

Title: **"Praise the Lord!": Learning to Praise in Prayer**
Text: **Psalms 113**
Date: **January 7, 2024**

Find the sermon manuscript to follow along with online at mercyhillchurch.org.



Big Idea

We are called to praise the Lord at all times, in all places. But do we know why? What is it that makes such praise not only possible, but reasonable, even natural?

1. That He Is to Be Praised (v. 1)

This whole psalm is actually framed by the same exhortation. So it begins in v. 1: "Praise the LORD!" And, likewise, it concludes in v. 9: "Praise the LORD!" There is your frame. And everything in between is meant to be an unpacking and unfolding of this master theme. This is the keynote to which the whole song of this psalm is tuned.

2. When He Is to Be Praised (v. 2)

What makes this even more challenging for us is that this idea put forward by the psalmist here ("from this time forth and forevermore") –it doesn't just include your good days: when everything's going well, when all is as it should be, when God seems to be turning all you touch to gold; it also includes your bad days as well: those days when you feel like all is lost, like the clouds won't break, like your dreams have gone up in flames, when you're left lying in a heap of ashes, and God is the one who seems to have lit the match. Even on those days, even when you don't particularly like what the Lord is doing (or not doing!) in your life, you praise, you bless his name.

3. Where He Is to Be Praised (v. 3)

Don't you find there are certain places where, when you're there, it is easier to praise the Lord. And, on the other side, aren't their places where it's easier to forget that and drift into grumbling or something else? So maybe you come to church and you hear the gospel and you sing and you praise, oh it's so wonderful. But then you go home and there are dishes in the sink from last night, and the kids have gotten in another tussle in the back room, and lawn still needs to be

mowed, or whatever. And you don't so much feel like praising. Ah, but God is still worthy of it, even here. It doesn't matter where you are. "From the rising of the sun to its setting [from east to west], the name of the LORD is to be praised!"

4. Why He Is to Be Praised (vv. 4-9)

Reason #1: Because He Is So High above Us (i.e. glorious) (vv. 4-6)

He is not just above us spatially. He is above us in every possible way –he is exalted, lifted up, supreme, sovereign.

Reason #2: Because He Is Down Low with Us (i.e. gracious) (vv. 7-9)

On this point, we're essentially given two case studies. One is concerned with the poor and needy person. The other is concerned with the barren woman. Both find themselves in terrible states. And yet both experience this transcendent God descending from the heights and drawing near to them in the doldrums with compassion.

Derek Kidner writes of how these last verses "anticipate the great downward and upward sweep of the gospel, which was to go even deeper and higher than the dust and the throne of princes: from the grave to the throne of God (Eph. 2:5f.)" (TOTC)! In Jesus, God goes down lower and takes us up higher than this psalmist could have ever imagined at the time. It's always been who God is, but never before and never again will the world see it with such striking clarity as at the cross! The God who is so high above us is right here with us. He's got us. He loves us. Is life still hard? Yeah. But no matter what you're dealing with, you realize: he's already beaten death for you; he's already suffered judgment for you; he's already secured glory for you. It's going to be okay. More than okay, it's going to be overwhelmingly awesome! And that is why we can, in the closing words of our Psalm, "[p]raise the LORD!" (v. 9).



Reflection Questions

- Is praise for the Lord erupting from your heart these days? Are you his "servant" (v. 1), submitted to him, trusting him, delighting in him? Or are you playing the master? Has there been more grumbling and criticism, demands and discontent than anything else? Why do you think? How might you try to incorporate more praise into your prayers this week?

W
E
L
C
O
M
E

SCAN TO FILL OUT A



CONNECTION CARD

Give online at mercyhillchurch.org/give or text any amount to 84321 and follow the prompts.

Our Mission & Values

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.

FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate presses our church *upwards* in love

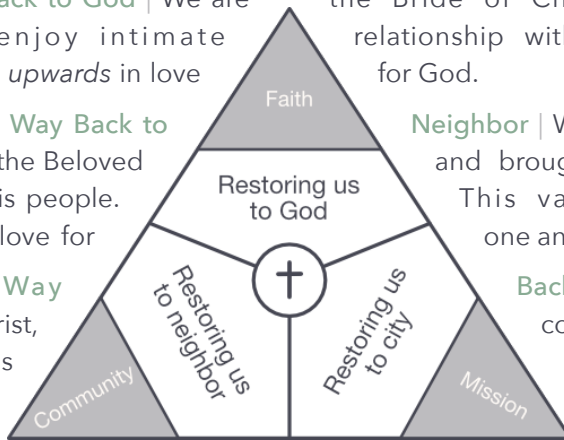
the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value for God.

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. church *inwards* in love for

Neighbor | We are the Family of and brought into covenantal This value presses our one another.

MISSION: The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his value presses our in love for the

Back to City | We are commissioned by the ambassadors. This church *outwards* unbelieving.



Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



Mail: PO Box 23806, San Jose, CA 95153
Phone: (408) 320-7080
Email: info@mercyhillchurch.org
Web: mercyhillchurch.org



Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.
We are so glad you've joined us today!

Announcement Spotlight

Week of Prayer - Kicking Off Today!

The church is always called to be praying and seeking God together, but sometimes it is good to set aside special time to do so. That's what we have made a habit of doing during the first week of every new year. This year the first Sunday in January is the 7th, so our Week of Prayer will span from January 7th to the 14th. We really hope you will dive into this with us. We're excited to see what our God will do!

Scan the QR code below to learn more!

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at info@mercyhillchurch.org.

All Church Hangout - Today!

Short-term Missions Informational Meeting!

All Church Prayer - Tonight!

Perspectives on the World Christian Movement

Curious about Baptism?

Scan the QR code below for more info!

For clickable content and more announcements,



scan this code to head to our Communications Hub!

Or find it online at mercyhillchurch.org/communications-hub.