought to take in training our kids is, we tell our kids at a young age, right? You put their hands together, you tell them to pray. My wife's a pastor's kid, so they don't have to close their eyes.

[12 : 09] I didn't know that was a rule, but apparently pastor's kids don't have to close their eyes because somebody's got to be looking around. I don't know what she'd be looking for, but you tell the kids to bow their head, great first step in blessing the Lord, but at all times.

So what about when they got that bicycle? What about when you just had a great evening together at the park? That food does not have to be involved in saying thank you to the Lord.

At all times, we ought to bless the Lord for the opportunity to meet together. I thank the Lord. Graham told me about traveling this weekend. He could have been involved in an accident that happened around him, but the Lord kept him safe.

That's something that we would bless the Lord and we would thank the Lord for. And so then we move on to verses two through four. We ask this question, so what is involved in worship? Blessed be the name of the Lord from the time forth and forevermore, from the rising of the sun and to the going down of the same.

The Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations and his glory above the heavens. And so we're supposed to do this at all times. And so what is involved and what is the nature of this, this continual praise?

[13 : 17] Malachi, he looks around and he didn't see very many people in his land who were really worshiping God. Malachi, last book of the Old Testament. And he pointed to the priest that had blind animals and they had crippled, diseased animals.

And he suggested, he says, would you bring these animals to your governor? Like really, would you bring this sacrifice to your earthly authorities? And he even suggests, he says, you guys shut down your altars.

Like what you're doing is just not pleasing to the Lord. And Malachi dreams of a day when God will be worshiped from this time forth and forevermore. Malachi chapter one, verses 10 and 11.

Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for naught? Neither do you kindle fire on mine altar for naught. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts. Neither will I accept an offering at your hand.

For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles. And in every place, incense shall be offered unto my name. And pure offering, for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

[14 : 27] The same expression from the rising of the sun and the going down of the same, that our Lord should be praised continually. High above the nations. Reminded of this when I'm trying to get in sync with the Ewing family.

Josh and I have communicated, but never at the same time, where they're 11 hours ahead of us, right? And that's kind of lost on us in the world that we live in today. I know that many churches would have a missions conference and talk about how the sun never sets upon the ministry, that the God is always being praised.

And in the modern world we live in, that we just take for granted. But how wonderful is it that when you go to bed, that the praise of the Lord is not stopping, but it is starting on another part of the world.

And then we get to have the opportunity to be part of a church family that around the clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that there's people involved in bringing praise to His name.

And that also reminds us where He desires to be worshipped in all of the earth. And so why does the Lord deserve our praise? Well, the Psalms never call on us the praise without giving us reasoning, because there's no shortage of it, right?

[15 : 35] You would never, if Psalms could, there's no shortage of reasons that give praise to the Lord. So referring to us as servants and praising His work, what is some of the reasons in which we should praise the Lord?

Verse number five. Who is like the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth?

He raises up the poor out of the dust and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him princess, even with the princess of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house and to be joyful mother of children.

Praise ye the Lord. It's said as a statement, but not as a question, an exclamation, which is, who is like our God? And I phrase it tonight as a question.

Who is like our God? No one. We could just sit here in silence. You could take this question anywhere. You could ask everybody that you want.

[16 : 34] You could spend your whole life. Zach Elrod was telling me that his nephew goes around. I don't know how old his nephew is. I believe it's like maybe four or five. And wherever they're at, he walks up to people and he says, do you know God loves you?

All right? And everywhere he goes, do you know God loves you? He sticks his little finger out. He says, do you know that God loves you? And that's a great question to ask. But you could ask anybody you want in any time in history who is like our God.

We pray for our uncle, or for our brother Sam. I call him Uncle Sam, like the great Uncle Sam, the American. I don't know who Uncle Sam is in history. Anyway, Uncle Sam. Sam, all right? Sam Paxson. I miss hearing him pray.

You know, we're praying for him as he recovers. But he would always say that, right? And it's so biblical. When I first heard it, it sounded very odd to me. God, there is none like you. There's nobody like you on this earth.

There's none like you. And it sounded very odd to me because I hadn't heard that often in a prayer. But you read through the Psalms. That is brought up time and time again. God, there is none like you. Who is like unto our God?

[17 : 33] God. So we could pause indefinitely and there would be no answer to that question. God must stoop to reach us here on earth. He humbles himself.

He stoops down. Behold the things that are in heaven that are in earth. This earth which is big, which is massive, which we don't even understand, all the aspects of it. There's things on planet earth that we don't even understand that we comprehend.

Him and then in the universe. But it says that our God, He would humble Himself and He would stoop down. Picturing Genesis 11, the Tower of Babel. They built the biggest thing that they could.

And He says, let me come down there and see what Legos you've been working on today. Let me see what you got going on. It says that our God would stoop down. He's much bigger than the biggest thing that we can understand.

Take the biggest thing that you can try to help your head around and God would have to humble Himself and to stoop down and to be among us. But what does He do when He does that? He doesn't just do it.

[18 : 31] He doesn't just make Himself knowable. He doesn't even know that we can know that there's a God that made Himself knowable to us. But it's a God who lifts up the needy. He raises the poor out of dust and He lifts the needy of a dunghill and He sits in with the princess and even the princess of His people.

This God who had to stoop down to see the earth and the heavens cares about us. The poor, the weak, the barren. He delights to exalt them. This reminds us of Hannah's prayer.

You know, in 1 Samuel 2, verse 1 and 2, living in a society where her barrenness was just something that was always there. It was always before her. Everywhere she would go, there would be children.

She desired so much to have children. And her prayer in 2 Samuel 2, 1 and 2 says, And Hannah prayed and said, My heart rejoices in the Lord.

Mine horn is exalted in the Lord. We know that references her. Her strength is lifted up in the Lord. My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies because I rejoice in thy salvation.

[19 : 33] There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee. Neither is there any rock like our God. Her enemies, people have been criticizing her. We saw that she wanted to have children.

She was just so overwhelmed with emotion when God was going to allow her children. They accused her of being drunk because her prayers were just poured out before God. And God gave her a child and her prayer is, There is none holy as in the Lord.

There is none beside thee. That's what God does for us. He hears the prayers of needy people. And it's evidence here in the Psalm of Thanksgiving. He takes the barren woman.

He gives her a home. He gives her a house that is a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord. God does the seemingly impossible in people's lives. He does it complete.

He takes somebody. He comes down and he finds a person in the poor, there in the dust, and he raises them up. He finds the woman who is barren, who has an impossible situation, and he gives her a home that is filled with joy, that is filled with children.

[20 : 37] So the God of the nations see the poor and barren and he meets their needs. And we must say, Who is likened to the Lord, our God? Who dwelleth on high.

God is that which the greater cannot be conceived. To me, Jesus Christ is exactly that. A greater cannot be conceived. He is great in the glory of his person as the God-man, the marvelous combination of transcendence and elevation on the one hand and compassion and sympathy on the other.

He is so great that he has to stoop down the earth, but he's still so compassionate that when he does, he exalts the poor and gives children to the barren. And he is great in his teaching, great in his work, great in his promises.

And where would I improve him? Where would I alter him? Where is his equal? Where is his superior? And if there was no Jesus and I could not worship Jesus Christ, I would worship the man who created him.

He is beyond imagination. The Bible is self-attesting, but one of the great, amazing ways is not what we know about Jesus Christ. He is not even within our possibility to imagine the greatness of our Lord.

[21 : 46] Somebody that strong and mighty, but that compassionate. So who are the poor and barren in this story? Psalm 40, verse 17, But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.

Thou art my help and my deliverer. Make no tearing, O my God. I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh upon me. Then Luke 5, 31 and 32, And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician, but they are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance. That Jesus, you met Jesus Christ, that he came into your life, that the gospel was shared. When you were at a place as a barren woman with no ability to change your story, you were at a poor place, but then God found you.

He stooped down in humility. He came to this earth. He lived a perfect life. He died a perfect death. And he died for you. And so God didn't only stoop down, but he sent his only begotten son to meet us here in the dirt.

And he didn't simply call us from afar, giving us commands and regulations to follow, but he humbled himself and he looked down and became a man, a human to die for our sins and to reconcile us back to himself.

[22 : 57] And so before I end in a word of prayer, and then we sing a song to rejoice together, and I will sing, I will pray, and I'll pray this psalm together, but I just want to one last time ask this question, who is like unto our God?

And we just sit in silence. There's just absolutely no answer to it. Sometime when you need a moment to gain your perspective in life, you feel like the enemy is raging, you feel like things are so big, you feel like your problems are too large, and you say that nobody seems to care, then you realize that the God of heaven is above any of your problems, and he most certainly does care, because even though he's above the world, he would come down all the way to the dirt, that he'd make himself after our fashion so that he could die for us, just ask yourself that question, and in that silence, they come out of that silence just rejoicing, knowing that that question will never be answered.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I thank you for the reminder of this psalm. In a world, Lord, that's always grabbing at our attention, we praise your name, Lord. We are your servants, and we praise you for your name, your character, all that you have revealed to us, Lord.

We search these scriptures daily, wanting to know more of you, and on every page, Lord, we find something that your servants have to rejoice in. And so we bless your name, Lord, from this time forth forevermore.

Lord, from the day that you saved us, you have put praise in our hearts, and we will not stop through all eternity. Lord, as you put this church together, and we will eternally be together, worshiping the name of your Son.

[24 : 32] From the rising of the sun and the going down of the same, Lord, you are worthy to be praised. Father, we think about our missionary force around the world and how many times they are the only one in that part of their city, maybe on that street, Lord, that is praising your name, but they will continue to do it.

They will not stop, Lord, because they have got a glimpse of how wonderful and how great that you are. Lord, you are high above all the nations, and your glory is high above even the heavens.

Lord, who is like unto you? Lord, tonight we say that no one is. You've humbled yourself and behold the things that are in heaven and earth, Lord, you've humbled yourself and you've come down and you've raised up the poor.

You have lifted us out of our place, Lord. You have given a joyful home, Lord, unto the barren. And Lord, we just rejoice, Lord, in your name, the joy that you're given tonight as your people, Lord, we say praise to your name, Lord.

You are worthy of our worship and all of our reverence and all of our love and our attention. And we pray this in your Son's name, Amen.