

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE -

12.15.2024

PSALM 133 - THE BLESSING OF BROTHERHOOD

I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 133:1-3

1 Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity!

2 It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard,

on the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes!

3 It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion!

For there the Lord has commanded the blessing,
life forevermore.

- Ps 133 is one of the Songs of Ascents, these were songs pilgrims sang as they made their journey to Jerusalem for one of the annual feasts.
- As we studied in Psalm 122, the psalmist marveled at the unity and diversity of the worshipers that were present in Jerusalem. Representatives from all of the tribes of the Lord were there with a united purpose, to worship God and give thanks to him.
- This psalm is not a mere reflection of that unity but an expression of rejoicing in the blessing that God bestows on his people who dwell in unity.
- The psalm indicates that its author is David.
- We know from Scripture how much David loved to worship the Lord.
- We can imagine David writing this song to describe the kind of unity he witnessed as God's people would come from all over the kingdom, from every tribe, to worship and honor the Lord.

- Unity is essential for followers of Jesus, it is essential for true worship, it is essential for a body of believers who constitute a local church.

- We have many passages in Scripture exhorting us to spiritual unity with other followers of Christ.
- How miserable it is when there is conflict among brothers, when there is discord, when there is division and disunity among those who are one in Christ.
- David was no stranger to conflict in relationships and disunity. He experienced this first hand.
- What's amazing is that David didn't allow the hurt he experienced from those who were considered part of God's people to keep him from worshiping the Lord.
- He sings about the kind of unity he sees and how God blesses his people when they dwell in unity.
- I want you to see today the beautiful picture presented to us of the blessing of brotherhood.
- The kind of unity that we can experience now and that we will one day experience in complete fullness.

II. THE EXCELLENCY OF BROTHERHOOD

- “Behold...” this is a summons to attention, an invitation to fix our mind on what is to follow, to see something amazing or something that tends to be ignored.
- In this instance, what we are invited to see and pay attention to, is the excellency of the brotherhood of believers who dwell in unity.
- David employs two adjectives to describe the excellency of brotherhood: good and pleasant.
- In Gen 1, God declares everything that he has made as good.
- In Gen 2, God declared something that was not good; “It is not good that the man should be alone...”
- We were made for community.
- Sin destroyed that perfect communion that was enjoyed in the garden.
- But in Christ, something remarkable happens.
- We are united to Christ. We become part of the people of God, his family.
- We come from diverse backgrounds with many reasons why we shouldn't even be together—but—here we are, gathered for worship.
- Why? Because God has made us one in Christ!
- David describes the unity of the brotherhood of believers as good—objectively good.
- And he describes it as pleasant, delightful.
- There is something so absolutely beautiful about true unity experienced among brothers and sisters in Christ.
- There is a type of unity that can be experienced in places outside of the church.
- But notice, David is expressly talking about when “brothers dwell in unity.”
- This is about those who are in a covenant relationship with the Lord. It is a spiritual brotherhood.
- Unity is about togetherness. When that is experienced by the people of God it is so very good and pleasant.
- Unfortunately, we are sinners. And unity can easily be fractured by sinful behavior and selfishness.
- We must always be on guard against things that can disrupt unity, things like gossip, envy, slander, and backbiting.
- We also have an enemy who would like nothing better than to see brothers and sisters in disunity and discord.
- We must zealously safeguard and preserve unity in the church.

- Jesus prayed for our oneness, he prayed that his people would be one (John 17:20-21).
- Paul urges God's people to maintain this oneness, this unity.
- Ephesians 4:1-6 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- We are called to maintain unity because we are one in him!
- Paul appeals to the church at Corinth be united, to preserve unity.
- 1 Corinthians 1:10-11 I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.
- Unity requires us to lay aside our personal preferences and our own desires, for the sake of our brothers and sisters.
- Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
- The unity of the brotherhood of believers is something special.
- It's something we should fight to preserve.

III. THE ESSENCE OF BROTHERHOOD

- David employs two similes to describe the essence of brotherhood.
- He paints two pictures for us that help us understand exactly what it is about the people of God dwelling in unity that is so very good and pleasant.
- The first simile, the first illustration of the anointing oil running down Aaron's head, down to his beard and on to his robes.
- The second illustration is the dew from Mt. Hermon falling down on the mountains of Zion.

1. UNITY AMONG BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST IS SACRED

- "It is like the precious oil..." This is the oil that was used to consecrate and anoint Aaron, the High Priest, for service.
- The Lord gave Moses the recipe for making this oil (Exodus 30:22-33).
- This oil was sacred.
- Spiritual unity is sacred. It is holy. That's what David is saying with this picture.
- That is why it is not to be taken lightly. That is why we must do everything we can to preserve it.
- The oil was strongly fragrant. When it was applied for anointing, the temple would be filled with this pleasing, delightful aroma of the holy anointing oil.
- Unity is like that, it is a pleasing aroma.
- Unity makes the church smell good and pleasing.
- You can easily determine whether a church is experiencing unity or disunity, it's in the air. You can smell it.
- Unity is like a fragrant aroma that covers our sinful inclinations towards disunity and disagreements.

- Here's an example of unity in action, a pleasing fragrance in the church, an example of the sacredness of spiritual unity.
- 1 Peter 4:8-11 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- Authentic unity in the church is attractive, inviting, compelling, good and pleasant.
- And it truly cannot be found anywhere else but among the people of God.

2. UNITY AMONG BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST COMES FROM ABOVE

- Take note of a particular verb that is repeated three times in this psalm: “running down” which we see twice, and “falls” in v3. It is the same verb.
 - When Aaron was anointed, the oil was poured out on his head. And it would run down from the top of his head, down his beard, and it ran down the collar of his robes.
 - In the second picture, David describes the dew on Hermon which falls on the mountains of Zion.
 - Hermon was the highest mountain in the holy land, about 100 miles or so north of Jerusalem/Zion, with an elevation of over 9,000 ft and with snow-capped peaks.
 - The plains around Mt. Hermon are dry and arid. When the snowcaps thaw, the water flows down to the land and feeds the Jordan River.
 - This “dew” would make its way to Jerusalem/Zion over a 100 miles away, bringing life-giving water.
 - The point David is making is that spiritual unity among the people of God is poured out from above.
 - It comes down from God upon the people of God.
 - That poured out unity refreshes those who are in union with Christ and in unity with one another.
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- Our unity in Christ reflects the unity that exists in the Triune-God.
 - Our unity is brought about by the work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 - God the Father willed our unity from before the foundations of the world.
 - God the Son purchased our unity through his saving work, he is the greater High Priest.
 - God the Spirit produces and enables unity in the people of God.
 - When we dwell in spiritual unity, we are experiencing the gift given to us from our God.

IV. THE EDICT OF BROTHERHOOD

- This short psalm closes with a benediction.
- “For there...” "There" is Zion, it is where the people of God are. It is the church of Jesus Christ.
- The edict pronounced here is that “there,” where God’s people are dwelling in unity, God commands the blessing.
- If you’re not “there” then you don’t get this blessing.
- The blessing he commands of life forevermore is in the assembly of the people of God.

- What a profound blessing we have in the church of Jesus Christ.
- This is where true life is found, amongst the oneness the people of God enjoy in communion with God and in communion with one another.
- The cross of Jesus Christ is the great equalizer.
- Galatians 3:27-28 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- Because we are one in Christ Jesus there should not be any disunity among us.
- We know, perfect unity will not come until the world is remade. Sin keeps us from experiencing the true unity we have in Christ in all its fullness.
- But we know it will be fully realized on that Day.
- Until then, let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- Let's strive and labor to preserve the precious unity that we have in our body and seek to strengthen it.
- Let's be a church where radical forgiveness and grace flows freely, where we cover one another, speak well of one another, pray for one another and love one another deeply.
- Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, for the glory of God and the good of his church.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?