

SUNDAY'S SOUL SONG - Vol 1, No 47. OT 25. Psalm 113.

“Sing the words and tunes of the *psalms* and hymns when you are together” Ephesians 5:19

Theme: “True Worship Leads To Service”

R. Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.

V1. Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD!

V2. May the name of the LORD be blest
both now and forevermore!

V3. High above all nations is the LORD,
above the heavens his glory.

V5. Who is like the LORD, our God,
who dwells on high,

V6. who lowers himself to look down
upon heaven and earth?

V7. From the dust he lifts up the lowly,
from the ash heap he raises the poor,

V8. to set them in the company of princes,
yes, with the princes of his people.



**The parable of the
shrewd manager
Luke 16:1-13**

Psalm 112/113 is a psalm of praise, probably sung at the beginning of the Passover feast, that focuses on God's regard for the lowly, poor and needy, and those who cannot conceive children. This is a psalm of great contrasts: the exalted transcendent God looks down (is mindful of) and lifts up those who are low (unites with and present to, those in need). If we are to be like Jesus we need to have a 'preferential option for the poor', which is a program of the Kingdom of God. Frederick Buechner, the U.S. biblical spiritual writer and preacher (1926–) says: “The place God calls you to, is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.” Yes, our God hears the cry of the poor. Many people don't hear the cry or don't want too, they are too wrapped up in their own world's selfish agenda.



You may have heard of the children's classic book 'Charlotte's Web' written by American novelist E.B. White. He was a gifted writer, but something not well-known about him, was that he was a hypochondriac and spent most of his life, from the age of 10 on, worrying he would die. Instead, he lived to be 86 years old. At the age of 81, when it finally occurred to him he might not die anytime soon, he bought a canoe, tied it to the top of his car, went on a trip, and finally began enjoying life. But it took him 81 years to realise his situation wasn't as precarious as he'd imagined.

Many people can be like that. They believe that worst is going to happen; or they are not going to handle what today brings them. We can be easily caught up in the fears of life, or the attitudes we choose to adopt. It's not what we face, as much as the way we choose to face it. You may have heard that said, but I'm quite sure it's true. Like the story of the shoe salesman sent to a remote part of his country. On arrival was dismayed because everyone went around barefooted. He reported back to the company: "No prospect for sales. People don't wear shoes." A later salesman went to the same territory. He reported to the home office: "Great potential! People don't wear shoes here!" The God who formed and rules the universe, desires for us to have a positive outlook on life. We who give praise to our God, should also be practical in our giving help to those who are needy (as seen in verses 5&6).



I love this Psalm because it emphasizes that God is high and mighty and yet also stoops to help the lowly. What grace! The whole universe declares God's glory! Yet God stoops low to hear our humble prayers. God meets us at our moment of greatest need. God raises us out of our humble circumstances and introduces us to the riches of divine grace! What a mighty God we serve indeed. It can be difficult to hold these two aspects of God's character in tension. We must never let God's greatness eclipse God's willingness, to meet us where we are - and especially the poor. We must never forget that God has come to us. We must not take God's grace for granted. God has stooped low through the Only-Begotten-Son, so that He might raise us up! He became poor so that we might be rich in so many ways.

We have probably heard the saying? Our attitude has a great deal to do with the outcome of our lives and those we live with. It also affects not only our happiness but the happiness of those in need. A Peanuts cartoon has Lucy, a pessimist in her own right, asking Charlie Brown if he has ever known anyone who is truly happy. Before she can finish her sentence, Snoopy the dog, comes dancing on tiptoe, a beaming smile on his face. He dances his way across two frames of the cartoon strip. Finally, in the last frame, Lucy finishes her sentence: "Have you ever known anybody who was really happy—and was still in his or her right mind?" The program for true happiness can be found in Jesus' Sermon of the Mount as recorded in Matthew's gospel (5:3-10). As the psalm says, God wants us to recognise our dignity and favour (v8).

A careful prayerful reading reveals the psalms similarity in spirit to Hannah's canticle ((1 Samuel 2:1-10) and Mary's 'Magnificat, (Luke 1:46-55). Like Mary, the psalmist exalts in God's greatness, goodness and compassion. In praying this psalm, we need to ready to answer the question in verse 6. Am I prepared to be like "the LORD. Our God" and with humble compassion, and do something for poor and lowly? Worship and service are meant to go together.