

# Exposition on Psalm 113

by St. Augustine

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and the Lord's exaltation, and how He lifts up the humble from the dust and mire to set them with the princes of His people.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 112:1-2, Psalm 112:4, Psalm 112:7, Matthew 19:28, Luke 16:9

**Topics:** "Humility", "Childlike Faith"

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## Description

St. Augustine preaches on the importance of humility and childlike faith in praising the Lord, emphasizing that pride hinders one from entering the kingdom of heaven. He reflects on the exaltation of the humble by God, who lifts them from destitution and sets them among princes, urging believers to embrace humility and not despise being under the Lord's right hand.

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## Transcript

1. ...When ye hear sung in the Psalms, Praise the Lord, you children Psalm 112:1; imagine not that that exhortation pertains not unto you, because having already passed the youth of the body, you are either blooming in the prime of manhood, or growing gray with the honours of old age: for unto all of you the Apostle says, Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice be children, but in understanding be men. What malice in particular, save pride? For it is pride that, presuming in false greatness, suffers not man to walk along the narrow path, and to enter by the narrow gate; but the child easily enters through the narrow entrance; and thus no man, save as a child, enters into the kingdom of heaven. Praise the Name of the Lord....Let Him therefore be always proclaimed: Blessed be the Name of the Lord, from this time forth for evermore Psalm 112:2. Let Him be proclaimed everywhere: From the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same, praise ye the Name of the Lord Psalm 112:3.

2. If any of the holy children who praise the Name of the Lord were to ask of me and say to me, for evermore I understand to mean unto all eternity: but why from this, and why is not the Name of the Lord blessed before this, and before all ages? I will answer the infant, who asks not in contumacy. Unto you it is said, masters and children, unto you it is said, Praise the Name of the Lord; blessed be the Name of the Lord: let the Name of the Lord be blessed, from this, that is, from the moment ye speak these words. For you begin to praise, but praise ye without end....Or, since in this passage he seems to signify rather humility than childhood, the contrary of which is the vain and false greatness of pride; and for this reason none but children praise the Lord, since the proud know not how to praise Him; let old age be childlike, and your childhood like old age; that is, that neither may your wisdom be with pride, nor your humility

without wisdom, that you may praise the Lord from this for evermore. Wherever the Church of Christ is diffused in her childlike saints, Praise ye the Name of the Lord; that is, from the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same.

3. The Lord is high above all heathen Psalm 112:4. The heathen are men: what wonder if the Lord be above all men? They see with their eyes those whom they worship high above themselves to shine in heaven, the sun and moon and stars, creatures which they serve while they neglect the Creator. But not only is the Lord high above all heathen; but His glory also is above the heavens. The heavens look up unto Him above themselves; and the humble have Him together with them, who do not worship the heavens instead of Him, though placed in the flesh beneath the heavens.

4. Who is like the Lord our God, that has His dwelling so high; and yet beholds the humble? Psalm 112:5. Any one would think that He dwells in the lofty heavens, whence He may behold the humble things on earth; but He beholds the humble things that are in heaven and earth Psalm 112:6: what then is His high dwelling, whence He beholds the humble things that are in heaven and earth? Are the humble things He beholds His own high dwelling itself? For He thus exalts the humble, so as not to make them proud. He therefore both dwells in those whom He raises high, and makes them heaven for Himself, that is, His own abode; and by seeing them not proud, but constantly subject to Himself, He beholds even in heaven itself these very humble things, in whom raised on high He dwells. For the Spirit thus speaks through Isaiah: Thus says the Highest that dwells on high, that inhabites eternity; the Lord Most High, dwelling in the holy. He has expounded what He meant by dwelling on high, by the more full expression, dwelling in the holy....

5. And he has moved us also to enquire whether the Lord our God beholds the same humble things in heaven and in earth: or different humble things in heaven to what He beholds on earth....But if the Lord our God beholds other humble things in heaven to what He does on earth; I suppose that He already beholds in heaven those whom He has called, and in whom He dwells; while on earth He beholds those whom He is now calling, that He may dwell in them. For He has the one with Him musing on heavenly things, the others He is waking, while they yet dream things earthly. But since it is difficult to call even those humble, who have not as yet submitted their necks in piety to the gracious yoke of Christ, since the divine writings throughout the whole Psalm warn us to understand holy by the word humble; there is also another interpretation, which, Beloved, you may consider with me. I believe that those are now meant by heavens who shall sit upon twelve thrones, and shall judge with the Lord; Matthew 19:28 and under the name of the earth, the rest of the multitude of the blessed, who shall be set on the right hand, that through works of mercy they may be praised and received into everlasting habitations by those whom they have made friends to themselves from the mammon of unrighteousness in this mortal life. Luke 16:9 ...

6. He takes up the destitute out of the dust, and lifts the poor out of the mire Psalm 112:7; that He may set Him with the princes, even with the princes of His people Psalm 112:8. Let not then the heads of the exalted disdain to be humble, beneath the Lord's right hand. For though the faithful steward of the Lord's money be placed together with the princes of the people of God, although he be destined to sit on the twelve seats, and even to judge angels; Matthew 19:28 yet he is taken up destitute from the dust, and lifted from out of the mire. Was not he possibly lifted up from the mire, who served various lusts and pleasures?...

7. What then, brethren, if we have already heard of those humble things which are in heaven, lifted up from the mire, that they might be set with the princes of the people; have we by consequence heard nothing of the humble things which the Lord beholds on the earth? For those friends who will judge with

their Lord are fewer, while those whom they receive into everlasting habitations are more in number. For although the whole of a heap of grain compared with the separate chaff may seem to contain few in number; yet considered by itself, it is abundant....The Church then speaks thus in that sense, wherein she seems to bear no offspring among those crowds who have not given up all things, that they might follow the Lord, and might sit upon the twelve thrones. Matthew 19:28 But how many in the same crowd, who make unto themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, Luke 16:9 shall stand on the right hand through works of mercy? He not only then lifts up from the mire him whom He is to place with the princes of His people; but also, Makes the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children Psalm 112:9: He who dwells on high, and beholds the humble things that are in heaven and earth, the seed of Abraham like the stars of heaven, holiness set on high in heavenly habitations; and like the sand on the sea shore, a merciful and countless multitude gathered together from the harmful waves, and the bitterness of impiety.

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