

Summer In The Psalms II - #5 – Unity

Psalm 133

Our “Summer In The Psalms” leads us to another “*Song of Degrees*”, or “*Song of Assents*”, depending on your translation. The children of Israel sang this Psalm going to and coming from the feasts at Jerusalem throughout the year.

As Psalms are intended to do, this selection from the *Playlist for the Soul* resonates from the heart of God to the hearts of His people.

It is unique for several reasons:

- It is **short**. (No promise that the sermon will be short also!)
- There is **no** conflict, fear, frustration, suffering.
- There is simply singing in **the wondrous rapture of something joyous:**

Unity.

Why is it so special? **Worthy of an entire Psalm?**

Why is it so unusual: rarely addressed, never commanded, yet commended as glorious by our God?

I. The Divine Invitation: vs. 1

A. ***“Behold”***

Pay attention. Stop and stare. Gaze upon this!

B. ***“How good and how pleasant”***

Double exclamations of something special.

So, we’re invited by God to something – extraordinary!

II. The Delightful Idea. Vs. 1

A. The intended recipients. (B. Incredible reality C. Illustrations)

1. ***“for brethren”***

This was **not speaking of nor intended for the masses.**

This truth was **focused on and only possible for “brethren”.**

- Those in the family.
- Those in the tribe.
- Those of the house of Israel.

The New Testament parallel: This truth is

- Not for all people
- Not even for all the saved. That is an unknown element.

This was directed at the known – *those dwelling together*.
The New Testament parallel is church family.

2. *“dwell”* - David further defines the context and intent.

“Dwell” - This is not a casual passing on the street or market place.
“to dwell” is *to spend time; to live with;*

- Israel.
- Today. How we “dwell” says a lot about us!

One of the real tests of who we are, and even more important, whose we are, is the way we treat those we spend the most time with.

When something supernatural can elevate us to a place beyond our preferences, our personal default need for the world to revolve around us, even our ability to look beyond annoying habits and ways, the stage is set for something amazing.

Something described as *“how good and how pleasant”*.

The New Testament gives us glimpses of the kind of unity the Psalmist sings of:

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35

B. The incredible reality: *“together in unity”* – One Hebrew Word. Our subject!

1. Negatively - *“Unity”* is...

- **More than being nice; demonstrating the love of Christ to everyone.** That is understood and part of our calling, **but it is not “unity”.**
- **More than getting along; being peaceful as opposed to warlike, judgmental or divisive.** Paul gives us a sense of this in Romans 12
*18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, **live peaceably with all men.***
But that is not unity.

UNITY IS NOT a goal to be chased, but a consequence to be cherished.

Unity is NOT “Peace” at any cost. Unity at the cost of right and good and godliness is simply defeat in disguise.

Patrick Henry, as the future of our nation was being discussed, persuasively argued,

*What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or **peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?** Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death! - Patrick Henry (March 23, 1775)*

Old Testament and New, God demands holiness & righteousness. Standing for Him. Fighting the things of darkness.

Solomon, future king, the son of David, wisest man on the earth, wrote in Proverbs 6:

*16. These **six things doth the LORD hate:** yea, seven are an abomination unto him:*

*17. **A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,***

*18. **An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,***

*19. **A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.***

There are things God hates. There are things we are to fight against. Unity is not the *ultimate* goal. Godliness is. Obedience is.

Yet,

- In our text, **brethren dwelling in unity is a wondrous condition worthy of an eternal song.**
- **Jesus – the night before He was crucified, prayed** (John 17)
 - 11. *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. **Holy Father,** keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are. [unity]***
 - 21. ***That they all may be one; [unity] as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.***
 - 22. *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; **that they may be one, even as we are one:***
 - 23. *I in them, and thou in me, **that they may be made perfect in one [unity]; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.***

Unity is possible, beautiful, powerful. Jesus prayed for us to experience it!

2. “Unity” means “in union, together, one”

Beyond explanation, the Psalmist invokes...

C. Two Illustrations.

2 Similes. Illustrations largely lost on us because we are not of their world. Pictures instantly visible in the minds and hearts of those who sang! The allusions were not just a statement of historical facts triggers to draw them into something sacred. Something rare and special.

1. Vs. 2 – “Like the precious ointment...”

Explain the special anointing of Aaron.

Special, specific essential holy oils.

They had seen. Smelled. Experienced with it the sacred awareness of God Himself. Joy.

2. Vs. 3 – “**As the dew of Hermon... that descended upon the mountains of Zion**”

Mt. Hermon is frequently mentioned in the Bible and is the traditional site of the Transfiguration. It was **the highest mountain**, serving as the definitive northern boundary of the Promised Land.

But here's the reference:

Mt Hermon was so situated that in the hot Mediterranean climate, that it would respond to nature's elements and “send” refreshing, heaven-sent dew.

The famous “mist” would descend upon Jerusalem and Zion. It would bring life. Refreshment. Pure delight.

These delights - rare, special, and even sacred - were *but glimpses* of the wonder of experiencing God given unity.

Every time they sang, they were reminded and drawn again...

Fast forwarding to our world, today –

Psalm 133 is here not just as an historical lesson, but a heavenly leading to something now. *Delightful. Possible. Powerful.*

- How?
- What can we do to set the stage for us *to experience God's intentions of delightful unity?*

III. Insights.

A. A Regular Reminder

They were to make several trips a year. **Over and over they were to sing and be reminded** of this special possibility.

B. A Heavenly Hint: Both illustrations share a simple, common truth:

The delights flowed down...

- **The fragrant anointing oil** was poured upon the head of Aaran. It flowed down... dripped from his beard... drenched his garments... dropped to the floor. ***Released the fragrance that filled the air!***

- **The dew descended from the giant mountain to those below...** Far and wide... The results would ripple beyond to a parched land and people needing the heaven- sent delight.

Psalm 133 isn't primarily about people. **It's about God.**

- The oil never climbs upward.
- The dew doesn't rise from the valley.

Unity isn't something we climb high enough to acquire. It's something that flows from God! Something God makes possible.

Our delightful blessing begins at the "top".

I love the words of James, the half-brother of Jesus, in James 1

17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth

- **Life. Love. Light. Delight. Joy.**
- **The capacity to become a new creation.**

It all begins with a personal relationship by trusting Jesus as our Savior. God, and all God can do, becomes real to us in Him!

C. Inclusion:

In order to dwell with the brethren with the possibility of experiencing a wondrous, God given delight – **unity – the answer to Jesus' prayer – we must be a part of the "brethren".**

For us, simply, that is not only being a part of the family of God but choosing to be a part of tangible, touchable family – His church.

D. Finally: A simple key to keep us on track:

The only way we can have divine unity is through His working in each of us.

Paul to the church at Ephesus:

Ephesians 4

2. *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*
3. **Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**
4. *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*
5. *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*
6. *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, **and in you all.***
7. But **unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.**

Ephesians 5

16. **Redeeming the time**, *because the days are evil.*
17. *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding **what the will of the Lord is.***
18. *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but **be filled with the Spirit;***
19. **Speaking to yourselves in psalms** [Maybe **Psalm 133?!!!**] *and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*
20. *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*
21. **Submitting yourselves one to another** *in the fear of God.*

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

Unity is not a goal to be chased, but a consequence to be cherished.

When Christ is lifted higher than our preferences... when His Spirit is welcomed more than our opinions... when His glory matters more than our comfort... unity quietly appears.

- It flows from Him.
- It comes when we know the Lord, surrender our will to His, and love and serve Him and others.