

## Sermon Guide

July 2, 2017

Psalm 113 is the second text we're exploring this summer as part of our series, *cultivate: communion with God*. This Psalm revolves around the theme of 'praise' or 'worship,' with the goal of summoning us to a life that regularly cultivates worship. Echoes of praise reverberate no less than five times and the entire Psalm is bracketed by the *inclusio*, 'Halleluiah!' As such, this Psalm is appropriately designated as a Psalm of praise. It commences by bidding us to worship with a *call to worship* (113:1-3). The call to worship functions as a means of reminding us who God is, who we are, and what grace is. There are undoubtedly seasons of life when the last thing our hearts are inclined to do is *praise the name of the Lord*. But the call to worship meets us when we're most parched and famished in proper worship by reminding us that the Lord has graciously revealed himself, assures us that we're still his children in Christ even when it seems darkness has become our companion, and thus stirs our affections to find rest in him. The second part of the Psalm – the *cause* to praise (113:4-9) fills out the call to worship by giving us further reason to worship the name of the Lord.

According to the sermon, this Psalm implicitly instructs us to cultivate a life of worship through regularly assessing (1) the nature of worship, (2) when to worship, and (3) the people of worship. First, 'worship' is simply the disposition of everyone's heart. Worship is intuitive in that there is never a time when we're not worshipping, because to worship simply means to ascribe worth to someone or something. But to what thing or person do we ascribe ultimate worth? Second, what gives us the power or reason to worship when our lives are more characterized by the ash heap than by royalty? The single reason and source we have to worship in all circumstances is the gospel truth that Jesus was lifted from the ash heap and crowned Lord of all. Third, this Psalm paints a democratized vision of worship, 'from the place where the sun rises to the place where the sun sets' (113:3). It envisions a remnant from every tongue, tribe, and nation gathering around the throne of God and worshipping together as the people of God.

### Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn from this sermon? Specifically...
  - a. What insights did you learn?
  - b. What questions do you have? Are there any areas you don't understand?
  - c. What areas of your life (be specific) do you sense God wants to change as a result of this passage of Scripture?
2. Do you see any misconceptions of worship in your own theology? Do you see the idols that perhaps occupy the highest object of your worship?
3. When do you find it most difficult to worship? What has helped during those low points?
4. How does the scope of the worshipping community (i.e. every tongue, tribe, and nation) change your approach to worship?