

4.12.22 pm

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Date: 04 December 2022

Preacher: Phil Pickett

[0 : 0 0] Good evening everybody and welcome to our evening service. It's a pleasure to have Phil Pickett with us this evening, who's a minister in training based in Carloway.

He's preached with us before and we welcome him back to our pulpit tonight. A few intimations just to pick out. Elders meet for prayer tomorrow night at 7pm.

The other meetings, as usual, during the week. Just note that on Wednesday evening at the prayer meeting, we'll be joined on Zoom by Reverend Duncan Peters, who is involved in a particular ministry in this country.

So please do come to the meeting here or online if you're unable to attend to hear that. And also highlight that the Mother and Toddlers Gaelic Group meets this week on Thursday from 10 to 11.30.

Just a reminder for folks in that all other meetings are as usual. So these are all intimations and I'll just ask Phil to come and lead us in worship now.

[1 : 0 8] Thank you. Well, if I could add my welcome and say it's good to be with you all.

For those of you I haven't met, my name is Phil and I serve as a minister in training at Carloway Free Church, where I've been this past year. And so, yeah, it's wonderful.

I've been here once before. It's wonderful to be here again and to just keep up that partnership between churches across the Western Isles. Well, the theme for this evening, for our service this evening, is the humility of Christ.

Let me read some words from 2 Corinthians chapter 8. Paul says, For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

And we see one of the places in the Bible that we see Jesus' humility most clearly is in his character as a shepherd. And so we're going to begin by singing a portion of Psalm 23 in Gaelic.

[2 : 1 0] The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. Let's stand and sing as we, or sit, whatever we do as we sing in Gaelic.

Amen. I shall not want.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[4 : 2 6] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[6 : 56] Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
[9 : 26] Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
[11 : 56] Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
[14 : 26] Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 And your cry.
[16 : 56] Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Amen.
[19 : 26] Let's come.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.
[21 : 56] Thank you.
 Thank you.
 May they.
 Thank you.
 Amen.
[24 : 26] Thank you.
 Thank you.
 Thank you.

And you.

Thank you.

[26 : 56] Thank you.

Thank you.

And you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[29 : 56] This psalm.

God's words.

Thank you.

with the land and the seas rejoicing or the last hymn that we're singing as we sing guilty vile and helpless we spotless lamb of god was he full atonement can it be hallelujah what a savior helps to humble our hearts helps us to realize the gravity of our sin and helps us to appreciate the the full forgiveness that christ gives singing is something powerful isn't it so can i encourage you to to sing even if you don't feel like it especially don't you don't when you don't feel like it because psalms like this hymns like that we've been given that are based on truths of scripture are there to help us feel the truths of god's word anyway that was a bit of an aside maybe but um in short our first point though is we praise because god because he's worthy of all praise and in life we praise things that are great don't we when we think something is admirable we think something is great we praise it and we saw an exact example of that a couple of months ago i don't know if you can cast your minds back to not the world cup but the women's euros that happened what was that end of the summer roughly um because it was quite it was quite a major event for the uk for england in particular because it was the first major tournament and that the england's england women's football team had ever won um and i got the numbers and equally historic were the crowds that watched 81 192 people were packed in the wembley stadium for the final um 17.9 million people supported from their living rooms and thousands more fans then gathered in trafilgar skisware for a three-day party why am i saying all this well the crowd size of the crowds was um monumentous because it showed that women's football was being taken seriously that this thing was something that was worthy of praise and i'm sure that if the men come and win the world cup then there'll be a similar size party in a few weeks time well in psalm 113 the psalmist shows that god us that god is worthy to be praised by in some ways showing us the size of the party by showing us the size of the crowd that is singing and praising god let's if you just look with me from verse one this is a party that would clearly break the limits of any um of trafilgar square or stadium because everyone is invited do you notice that um there's there's a u that goes through all of this um we don't have a plural u in english do we i'm not sure maybe we do in gaelic i can find out you guys can tell me afterwards if this was american english though we might read this and say y'all you know y'all praise the lord it's uh everyone praise the lord is the invitation that the psalmist is giving us every person is being called to join in god's praise whether male or female from every nation no one is excluded everyone is invited and god isn't just being praised by christians as the creator of the world he deserves everyone's praise all of the praise of all of his creation well second this isn't just a party for a few days is it it doesn't end notice verse two blessed um let the name of the lord be praised both now and forevermore the psalmist is clearly thinking bigger than just singing a few psalms on a sun and songs on a sunday he's king thinking bigger than even a midweek meeting as well this is a praise that it should last for all time throughout life god is so glorious that he is worthy of unending praise and third this isn't just a party in one place this is over the whole earth look at verse three with me from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets the name of the lord is to be praised now this

could be talking about time again but those who know hebrew better than me um tell me that it's a way of referring to the whole earth every place where the sun's heat touches the ground every nation that the sun goes over all of these people will be praising the lord so we've got all people all time all places it's a big party and that's because of who's at the center of it do you notice the word that's repeated again and again and again praise the lord praise your servants of the lord praise the name of the lord let the name of the lord be praised if we were to be there we could imagine this is like the chant of the crowds the lord the lord the lord that's it's god's name we have the lord in capital letters in our bible in the hebrew it would be yahweh the covenant name of god um the special personal name of god that god gave to his people and said this is the name that you know me by it's personal and it comes with it all the promises that god gave to his people names are loaded with meaning aren't they um if i say noah you say he built the ark if i say hadrian you say he built the wall um if i say liz trust you say who's that um if i say rishi sunak you say he gave two for one free meals back in covet didn't he well if you said yahweh to an israelite um that would bring up so much meaning and they would tell you exactly what he's done they would tell you all about the god who's worthy of praise because of the things that he has done and that's what the psalmist then goes on to tell us exactly what he goes on to tell us in verses four to nine we're on our second point now praise the lord for he's highly exalted and yet stoops down low first the lord is exalted look with me at verse four in your bibles the lord is exalted over all the nations his glory above the heavens who is like the one who is enthroned on high who stoops down low on the heavens and the earth now god isn't a physical being so these verses um are using a metaphor not to tell us god's location but to tell us his status you see ancient kings and rulers and rulers still today they'd show their status by sitting on a throne with many steps so you know if you're a seven step king you know you're pretty you're pretty up there and they do the same with temples that's why you get um big ziggurats um or pyramids that kind of thing like structures and you stick the temple of the god on the top makes your god seem very impressive when some ways the psalmist is taking that kind of language i just say our god's above them all our god is um he rules not just above one nation but over all nations his glory is above the heavens he's exalted he's high up his glory is above everyone god's in charge god rules it's speaking of god's royal power his control his authority over all creation it's what theologians often refer to as god being transcendent above all things and it's something we see from the very first pages of the bible don't we without any effort god just calls creation into existence you ever thought about how how amazing that is nothing but his word of command psalm 33 verse 6 says by the word of the lord the heavens were made by the breath of his mouth all their hosts god just speaks and stuff is one of my favorite passages about god's transcendence is is isaiah 40 in verse 12 it talks about who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand who has marked off the heavens with a span who has enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure who has weighed the mountains in a balance it's a great one to do with you know children's talks you just you can show them

[39 : 27] that god is so big we can we can measure a little liter of water god just scoops up the oceans that's how mighty and awesome and powerful and exalted he is and the lesson we get it there in verse 5 don't we in psalm 113 who is like the lord our god as we contemplate the god who is exalted the conclusion we come to is there's none like him who is like the lord our god and god's transcendence sets him apart from creation it makes him different to us um there's a guy called jim lovell i don't know whether you know that name but he was one of the first three astronauts to fly around and orbit the moon and in an interview he described about how when the earth came into view um as it was coming around um the moon he put his thumb up to the window of the space capsule and he realized that he could cover the whole earth in with his thumb that's how far away it was he realized everything he'd ever known all six billion people on the planet were just covered by his thumb in that minute that's a bit like god's view in verse 6 isn't it god stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth you know isaiah says that compared to god the nations are just like a drop in the bucket a tiny compared to god there's none like him he's highly exalted he's powerful he's the creator we're creatures and that's why he's the one who's worthy of praise but but it doesn't end that there the whole reason we're here is that it doesn't end there because god's transcendence doesn't make him distant from his creation does it that's a deist view of god a view that god a god who creates and then just chucks the world away and lets it do its own thing we have a god the god of the bible is a god who is active in his creation who's involved who gets his hands dirty god's authority and control doesn't mean he's absent but means that he's present in his creation and he's the god who stoops down low we see that in the language just even of him looking down on the heavens and the earth the one who is unbound by space and time pays attention to us pays attention to you and me however little we may feel today however insignificant we may feel i love verses nine to seven to nine especially it really unpacks that he raises the poor from the dust he lifts the needy from the ash heap he seats them with princes with the princes of their people he settles the barren woman in a home as a happy mother of children the god who looks far down is the god who stoops far down low and gets involved in our lives he doesn't just pay attention to major politics or powerful people either all of the things all of the people that are mentioned there are people who are on the lowest rung of society the poor the needy the barren god notices the notices the forgotten people in society you know when you he notices the person that's laying underneath some cardboard box in an old shop front window that we walk past and we don't notice he notices the person who's housebound and at home and it feels like everyone's forgotten them because they can't get out and no one visits i was growing up in nepal and in nepal there's very much a kind of there's a caste system where some people are deemed untouchable and i remember you know walking down the side of the road and you see children picking through a rubbish heap side by side with stray dogs god notices them other people might not other people might shun them god notices them he sees the woman who's barren it says in verse nine the woman who's unable to have children now that

now on its own is a an enormous source of pain you know some societies there's just even added to that a source of shame as if the person has done something wrong i mean isn't it wonderful god sees women i know that we've come a we've come a long way as a society and in in how women are treated but still very often women aren't treated as as valuable as men there's still babies that are cast out in some countries because people would rather have a boy people aren't treated equally and yet god loves men and women equally they're equally precious in his sight isn't that wonderful god sees us but he doesn't just see he acts and that's our third point praise the lord who raises up verses eight to nine aren't just pictures of god looking and noticing people they're pictures of god acting and graciously raising up the lowly and he raises up the poor and needy to to make them princes it's the stuff of bollywood and hollywood of slumdog millionaire and aladdin if you've seen those films but there's something we see god doing all across the bible think of joseph he was in the dungeons of egypt and god raises him up to be pharaoh's right-hand man god takes david the nobody who's watching sheep and makes him the greatest king that israel ever had maybe most iconic of all god takes the people of israel slaves in egypt and he brings them up out of egypt and settles them in the land and says you will be my people and i will be your god in fact that's such a big event that's the focus of the next psalm psalm 114 he lifts up the barren woman and gives her a home that's a theme we see again and again in the bible isn't it think of sarah abraham's wife unable to have children but god promises and god fulfills his promise think of jacob's wife rebecca or you might know the story of hannah the mother of samuel she was um hannah was barren and she was mocked by her husband's other wife i know right and another wife but god then answered her prayer she became the mother of samuel we see that again john the baptist's other again unable to have kids god grants it in some ways you might see say that raising up the lowly in all these kinds of different ways from joseph to um to abraham to whatever raising up the lowly is kind of what god does he's a god that notices he's a god that acts no wonder the psalmist says who is like our god what other god what other celebrity whatever other politician or royalty is so exalted but at the same time so close to us there are there are none the rich and famous rarely mix with poor nobodies like us i mean there might be a somebody here i don't know um you might remember in the summer when um prince william was um went and helped to sell the big issue one day and what happened well the next day he was all across all of the newspapers and headlines and he was going viral because it was just so unheard of well god did far more than that the creator of all things became a creature he took on flesh he became man and you think that kind of thing would be breaking news wouldn't you you think that would come up in the local newspaper or even in the local whatsapp group but it didn't because when jesus was born when god became man and became a baby he was born in a shed he was born out of wedlock but jesus went further still deeper still god humbled himself even more in philippians 2 we read that he humbled himself to the point of death even death on the cross the highest of high really did

become the lowest of low and he didn't do it to promote charity he stooped to raise the lowly not the physically poor primarily we although jesus does give us a picture of what his new creation will be like that it's going to have none of that um no poverty none of the effects of sin in it but primarily jesus came for the spiritually poor you see by nature we're all spiritually bankrupt you know we have nothing good to offer the exalted god you might say that we owe an infinite debt of praise to god because of who he is but actually our hearts are just one big bank full of stolen praise as we don't praise god for who he is but we just focus on ourselves we live our lives ignoring his commands and some of us might feel very aware of that tonight maybe maybe we feel very aware of our spiritual poverty this evening maybe you feel worthless maybe you're aware of the ways in the past week that you've sinned maybe falling once again again and again into the same patterns losing your temper you wish you could take those words back selfishly hurting the people you love whatever you've done whatever you failed to do the good news of the gospel the good news of this passage is that jesus came for you if you're one of those spiritually poor in the sermon of the mount jesus said blessed are the poor of spirit for theirs is the kingdom of god the god who was on high stooped down low to raise up not the rich righteous but those who are poor in spirit i love in romans chapter 5 verse 8 we read god demonstrates his own love for us in this while we were still sinners christ died for us that's who jesus came for spiritually poor sinners like you and me that's a promise that's a promise for you if you recognize your own spiritual poverty well the bible tells us today that christ came for you and you can have assurance that he died in your place however i wouldn't be surprised if there'll be other people here maybe listening online or here in person that that you wouldn't say that that's you because the thing is we all struggle to admit our spiritual poverty you know naturally we're we're actually quite proud we find it hard to admit that we're helpless you know we'll think that oh you know although we might think we need god's help we think we have something to offer we'll look at the past week and we'll think well i know that there are these things that i did but i could have done worse and there are all these things that i could have could have said i chose not to say we kind of rack up points in our mind we think i'm not utterly helpless i mean in some ways just to be blunt if we weren't totally helpless jesus wouldn't have had to die can i just all to be honest with ourselves god sees our heart my hearts are like an empty bank vault full of stolen praise and worship that belongs to him there's nothing worthy there all our good deeds are stained and tarnished by sin but the promise promise promise of the gospel is therefore if we repent and the bible tells us that the exalted king became low for us we only need to ask if jesus takes our sin he pays our debt with his blood shed on the cross more than that one one john verse nine he promises that if we confess our sin he's faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness you see when jesus um takes our sin he also raises us up he cleanses us he forgives us and he credits to our

account his perfect righteousness so that when god looks at us he doesn't look at us in the way that we deserve he doesn't look at us with this the stain of spiritual poverty he looks at us as children as children of god beloved from here by him so why is god worthy of all praise why is he worthy of all praise by all people in all time in all places because jesus christ the exalted god stooped down to die in order to raise up sinners like you and me god is worthy to be praised by all people all time more places and he will be in the very last book of the bible in revelation the apostle john records multiple times um his vision that god gives him of heaven of what of of the new creation and this is what he sees he sees a great multitude that none could number from every nation from all tribes and peoples and languages standing before the throne and they're singing worthy is the lamb who was slain god is worthy to be praised he will be praised by every nation tribe and language the question then is will we join in will we praise him in song we can ask that but more than that will we praise him with our lives will every day of the week every minute of our lives be devoted to him to the god who stooped down for us to raise us up because he's worthy of it let's pray and then we'll close by singing psalm 113 heavenly father we thank you that you are worthy of all praise lord we thank you that you are the god who gave everything for us thank you that you so loved the world that you gave your only son that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life lord we thank you for the forgiveness that is in christ jesus lord we thank you that in christ we have a savior who has walked the road that we are he's taken us in all in order to raise us up to be children of god to give us life in you lord we pray that if there's any here who don't know that life and forgiveness that they would turn to christ lord and we pray that for all of us you'd help us to keep remembering that gospel of salvation lord you'd help us to keep praising you to keep focusing our minds on you and as we do lord that that gospel would encourage us and motivate us to live the life that you ask us to live we pray all this in jesus name amen well we're now going to close by singing psalm 113 i thought um after thinking about it a bit it might be nice to sing it and can i encourage us all to sing our words that encourage us so um we're standing and singing for this one psalm 113 let's stand and sing oh servants of the lord sing praises to his holy name oh blessed be the name of god his praise forever will proclaim from east to west the praise of god each day is to be spread abroad the lord is high above the earth his glory far above the sky who else is like the lord our god the one who sits enthroned on high

he is the one who stoops down low to look on heaven and earth below he raises outcasts from the dust and from the ash he blifts the poor the lord exalting them in dignity with noblemen to sit secure the childless women ill reward with home and children praise the lord let me read a final verse as we stand worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and glory honor and blessing now to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever amen