

### Cheeseheads

It's football season, and for anyone who watches NFL games on television, it's also time to wonder at a special breed of fan: the Cheeseheads. These are the people who fanatically support the Green Bay Packers. And it is fanatical at times.

I marvel at the lengths Cheeseheads go to - from wearing big fake cheese wedges on their heads (hence the name) to bearing their chests and painting their torsos green and yellow, the team colors. It is really amazing when they do these things in temperatures well below freezing, and then tough it out – bare paint covered torsos and all. Imagine sitting like that through an entire football game played in the Wisconsin winter. And all the while, they cheer on their team.

As believers in Christ, we are called to give praise to God. Does it require funny hats and painted chests? Not from what I've read in the Bible (and for that I give God thanks!). But the Bible does call for praise. Let's spend this week doing two things: looking at what God's word says about praise, and praising God in light of what we have learned.

#### Monday – Servants Praise

*“Just as a servant knows that he must first obey his master in all things, so the surrender to an implicit and unquestionable obedience must become the essential characteristic of our lives.”* Andrew Murray, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> c. South African missionary and author.

1. Please read Psalm 113. According to verses 1-3, who is to praise God? When and where?
2. What does Jesus say about your role as a servant of God in Luke 17:7-10? What is your reaction to this?
3. Now read Luke 1:26-38, 46-55. What did Mary say about herself? About God?

**Making it Personal:** What reasons do you have to give praise to God?

#### Tuesday – God is Higher than His Servants

*“God is not a cosmic bell-boy for whom we can press a button to get things done.”* Harry Emerson Fosdick, 20<sup>th</sup> c. American pastor.

1. Please read Psalm 113. What is God's position according to verse 4?
2. To explore the significance of God's position over all, read Job 40:1-5 and 42:1-3, along with Romans 11:33-36. How would you summarize these passages as they relate to God's character?
3. How does Isaiah 55:8-11 help you understand Psalm 113:4?

**Making it Personal:** What have you learned today about God's thoughts as they relate to your thoughts? In what ways do your own thoughts mislead you? How can you more fully yield to God's thoughts?

#### Wednesday – God Reaches Down to His Servants

*“God desires to be loved by men, although he needs them not; and men refuse to love God, though they need him in an infinite degree.”* Unknown.

1. Please read Psalm 113. What interest does God show in his creation, according to verses 5-6?
2. How do Isaiah 55:6-8 and Psalm 113:5-6 complement one another?
3. Now look at Philippians 2:5-11. Consider how Jesus, God the Son, reached down to us and came near. How has this shed a clearer light on the character of God? How has this led to praise?

**Making it Personal:** Isaiah 55:6 says, “seek the Lord while he may be found.” Have you taken full advantage of this time in which he may be found? Spend some time in prayer about this matter.

#### Thursday – God Raises Up His Servants

*“In the Kingdom of God, service is not a stepping-stone to nobility: it is nobility, the only kind of nobility that is recognized.”* T.W. Manson, 20<sup>th</sup> c. British theologian.

1. Please read Psalm 113. What does God do for the poor and the rich in verses 7-8? What does this say about the heart and character of God? What does it say about the rich and the poor?
2. According to 1 Corinthians 11:17-22, who was humiliating whom? How did the wealthy in Corinth bring displeasure to God in their way of treating those less fortunate (reread Psalm 113:7-8)?

**Prayer Focus:** Pray for God's people, and FBC in particular, that we would give praise to God in the way we treat the less fortunate among us. Pray about your own part in this.

#### Friday – God Fulfills His Servants

*“God alone satisfies.”* Thomas a Kempis, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> c. German monk.

1. Please read Psalm 113. What comes to mind as you read verse 9?

**Text Insight:** A woman who was physically unable to have children (barren) would be seen as having failed her husband and people. This was a major source of disgrace in a culture that required children for survival.

2. What does Isaiah 55:1-3 say to those who are in need?
3. In light of Psalm 113:9 and Matthew 4:1-4, what do you think about God's ability to satisfy our hungry hearts?

**Making it Personal:** To whom are you looking for satisfaction in life. Where are you going to have your needs met? Take time to praise God for all he has done for you and all he is able to do.

**For the Weekend:** Read Psalm 40. What principles from Psalm 113 do you find at work there?