

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

“CONFIDENCE: OUR GOD REIGNS”

For individual study or discussion

DATE: July 13, 2025

SPEAKER: Chad/Wil

SERIES: Summer in the Psalms

PASSAGE: Psalm 115

Family Dinner Table

God Is Not Silent

*excerpted from “The Eloquence of Silence”
by Carl Trueman*

One of the distinguishing marks of God as he reveals himself in Scripture is that he is a God who speaks. He is a God who is not silent. Silence is the default position of those gods that are no gods. It is the speech of idols and it is ultimately the speech of idolators too. There is a story told by one of the followers of Michel Foucault, the brilliant French post-structuralist thinker, that as Foucault lay dying of AIDS in 1984, he declared that he had always assumed that, at such a moment of crisis there would be something to say. But now that he was at such a moment, he discovered there was nothing to say after all. Foucault had devoted his life to extremes, particularly in the sexual realm. He was a man who, from a Christian perspective, one could say truly reveled in idolatry. Those who read his works cannot help but come away with the impression that this was a man who worshiped power, who had devoted himself to the pursuit of gods that are no gods. Here, as he lay dying, the silence of his gods was eloquent, forcing him to face up to the ultimate nihilism of his own philosophy and the awesome void on whose edge he then stood: *‘Those who make them become like them’ (v. 8).*”

- Augustine maintained that we are defined by what we love. Our loves govern our actions and pursuits. What do you love? What brings meaning to your life? Take time to identify the idols in your life this week.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

On Point, supported partner ministry

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Bev and Andy Warren, supported missionary partners

Psalm 115 is one of the “*Hallel*” psalms (113–118) that the Jews sang during Passover. The frequently used expression “*hallelujah*” meaning “*praise the Lord*” is a derivative of the Hebrew “*hallel*.” Psalm 115 highlights the desire for God to be glorified among the nations, emphasizing his superiority over the lifeless idols while urging Israel (and us) to have confidence that our God reigns.

Because of God’s consistent, loving faithfulness, believers respond by reminding ourselves of God’s supremacy. (vv. 1–3)

Psalm 115 begins with a proclamation of seeking God’s glory rather than one’s own. Israel calls upon God’s steadfast love and faithfulness (*hesed*) as they seek vindication from the nations who mock, “*Where is their God?*” As the church today seeks to maintain its faith in an ever increasingly hostile world, one commentator offers Psalm 115 as an encouragement: “*When the question, ‘Where is their God?’ troubles the church, Psalm 115 gives us a song to sing.*”¹

- Read Exodus 9:16. Why did God display his signs and wonders in Egypt?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 2:4–6. According to Paul, what should be the motivation of our daily lives?
- According to Isaiah 42:8 and 48:9–11, why does God refuse to yield his glory to people or his praise to idols?

Because of God’s consistent, loving faithfulness, believers respond by rejecting the foolishness of idols. (vv. 4–8)

Verses 4–8 remind us that we are what we worship. How we live our lives declares what we are worshipping. In *You Are What You Love*, James K. A. Smith argues that humans were made for worship. Consciously or not, every human directs their devotion toward something they regard as ultimate: “*You are what you love because you live toward what you want.*”²

- Psalm 115 begins by contrasting the superiority of the sovereign God over idols. Read Exodus 20:1–6. What similar themes do you encounter between Psalm 115:1–8 and Exodus 20:1–6?
- What are the consequences of following after idols? (cf. Isaiah 44:9–20, Romans 1:21–25, Jeremiah 2:11–13, Galatians 4:8–9, and 1 Corinthians 10:14–22)
- Read Romans 8:29. When we commit ourselves to God, who will we ultimately look like?

Because of God’s consistent, loving faithfulness, believers respond by relying on God’s faithful care. (vv. 9–18)

The psalmist now shifts from exposing the emptiness of worthless idols to inviting the reader to trust in the living God who alone is worthy of our worship. “*He is their help and their shield*” (v. 9). The psalmist reminds us that God is greater than our circumstances. His protection will be a “*shield*” against the attacks of the enemy (Ephesians 6:16), and all who trust him will be blessed, “*both the small and the great*” (cf. Revelation 11:18, 19:5 and Luke 1:52).

- Why do you think “*trust in the Lord*” is repeated three times in Psalm 115:9–11? What sort of situations can make us turn away from trusting in the Lord? When we aren’t trusting in the Lord, who or what do we trust in?
- Why do you think “*he will bless*” is repeated four times in Psalm 115:12–13? How is this a contrast to those who worship idols? What should be our response to God’s blessings? (v. 18)

¹ Ash, Christopher. *The Psalms: A Christ-Centered Commentary, Volume 3*. 2024, Wheaton, IL. Crossway.

² Smith, James K.A. *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. 2016, Grand Rapids. Brazos Press. 23

³ Trueman, Carl. *The Eloquence of Silence*. The Gospel Coalition. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/the-eloquence-of-silence>