

133. THE BLESSING AND BENEFIT OF CHRISTIAN LOVE: Psalm 133

INTRODUCTION. How does it make you feel to go to church?

CON(TEXT). *A Song of Ascents. Of David.*

Psalm 133

"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."

DOCTRINE. Christian love and unity is good, pleasant, and a foretaste of heaven.

OUTLINE. I want to ask and answer five questions to study and apply this Psalm.

I. WHAT IS CHRISTIAN LOVE?

1 Corinthians 13:3-5 "4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

– **BOYS AND GIRLS**, [rehash].

USE FOR EXAMINATION

II. WHAT IS CHRISTIAN LOVE LIKE?

**I) CHRISTIAN LOVE IS A SIGN OF GOD'S BLESSING AND POWER—
LIKE OIL POURED ON THE HIGH PRIEST (Psalm 133:2).**

Psalm 133:2

"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!"

II) CHRISTIAN LOVE IS PLEASANT—LIKE A WONDERFUL SMELL THAT GIVES YOU INSTANT DELIGHT (Psalm 133:2).

Psalm 133:2

"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!"

- Freshly roasted coffee beans or a poured cup of coffee in the morning.
- A good candle.
- Freshly baked bread or cookies.
- Freshly cut watermelon.
- **BOYS AND GIRLS**, Christian love and unity is like a sweet smell that makes you close your eyes and just enjoy it.

III) CHRISTIAN LOVE IS REFRESHING—LIKE DEW WHICH GIVES LIFE TO THE LAND (Psalm 133:3a).

Psalm 133:3a

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

IV) CHRISTIAN LOVE IS LIFE—LIKE ETERNAL LIFE WHICH CHRIST GIVES (Psalm 133:3b).

"For there the LORD has commanded the blessing,
life forevermore."

III. WHAT IS CHRISTIAN LOVE FOUNDED UPON?

I) THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN LOVE AND UNITY IS THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S GRACE (Psalm 133:1).

Psalm 133

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

[USE FOR EXAMINATION]

Christian love and unity is *not* founded upon:

- The opinions of men,

the traditions of men,
the preferences of men,
the hobbies of men,
the age of men,
nor upon the convictions of men concerning tertiary positions.

[USE FOR COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT]

Christian love and unity is founded upon the fact that we are blood-bought believers who have been adopted into God's family and filled by God's Spirit through Jesus Christ!

IV. WHAT ARE SOME HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIAN LOVE?

William Bridge has a helpful sermon on Psalm 133:1, and in it he shows five hindrances to Christian unity and love.

I) Pride is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity.

- **BRIDGE:** "A proud man is much given to contention. . . ."
 - **PROBLEM. 1 Timothy 6:4-5** "4 he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth."
 - **ANSWER. Romans 12:3,16-18** "3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. . . 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."

II) Passion [*anger or lack of self-control*] is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity.

- **BRIDGE:** "For though a man dislikes and is sorry for what he has done is his passion when it is over; and though he hoes in his passion be one thing, and what he does in his serious consideration is another thing; yet we are to take great heed of passion. . . ."
 - **PROBLEM. Proverbs 15:18** "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention." **Proverbs 25:28** "A man

without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls."

- **ANSWER. Ephesians 4:1-3** "1 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."

III) Strangeness is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity.

- **BRIDGE:** "Strangeness ends in enmity. When brethren and friends grow strangers one to another, then they surmise things one of another, and that destroys love and unity. . . ."
- **PROBLEM.** [Bridge's wisdom]
- **ANSWER. Acts 2:42** "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

IV) Designing / Plotting is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity.

- **BRIDGE:** "True love knows no designs upon others. No man can endure to have designs laid against him. Designing causes anger, enmity, and hatred, and hinders true love one toward another. . . ."
- **PROBLEM. Proverbs 16:27** "A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire."
- **ANSWER. Romans 15:2** "Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up."

V) Whispering is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity.

- **BRIDGE:** "But now if any one should come to me and tell me any thing against a brother, I would not believe the whisperer till I had spoken with the other; for a cause can never be truly known nor judged of, till both parties have been heard speak. . . ."
- **PROBLEM. Proverbs 16:28** "A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends."
- **ANSWER. Ephesians 4:25** "Having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another."

USE FOR WARNING / AWAKENING

- **SUMMARY:** "Thus you may see the five things that hinder love, that is,

pride, passion, strangeness, designing one upon another, and hearkening unto whisperers. Now as you desire to live in love and unity, observe these things, and take heed of them."

— William Bridge, *The Works of William Bridge, Soli Deo Gloria, Vol. 2, Pg. 441-442*

V. WHAT ARE SOME SHIELDS TO GUARD CHRISTIAN LOVE?

Turn with me to **Philippians 4:1-3**, and let me show you four truths to guard Christian love and unity.

I. ONE SHIELD TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN UNITY IS BY REMEMBERING THE GENUINE AFFECTION WE HAVE FOR THE SAINTS (Philippians 4:1).

Philippians 4:1 "Therefore, my brothers, *whom I love and long for*, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my *beloved*."

II. ANOTHER SHIELD TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN UNITY IS REMEMBERING THAT

WE ALL HAVE THE SAME LORD (Philippians 4:2).

Philippians 4:2 "I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord."

III. YET ANOTHER SHEILD TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN UNITY IS REMEMBERING THAT

WE ARE LABORING SIDE BY SIDE IN THE GOSPEL (Philippians 4:3a).

Philippians 4:3a "Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers,"

IV. ANOTHER SHEILD TO PROTECT CHRISTIAN UNITY IS REMEMBERING THAT **OUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN RIGHT NEXT TO ONE ANOTHER'S IN THE BOOK OF LIFE** (Philippians 4:3b).

Philippians 4:3b "whose names are in the book of life."

Q. Can you see the book of life? All who have ever been, are now, or ever will be united to Jesus are written there. Think about that book, that says, "Brett Anthony Baggett" and then read your name right next to mine. The next time you disagree with someone who belongs to Jesus, think about your name written right beside theirs.

It is the same Father who unconditionally chose you and adopted you.

It is the same blood of Christ that cleanses you from sin.

It is the same Spirit that raised you from your deadness in sin and gave you the gift of faith in Christ.

It was with the same heavenly pen with which your names were written in the book of life.

RQ. Can you bicker with fellow saints while your eyes are fixed on the Savior?

CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS.

I) KEEP STRIVING SIDE BY SIDE FOR THE GOSPEL.

- **Philippians 1:27** "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel. . ."

II) WALK IN HUMILITY, GENTLENESS, PATIENCE, BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE, EAGER TO MAINTAIN UNITY.

- **Ephesians 4:1-3** "1 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."

III) REMEMBER OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER IS A TESTAMENT TO OUR BELONGING TO CHRIST.

- **John 13:35** "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

IV) LOVE ONE ANOTHER MORE AND MORE.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:9-10** "9 Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, 10 for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more. . ."

V) REMEMBER, CHRIST PRAYED FOR OUR UNITY AND LOVE.

- **John 17:20-23** "20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who

will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."

TEXT WORK

Psalm 133 - A Song of Ascents - Of David

1 Behold, how good and pleasant it is—

hinne^{int.} mā^{adj.} tob^{conj.} nā^{adj.} im
 Look! See! agreeable precious delightful lovely
 when brothers dwell in unity!
 ★ Christian★ Stay Together
 (remain abide)

2 It is like the precious oil on the head,

tōb^{adj.} 'al^{prep.} rō's^{det.}
 Good for anointing
 yārad^{verb} running down on the beard,
 zāqān^{det.}

on the beard of Aaron,
 ★ High Priest★

running down on the collar of his robes!
 pē^{prep.} midā^{det.}
 edge ★ High Priests garments★

3 It is like the dew of Hermon,
 tal^{prep.} hermōn

★ as covering vegetation★ Lit. "A sanctuary!"
 A mountain on the Northeastern border of Palestine and Lebanon and overlooking the border city of Dan.
 (Also called Sirion (Deu. 3:9) Also called "Sion" (Deu. 4:48))
 ★ Can simply mean "The summit of a Mountain"★

which falls on the mountains of Zion!
 yārad^{verb} hrār^{prep.} sīgōn^{det.}
 rel. part. Jerusalem★

Where God's presence dwells; i.e. The Church

For there the Lord has commanded the blessing,
 Conj. adv. saūā^{verb} det. Gift

hay^{prep.} life forevermore.
 Forever

prosperity
 Treaty of Peace

USES / POINTS OF APPLICATION

✔ *USE FOR COMFORT / ENCOURAGEMENT*

✔ *USE FOR EXAMINATION / TRIAL*

✔ *USE FOR EXHORTATION / DIRECTION*

✔ *USE FOR INSTRUCTION / DOCTRINE*

✔ *USE FOR WARNING / AWAKENING*

HELPS

- **133:1, Psalm** - William Bridge - The Freeness of the Grace and Love of God to Believers Discovered (5) - The Works of William Bridge, Soli Deo Gloria (HB) vol. 2, pg. 432 - [https://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Bridge,%20William/Works%20\(vol.2\)%20Ind%20Titles/\[WB\]%20The%20Freeness%20of%20Grace%20and%20Love%20of%20God%20\(part%205\).pdf](https://www.digitalpuritan.net/Digital%20Puritan%20Resources/Bridge,%20William/Works%20(vol.2)%20Ind%20Titles/[WB]%20The%20Freeness%20of%20Grace%20and%20Love%20of%20God%20(part%205).pdf)
 - — **Baggett, Brett. A Scripture Index of Puritan Sermons: Along with some Scottish Covenanters, American Puritans, and a few of their Spiritual Descendants (1558-1770) (p. 137).**
- **John Piper text work v1** - Unity Is the Church's Perfume: Psalm 133:1 [SearchInfoShoppingTap to unmute2xIf playback doesn't begin shortly, try restarting your device. • Up nextLiveUpcomingCancelPlay NowShareInclude playlistAn error occurred while retrieving sharing information. Please try again later.Watch laterShareCopy link](#)
- **John Piper text work v2** - Christian Unity Is a Precious Gift: Psalm 133:2 [SearchInfoShoppingTap to unmute2xIf playback doesn't begin shortly, try restarting your device. • Up nextLiveUpcomingCancelPlay NowShareInclude playlistAn error occurred while retrieving sharing information. Please try again later.Watch laterShareCopy link](#)
- **John Piper text work v3** - Don't Rebuild Walls Christ Tore Down: Psalm 133:3 [SearchInfoShoppingTap to unmute2xIf playback doesn't begin shortly, try restarting your device. • \[Music\]this is our third and last](#)

[session onUp nextLiveUpcomingCancelPlay NowShareInclude playlistAn error occurred while retrieving sharing information. Please try again later.Watch laterShareCopy link](#)

QUOTES

PSALM 133

BROOKS: "'Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!' (Psalm 133:1). It is not *good and not pleasant*, or *pleasant and not good*, but *good and pleasant*. There be some things that be *bona sed non jucunda*, good and not pleasant, as patience and discipline; and there be some things that are pleasant but not good, as carnal pleasures, voluptuousness, etc. And there are some things that are neither good nor pleasant, as malice, envy, worldly sorrow, etc. ; and there are some things that are both good and pleasant, as piety, charity, peace, and union among brethren; and oh! that we could see more of this among those that shall one day meet in their Father's kingdom and never part. And as they are brethren, so they are all fellow-members: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Corinthians 12:27). And again: 'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:30). Shall the members of the natural body be serviceable and useful to one another, and shall the members of this spiritual body cut and destroy one another? Is it against the law of nature for the natural members to cut and slash one another? And is it not much more against the law of nature and of grace for the members of Christ's glorious body to do so? And as you are all fellow members, so you are fellow-soldiers under the same captain of salvation, the Lord Jesus, lighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And as you are all fellow-soldiers, so you are all fellow-sufferers under the same enemies, the devil and the world. And as you are all fellow-sufferers, so are you fellow-travellers towards the land of Canaan, 'the new Jerusalem that is above? 'Here we have no abiding city, but we look for one to come.' The heirs of heaven are strangers on earth. And as you are all fellow-travellers, so are you all fellow-heirs of the same crown and inheritance." — **Thomas Brooks - The Works of Thomas Brooks (Banner of Truth), Vol 1, pg. 132**

JEREMIAH BURROUGHS:

Heaven's Taste

Jeremiah Burroughs

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.

Psalm 133:1-2

The church is
not only a
company with
which we shall
live in heaven
hereafter, but it is
heaven now.

It is a taste of heaven already to join with the people of God in communion. The Scripture calls the church of God and church communion heaven. In Isa. 65:17 we find a promise of God to restore His church and recover it from misery. It says, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." In Rev. 21 where the vision of the restoring of the Church was shown to John, it was shown also in that way. There was a new heaven, and a new earth. The church of God is heaven. It is not only a company with which we shall live in heaven hereafter, but it is heaven now, and therefore our Savior says that the least in the kingdom of heaven shall be greater than John. . . . The kingdom of heaven is like a man sowing his field with wheat. In other words, the church is a field sown with wheat. After the wheat is sown, the adversary sows tares in it. Chrysostom says in one of his sermons on the Corinthians, "The Church is the place of angels, the palace of heaven, yes heaven itself." If it is that communion with God's people is heaven already, surely it is worth the enduring of much affliction to be with them.

— Day By Day with the English Puritans, August 3rd

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Study Questions

1. **Introduction Reflection:** The sermon begins by asking, "How does it make you feel to go to church?" Reflect on your own experience. What emotions or thoughts come to mind when you think about gathering with other believers? How does this connect to the theme of Christian love and unity in Psalm 133?
2. **Understanding the Text:** Read Psalm 133:1-3. What are the two similes used to describe the goodness and pleasantness of brothers dwelling in unity? How do these images (precious oil and dew) enhance your understanding of Christian love?
3. **Defining Christian Love:** Based on 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, list the characteristics of Christian love. How do these qualities differ from worldly definitions of love? Provide an example of how one of these characteristics could be lived out in a church community.
4. **Biblical Imagery:**
 - How does the image of "precious oil on the head, running down on the beard of Aaron" (Psalm 133:2) illustrate the blessing and power of Christian love?
 - How does the "dew of Hermon" (Psalm 133:3a) reflect the refreshing and life-giving nature of Christian unity?
5. **Foundation of Christian Love:** According to the sermon, what is the foundation of Christian love and unity (Psalm 133:1)? Why is it significant that this unity is not based on human opinions, traditions, or preferences?
6. **Hindrances to Unity:** The sermon lists five hindrances to Christian love and unity (pride, passion, strangeness, designing, whispering). Choose one of these and explain how it can disrupt a church community, using the corresponding biblical "problem" and "answer" passages provided in the sermon.
7. **Shields of Unity:** The sermon highlights four shields to protect Christian unity from Philippians 4:1-3. Select one of these shields and explain how it can practically strengthen relationships within a church. Provide a specific example.
8. **Eternal Perspective:** The sermon references the "book of life" (Philippians 4:3b) as a reminder of our shared identity in Christ. How does this perspective influence the way you view disagreements or conflicts with other believers?
9. **Concluding Exhortations:** Review the five concluding exhortations from the sermon. Which one resonates with you the most, and why? How can you apply it in your own life or church community?
10. **Christ's Prayer for Unity:** Read John 17:20-23. How does Jesus' prayer

for the unity of believers inspire or challenge you to pursue Christian love and unity in your own context?

Discussion Questions

1. **Personal Reflection:** The sermon emphasizes that Christian love is "good, pleasant, and a foretaste of heaven." Share a time when you experienced this kind of love and unity in a church or Christian community. How did it impact you?
2. **Application of Imagery:** The sermon compares Christian love to pleasant smells like freshly roasted coffee or baked bread. What modern analogy would you use to describe the beauty of Christian unity to someone unfamiliar with the church? Why did you choose this analogy?
3. **Hindrances in Practice:** Discuss which of the five hindrances to Christian love (pride, passion, strangeness, designing, whispering) you see most often in church communities today. What practical steps can a church take to address this hindrance, based on the sermon's "answer" scriptures?
4. **Building Unity:** The sermon suggests that remembering our shared labor in the gospel (Philippians 4:3a) is a shield for unity. How can serving together in ministry or mission foster stronger relationships among believers? Share an example from your own experience or observation.
5. **Gospel Foundation:** The sermon states that Christian love is founded on the gospel of God's grace, not on human preferences or opinions. Discuss why this foundation is essential for maintaining unity in a diverse church community. What challenges arise when unity is based on secondary issues instead?
6. **Conflict Resolution:** The sermon references Philippians 4:2, where Paul urges Euodia and Syntyche to "agree in the Lord." How can focusing on our shared faith in Christ help resolve conflicts within a church? Share a practical approach to applying this principle in a real-life disagreement.
7. **Encouragement and Accountability:** The concluding exhortation from 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 urges believers to love one another "more and more." How can a church community encourage its members to grow in love? What role does accountability play in this process?
8. **Witness to the World:** According to John 13:35, Christian love is a testament to belonging to Christ. Discuss how a church's love and unity can impact its witness to non-believers. Can you think of a time when you saw this in action?
9. **Barriers to Unity:** The sermon warns against "strangeness" (lack of fellowship) as a hindrance to unity. In what ways can modern life (e.g., busyness, technology, individualism) contribute to strangeness among

believers? How can a church counteract this?

10. **Prayer and Unity:** Reflect on John 17:20-23, where Jesus prays for the unity of all believers. How does knowing that Jesus prayed for our unity motivate you to pursue it? What specific actions can you take to align with this prayer in your church or small group?

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Beloved brothers and sisters, friends, and visitors: I want to ask you this one question to try to prepare us all to study Psalm 133.

What does going to church make you feel like? What is on Sunday morning when you gather with the church for worship, how does it make you feel? I asked this to my kids last night in worship because we're going through this song and we got a lot of different angles of just kind of interesting adventures. I don't know.

Is that when you get together with other believers on the Lord's day like this for worship or in somebody's house on Wednesday night together or just general Christian fellowship you're getting to hang out with some people that are believers in Christ Jesus. How does it make you feel? That's kind of what this is all about. Notice at the beginning of Psalm 133, it says a song of a sense of David. So David wrote the song and this is a part of the book of Psalms. And there's a whole section of these songs of ascent. It's a song which means it was a song written to be sung by God's people in these different periods of the year when they would travel to Jerusalem to go to Jerusalem under the old covenant to worship the Lord near the temple. There's a festival multiple times a year. people from all over the land of Israel, they would all make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem where the temple was and they would worship the Lord together. And so it was a special time where people who are kind of spread out, they would come together like a huge family reunion. And so they would be going up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem is in the hills in these mountainous areas. And so even if you were going south, they would still say we're going up to Jerusalem. They didn't say up like we say up is north. We're going up to Jerusalem. We're ascending. We're going up. And so these songs of ascent were songs that God's people would sing together as they walked up to Jerusalem. So, a way that you could think about it is if we all had to walk to church on Sundays and it took us hours and hours to walk to church like like it took Thomas Boston even in the 1700s took him like three and a half hours each way to get to church. What are we going to do if we're walking for hours? Well, there's a whole portion of the psalms that are written to answer that question. What are we going to do? We're going to sing these psalms. these songs and this is one of those songs. So, it's a song of ascent and it's talking about the blessing and

benefit of Christian love. The blessing and benefit of Christian love, of the unity that believers have and how good and pleasant it is to have Christian love. Look at the psalm for yourself. A song of a sense. So singing while we're walking up, we could say on the Lord's day as we're walking to the church building to go and gather with God's people. Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity. Or it just literally means when they dwell together or abide together. Another way you could say it is how good and pleasant it is when Christians assemble together and love one another. That's it's not talking about actual living, but it's talking about being together. How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity. It is. And here's the answer of David. If you were to ask David, "What does it make you feel like to go to church?" This is probably the same type language that you would use, isn't it? It's like the precious oil on the head running down on the beard. Somebody asked you, "What does it make you feel like to go to church?" You go, "Oh, it's like dumping a bunch of oil on my head and it runs down into my beard." Don't do that. Don't say that to someone because they're not going to understand the context. Just like we might not understand the context first reading that like that's okay. So David, are you annoyed by going to church or is that a good thing? It's a good thing. It's 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 or on the fringes of his robes. Verse three, this is we're like, "Okay, you didn't like that metaphor. I'll give you another one." We can understand this one a little better. It is like the dew of Herman, which falls on the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forever more. I'll explain these metaphors and you'll, I believe, come to see, oh, that makes perfect sense. I see exactly what he's saying and that's true. I just wouldn't have used that metaphor in our context now 3,000 years after David wrote this and living in the new covenant rather than the old covenant. But once you see what David means, I think you'll agree. But the truth, the doctrine that we should learn from this psalm is just simply this. Christian love and unity is good, pleasant, and a foretaste of heaven. Christian love and unity is good, pleasant, and a foretaste of heaven. Now, in order to understand this and apply this psalm, I want to ask and answer five questions. Ask and answer five questions. And the first doesn't even have directly to do with the words in the psalm. It has to do with the whole point of the psalm about Christian love and unity. So before we get into the metaphors of what Christian love is like and what the foundation of it is, what hindrances are and how we can guard guard against disunity and you know work towards unity and love. Before we do all that we just need to ask what is Christian love? What is this love that David writes, "Behold, how good and pleasant when brothers abide together, when they love, when we love one another." What is that? What is love? What is Christian love? The reason we have to ask this question at the beginning is because love is so distorted in our day. and those who don't actually love Jesus, but who want to even try to hijack the Bible in some way and force their opinions or their convictions on us. They know we are people that are all about love. God is love. God commands us, love God, love your neighbor. These are the two great

commandments. Because the enemies of Christ know that they try to hijack the word love and say, "This is what it means to love. This is what it looks like." And so the simplest way God haters communicate what love is in our culture is like love is affirming other people. So it's like someone has an opinion or conviction or they want to do this. They have a desire and it's loving to just be like you know what I might not agree with that but I support you. It's like oh that's so loving. like, "No, that oftentimes that's actually not loving. It's that's actually hateful." If someone's desire is sin and you don't say, "Hey, that's wrong. You shouldn't do that. That's actually hateful for you to be like, you know what? I don't I don't necessarily agree." But in our day, those who hate God love to say, "That's loving." And love is synonymous in our culture right now with just tolerance. Tolerating evils is like the loving thing to do. But so we have to ask the question, what is love? What is love for real? And 1 Corinthians 13 3-5 gives us the definition. What is Christian love? Why would David say how good and pleasant it is when brothers are together? It's because of the love. And this is what love is. Love is patient.

Love is patient. Patient with one another. Isn't it great being around people who are patient with you? Isn't it good and pleasant to be around people who are patient? Like that is a huge blessing. And you could think of the opposite of someone who's impatient. It's not enjoyable to be around them. But how good and pleasant it is to be around others who are patient. Isn't it good and pleasant to be around someone next who's kind? Love is patient. Love is kind. 1 Corinthians 13:3. As opposed to someone who's mean or nasty. It's not fun to be around people who are not kind. A reality check for some people is if if you don't have a very many friends or good close friends or you're having trouble making friends, like you might not be patient and you might not be kind because I can tell you everybody I've ever met who's patient and kind like I like to be around them. even certain people that I don't have a whole lot in common with, but if they're kind, it's like I love being around this person. They're patient with me because I'm a fool a lot of times that need I need friends that are patient and people that are just kind. Maybe you don't have friends because you're not patient with people or you're not kind to people. That could be a good reality check for some of us. What is Christian love? It's patient. It's kind love. Next, Paul says, "Love does not envy. It doesn't envy others. It doesn't boast." So, you're not love doesn't brag. Love only brags on Christ, not brags on self. Doesn't envy other people. It doesn't see something good that happens to someone else and envy that. Love celebrates the good things that happen to other people and grieves the bad things that happen to other people and never goes, "Well, that's what they get." That's not love. Love doesn't envy. Love doesn't boast. Love is not arrogant. So, love doesn't look down the nose at somebody else and think they're less than. Love is not rude. Love is not rude. Love does not insist on its own way. Isn't it great being around someone who doesn't insist on their own way? It says, "I I don't know. What do you want to do?" Now, you can go back and forth in that until it's it's frustrating. But isn't it kind to be with someone who says, "You know what? What would make me most

happy?" Here's an example. Let's go out to eat together. And when the person from a genuine heart says, "You know what would make me most happy? Going wherever you would most like to go." Like that's really where I would like to go. Whatever would make you most happy, even if you choose Arby's, which is not my favorite place, but someone who says, "What would make me most happy is what you would like." And they actually mean that. Isn't it good? and pleasant to be around someone like that that's like not going to insist on my own way or has preferences but says we don't have to do it my way it's just a preference it's not necessarily right or wrong this how I prefer it whatever love does not insist on its own way love is not irritable isn't it miserable being around someone who is irritable who it's so easy to make them upset so easy.

It's miserable. But someone who's not irritable, that's what love looks like.

Love is not resentful. That means you can do wrong to somebody and they're not going to resent you for it. They will actually forgive you for it and move on because love covers a multitude of sins. But someone who's resentful, you do them wrong once or twice and it's like it's done for the rest of your relationship. It'll never be the same because they can't they can't actually forgive someone and just move on. It's not loving. Resentment is not loving. Love is not resentful. Verse six, what is Christian love? Paul says 1 Corinthians 13:6, "Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing. Love never rejoices in sin. Love never celebrates something God calls sin. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing. And that's perhaps the part of the definition of love, the true definition that God gives in his word that is most at odds with our current cultures definition of love. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing. And our culture says, "No, love does rejoice and celebrate whatever the person feels like doing." It's like, "What if it's wrongdoing?" Well, that's just your opinion, man. It's like, no, that's the opposite of what God says love is. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing. Love rejoices with the truth. Love loves the truth. Love rejoices with the truth. Verse 7 in 1 Corinthians 13. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love bears all things. What does that mean? It's like willing to bear burdens for one another and willing to let those who are strong bear with the failings of the weak. Willing to bear burdens for one another.

Love bears all things. Love believes all things. That doesn't mean that we are to be naive and if we're naive and whatever somebody says, we just believe it. That that's not what he's talking about. That's not what Paul means by believes all things. The best way to understand it is love gives others the benefit of the doubt and tries to read their words and their actions in the best possible light. Believes all things. I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt. You're going to give me the benefit of the doubt. Love bears all things. Love believes all things. Love hopes all things. Hope is a confident expectation of future salvation. It's not a I hope things work out. *Elpis*, the Greek word doesn't mean how we use the word hope in our culture. This word that's translated hope. It means a confident expectation of

future salvation based on God's promises and his providence. Hopes all things. Remembers the promises. Remembers what God said he's going to do. So always clings to that hope, that confidence through faith in what God has promised in Christ. Lastly, love endures all things. Love endures. Love gets through the tough times. When you have that, and we all stumble in many ways. None of us love perfectly. But when you have a group of people, you have Christians who labor to love one another like the scripture says to love one another, like the scripture defines it. Because of God's love for us, we love one another. Isn't that good and pleasant? Isn't it wonderful to be around one another? I can tell you it is a blessing for me as one of the pastors of this church and as one of the fellow members of this church. I like you guys. I love you guys. This is not a job for me. I love being with you. I asked my children last night. It's like, okay, so when we're going to church, or let's just say we're going to go hang out with some people, is your thought, are Ekklesia people going to be there or is it are Ekklesia people going to be there? And they said that one. It's like, well, it better be my people. Like, I want to be with them. That's how I feel about you. It's like I go to certain events, it's like none of our people or it is mostly unbelievers. There's not believers that I know that we love one another, that we're in fellowship with. It's like I want to be with you. This is the Christian love and how good and pleasant it is for brothers to abide together, to love one another. That's what Christian love is. Boys and girls, look up here at me. Love is patient. Love is kind. Love does not envy. That means it's not jealous of other people. Love does not boast. That means love does not brag about yourself. Love is not arrogant. That means prideful. Love is not prideful or arrogant. Love is not rude. Love does not say this is how I want to do things and it must be done like this. Love doesn't insist on its own way. Love is not irritable. That means it's hard to make somebody upset. They're not easily they don't easily get upset at you for something or you don't easily get upset at someone else for something. Love is not irritable. Love is not resentful. That means love actually forgives and lets things go and doesn't hold grudges against people. Love does not rejoice at sin. Love never gets happy when someone else is sinning or when you yourself are sinning. Love rejoices with the truth. When the truth is told, when the truth is heard, when the truth is believed, when the truth is submitted to, love rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things. Love believes all things. Children, love hopes all things. That means hope believes the promises of God and trusts his hand. And love endures all things. That's what Christian love is like. And that's why it is an excellent thing to have brothers dwelling in unity or abiding together in that love. It is good and pleasant. Now, not everything that is good is pleasant. Not everything that is good is pleasant. There's some medicines that you have to take that are good. They are not pleasant. Boys and girls, have you ever taken medicine, had to drink some kind of medicine that just tasted so disgusting? It was good for you, not pleasant. Now, there are some other things that are pleasant, but not good. Right? You ever had junk food?

Super pleasant. Very, very pleasant. You can fill in the blank in your own mind.

Some kind of junk food that is terrible, terrible for you. No nutritional value. It's just attacking your body. Very pleasant to the taste buds. Can I get an amen? Some things are good and not pleasant. Some things are pleasant and not good. But he says, "When Christians love one another and abide together, it's good and it's pleasant." It's good for you and it's pleasant. Not many things in this world are both good and pleasant, but Christian love and unity is. Now, I want you to look at the psalm and first look at verses two, just verse 2 and three at the metaphors that he uses and then we'll come back to verse one here in a minute. But what is Christian love like? What is it like? Notice that he starts verse two. The reason I say it like what is it like? Well, it's because he says it is like at the beginning of verse two. It's metaphors. He's using pictures. He's using imagery that people 3,000 years ago who lived in Palestine readily understood. People who lived under the old covenant, they understood exactly what he meant. We read it like dumping oil on somebody's head and it goes in their beard and all over their clothes. That's good and pleasant. Like, well, yeah. Do of Herman. Okay. Well, here's what he means. What is Christian love like? First, Christian love is a sign of God's blessing and power. It's a sign of God's blessing and power like oil poured on the high priest. Boys and girls, who is the very first high priest in Israel? If you know it, you can say it out loud. Who was the very first high priest in Israel? Aaron. Very good. Aaron was the very first high priest. And so that's why he even mentions Aaron here in verse two. Look, 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. So this is imagining we're supposed to imagine Aaron the first high priest who is anointed. That's what that word means. They're anointed. Oil is poured on his head. And it was oil that had very special fragrances and spices mixed in it. A precious oil is poured on Aaron's head as his anointing. And this was the sign, a visible sign that God had set him apart for a specific job and was going to empower him to do that job as high priest. So why is David using that metaphor? It's like precious oil on the head running down on the beard on the beard of Aaron running down on the collar of his robes. He's saying that Christian love, this Christian love and unity is like the oil poured on the head. It's a sign of God's blessing and it's a sign of God's power, like oil poured on the high priest. It's the same thing that Christ says in John 13:35. By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another. It's a sign of God's blessing and power when Christians dwell together in love and unity. When we love one another, when we're patient with one another, when we're kind to one another, when we don't envy, when we're not arrogant, when we don't insist on our own way, when we believe all things and bear all things and everything that 1 Corinthians 13 details about true love, and when we have that kind of love for one another and we abide together, it's a sign of God's blessing and power. where there is no love, when it's more like a country club, a a church, even a local church is more like a country club, and we attend the same events, but there's not that these are my people. I love these people. When there's not that, it's there's no sign of God's power, no sign of God's blessing. But when there is genuine affection for one another, affection that culminates in action, then that's a sign

that God is at work among these people. None of this makes sense. Most of these people don't have anything in common other than they belong to Christ. And for that, they love one another. When we have Christian love and unity, it's a sign of God's blessing and power like oil poured on the high priest. But secondly, what is Christian love like? Christian love is pleasant. Pleasant like a wonderful smell that gives you instant delight. See this precious oil on the head. Look at verse two again. 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. The oil that was poured on the high priest was not only something that signified God's blessing and power. It was also something that God prescribed in the law would be mixed with spices and specific flavors so that when it is poured out, everyone in the area would just go, "That's good." a pleasing aroma. A smell that everyone would not just go, I know we have to anoint them. That smells awful. Like, no, it was a pleasing aroma. And that's partly what David means here. It's like this oil, this precious oil dumped out on the head. It's pleasant. And notice, we know that that's what he's getting at as well. Not only the sign of God's blessing and power, but also Christian love. This unity is pleasant, pleasing. We know that because look again at verse one. Behold, how good and pleasant. Pleasant means delightful, lovely, enjoyable. So, Christian love is pleasant like a wonderful smell that gives you instant delight. There are a few things like the smell, the sense of smell. Let me just beg you to try to think of the last time you smelled something that it just enters your nostrils and you go, you just close your eyes. You're like, "Oh, that's good. That smells so good." Can you get there? Can you think of that? Maybe that's a good thing for you to talk at the lunch table today. And parents, you ask your kids and all of you or ask your spouse or ask your friends, whoever you eat lunch with, say, "What's that? What is that for you?" And if you're a coffee person, imagine freshly ground up coffee beans and you just smelled that in. It's like, "Oh, that's good." Or a freshly brewed cup of coffee. You know that smell is just like I asked my kids last night and one of them said when you walk by the candle aisle in Walmart like ohhhh that is good that's very good or one in our household is freshly baked cookies or freshly cut watermelon when McClain cuts a watermelon in our kitchen and even if we're in the living room the kids start going ohhhhh mom's cutting watermelon you can smell it in in the other room and it's one of those it's like, "Oh, that smells good." What is it? What is it for you?

David's point here is that Christian love and unity is like that. It's just pleasing. It's like when you walk into the Assembly of the Saints or get together with other Christian Christians, it's it's like you get that smell that just makes you close your eyes and go, "That's nice." Like, you can't describe it more than that other than like that feels great. I really enjoy that. That's what it's like when we dwell in unity, when we love one another, when we serve one another, when we're kind. When we're patient, that's what Christian love and unity is like. It's like that sweet smell that makes you close your eyes and just enjoy it. But third, look at the next metaphor that he uses in the beginning of verse three. Psalm 133:3. It is like the

dew of Hermon which falls down on the mountains of Zion. this simp. So Zion is the mountainous region where Jerusalem is and it's often Zion and Jerusalem are used interchangeably. It's in the old covenant where God's presence dwelt. God's presence dwelt in the temple in Jerusalem. And so Zion, Jerusalem, God's presence under the old covenant. God's presence no longer dwells in Jerusalem. no longer in Zion. But that for now we can use it that's a metaphor for the church or God's presence dwells. Where does God's presence dwell now? Not the church building but in his people. We are the temple. But in this context he's saying like the dw of Herman which falls on the mountains of Zion. So Herman is this mountain about 150 miles from Jerusalem. And it is so high that it is snow covered at the top all year round. And what happens is the snow from the top then turns into dew and comes down and waters and provides dew for all of the areas and the mountainous and the more dry area of Jerusalem. So the metaphor is like dew that comes down from Mount Herman and refreshes and waters the area of Zion. That's how awesome Christian love and unity is. Refreshing like when even this week we got rain here in our area that we hadn't had for a long time. It was bone dry out there and we got a couple of times of rain and it's like that was refreshing. So in the same way he's saying like the dew of Herman which falls on the mountains of Zion, Christian love is refreshing like dew which gives life to the land. Christian love and unity is something that is refreshing, revitalizing.

Is that how you feel?

that Christian love, our love for one another is a sign of God's blessing and power like oil poured out on the high priest is the sign of God's blessing and that he's going to provide them power to do their job. Christian love is pleasant like a wonderful smell that gives you instant delight. Is that how you feel about our love for one another? And Christians love for one another. Christian love is refreshing like dew which gives life to the land. Is that how you feel about it? Refreshed being around the saints.

That's how you and I should feel about it. And may God give us the grace to be able to say with David how good and pleasant it is. How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity. It is like the precious oil on the head running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the color of his robes. It is like the dew of Herman which falls on the mountains of Zion. It's refreshing, pleasant.

But look lastly, he says, "For there the Lord has commanded the blessing life forever more. For there with the saints the Lord has commanded the blessing life forever more. Christian love. What's Christian love like? It's like eternal life. Christian love is life like eternal life which Christ gives. For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, that gift, life forever more. See the love that we have for one another and the unity that we have together in Christ Jesus is like a glimpse of eternal life. The assembly of the saints, even on the Lord's day, has been often

said throughout church history. It's like this is a glimpse of heaven. We study God's word. God speaks to us through his word. We praise the Lord. We commune with the Lord at the table through the Lord's supper as we commune with one another. It's just a little glimpse of heaven. And that's what Christian love is like. Like eternal life which Christ gives. For there the Lord has commanded the blessing life forever more. So that's what Christian love is like. A sign of God's blessing and power. pleasant, refreshing and life, even a glimpse, a foretaste of eternal life, of heaven itself. Now go back to verse one and let's answer the third question. What is Christian love founded upon? This Christian love and unity, what is it founded upon? Notice, behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity. When brethren dwell in unity, when family members is what he's saying. And he doesn't mean biological family members. He means those who are in the family of God. Those who have been saved by the grace of God are united to one another, being united in Christ. And you need to see here at the beginning of this psalm that the foundation of Christian love and unity is the gospel of God's grace that brings us into the same family and makes us brothers. That's the foundation. It's not, you need to be clear on this, that Christian love and unity is not founded upon the opinions of men. A lot of us, we all have different opinions on certain things. Our unity is not founded upon opinions. Christian love and unity is not founded upon the traditions of men. We all have different preferences for traditions. Christian love and unity is not founded upon the preferences of men. I have different preferences than you. You have different preferences than me. Our unity is not founded upon that. Christian love and unity is not founded upon the hobbies or pastimes of men. There are some of you that I'm intimately close to as a brother in Christ and we have almost nothing in common other than Christ.

Christian love and unity is not founded upon the convictions of men concerning tertiary or side matters or doctrines. Christian unity is not based on any of those things. Not upon our opinions, traditions, preferences, hobbies, or even our convictions on tertiary positions. Hear me. Christian love and unity is founded upon the fact that we are blood-bought believers who have been brought into the family of God by his grace and filled with the spirit of God. That's our unity. We belong to Christ. We have the exact same father. We are in the same family. The same blood that was shed for me was shed for you. So even though we may have different opinions or traditions or preferences or hobbies or convictions concerning tertiary positions, in no way does that hinder the love and unity that we must have for one another. We've been bought with the same blood. We have the same father. And when we disagree, when we debate, when we argue, it's as family who gets done with disagreements and goes, "Who cares? You're still my brother. You're still my sister." Like, we can have differences and all these other things because our unity is not based on those things. Our love for one another and unity is founded on the fact that we are blood-bought believers adopted into God's family and filled by God's spirit through the Lord Jesus Christ. So that's

what Christian love is founded upon. Our love and unity is not just because we somehow found a bunch of people that we've got a lot of things in common with. No, we've been purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ and adopted into God's family. Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity. When family, that means the Christian brothers and sisters.

Now, let me ask, what are some hindrances to Christian love? I'm going to give you hindrances, then I'm going to give you a shield to guard against losing the Christian love and unity. Hindrances quickly. William Bridge. And I want to encourage you. I can link this sermon to you. William Bridge was a helpful Puritan author and he wrote a sermon on Psalm 133. It's a 13 pages long. Not very long. Just for context, if you were to take the words that I say in a sermon and put it on paper, it'd be 35 pages. So an hour long sermon is like 35 pages. So 13 pages might it be like oh I don't know can I read that like yeah you can read that that's pretty quick don't worry about that. William Bridge has this helpful sermon and in it he shows five hindrances to Christian unity and love so I'm going to mention them brief briefly and I also want to give you some scriptures that he doesn't necessarily give in there but scriptures for the problem and the answer to all of these.

First he says pride is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity. What would keep us from being staying remaining abiding together in love and unity? Well, pride. Bridge says a proud man is much given to contention. So what's the problem? 1 Timothy 6:4-5: "He is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth." What's the answer? Romans 12:3 and verses 16 through 18. Pride is this great hindrance to Christian love and unity. What's the answer? For by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. Verse 16, live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. That's the answer to pride. A proud man is much given to contention. So he said, "Pride is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity." And he's right. So what do we need? We need humility. We need to humble ourselves and seek one another's good. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no evil for evil. Give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all, if possible, so far as it depends on you. Live peaceably with all. Pride is a great hindrance. Second, Bridge says passion and by which he means anger or a lack of self-control. Passion, anger or lack of self-control is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity. Bridge says, "For though a man dislikes and is sorry for what he has

done in his passion, when it is over, and though he does in his passion be one thing, and what he does in his serious consideration is another thing, yet we are to take great heed of passion." He's saying, "Though anger or a lack of self-control, you regret what you said or you may go back and say, "Hey, I'm sorry." That's true and you act one way that's not really characteristic of who you are and you have to apologize later. He said, "Yeah, that's true." Like, but we still have to watch out for passion, anger, lack of self-control. It's a great hindrance to love and unity. Again, Proverbs 15:18, "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention."

Passion or anger or lack of self-control is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity. What's the answer? Ephesians 4 1-3. Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love. Eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. Humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another. Third, Bridge says that strangeness is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity, by which he means infrequently coming together, distance from one another. The more you're distant from one another, he says, "Strangeness ends in enmity. When brethren and friends grow strangers one to another, then they surmise things one of another, and that destroys love and unity." perhaps speaking from his own pastoral council and seeing that unfamiliarity. The further people get apart, less frequently they speak, the easier it is to surmise things one of another. So what's the answer? Acts 2:42, they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers, coming together, fellowshiping together, worshiping together, breaking bread together. That that's the answer to this strangeness that can be a great hindrance to Christian love and unity. Fourthly, Bridge says designing or plotting, plotting is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity. He says designs or designing, but what he means is like plotting.

True love knows no designs upon others. No man can endure to have designs laid against him. Designing causes anger, enmity, and hatred, and hinders true love one toward another. Designing or plotting is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity. So, the problem is what Proverbs 16:27 says, "A worthless man plots evil," meaning plots harm to somebody else. A worthless man plots harm to someone else and his speech is like a scorching fire. What's the answer? Romans 15:2, "Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up." Let each of us please his neighbor for his good to build him up. Fifthly, Bridge says whispering is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity by whispering is meant that's the metaphor for gossiping or did you hear about this? Gossiping can include slandering. Gossiping is speaking about things you shouldn't speak about. Slandering is gossiping plus you're misleading someone with what you're saying. Everything you say in gossip, it still may be true, but you shouldn't be talking

about it. Slander is something you shouldn't be talking about, and you're misleading the person you're talking to. So, gossip and slander is what the metaphor for uh whispering brings. But it's just saying little things in people's ear. little things through text, through email, through words that you speak to them. It's whispering is like you're saying certain things and you're trying to nudge people a certain way. Whispering is a great hindrance to Christian love and unity. Bridge says, "But now if anyone should come to me and tell me anything against a brother, I would not believe the whisperer till I had spoken with the other. For a cause can never be truly known nor judged of till both parties have heard have been heard speak." So what's the problem with whispering that is a hindrance to Christian love and unity? Proverbs 16:28, "A dishonest man spreads strife and a whisperer separates close friends." A dishonest man spreads strife and a whisperer separates close friends. What's the answer to whispering? Ephesians 4:25, "Having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." Having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. speaking specifically of Christians there. Bridge says in summary of this section, "Thus you may see the five things that hinder love, that is pride, passion, strangeness, designing one upon another, and hearkening unto whisperers. Now, as you desire to live in love and unity, observe these things and watch out for them."

So, those are some hindrances. But what are what are some shields to guard Christian love? How do we guard Christian love to maintain it? I want you to go in your Bible with me to the right to the New Testament and go to Philippians 4 verse 1. 1-3. Philippians chapter 4 verses 1 through 3.

In this whole section, Paul is exhorting the church at Philippi to stand firm together in unity for the glory of God. And he's going to deal in verse two with these two ladies, Euodia and Synteché. If you want to say it like the Greek is, let's say Synteché, that's going to be easier. Euodia and I and I entreat to agree in the Lord. That's two ladies in Philippi who are have a little bit of beef. They have disagreements. They're butting heads. They're not unified. And so he's going to deal with that. And what we can actually learn from verses 1 through three are some shields to protect Christian unity and love. I just want to show you these four things very quickly. He starts in verse one before he even brings up Euodia and Synteché to agree in the Lord to be united to stop bickering. Before he even does that, he says in verse one, "Therefore, my brothers whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved." He's what he's doing at the very beginning of this is reminding this whole church that he's exhorting to live in unity and reminding all of them of his love for them, their love for him, and all of their collective love for Christ. He's reminding them of the genuine affection that the saints have for one another. Therefore, my brothers whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. He's reminding them of

the genuine affection that all saints have for one another. So, one shield to protect Christian unity is by remembering the genuine affection you have, we all have for one another because we all belong to Jesus. remembering the genuine affection you have for the saints. Like David sings in Psalm 16, as for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight. So remembering the genuine affection you have for the saints. That's one shield to protect Christian unity. This is a believer. This is a brother. Another one, look in verse two. Another shield to protect Christian unity is remembering that we all have the same Lord. We all have the same Lord. He entreats these ladies. Verse two, I entreat Euodia and I entreat Synteché to agree in the Lord. Well, of the same Lord, all of the same master. We're all going to give account to the same Lord and the same master. So that's another shield to protect Christian unity and love is remember the genuine affection you have for the saints and remember that we all have the same Lord. We all have the same master. We all belong to the same battalion. We're all in the same army. We're all in the same family. We all have the same Lord. Look at the beginning of verse three. He says, "Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers." So, what can we learn from that about a shield to protect Christian love and unity? Another one is laboring, remembering that we are laboring side by side in the gospel.

remembering that we are laboring side by side in the gospel. So whatever differences there could be or hindrances to love, remember you've labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers. He's reminding them, we're gospel laborers together. We want more sinners to be saved, more saints to be sanctified, more of the earth to be covered with the glory of Christ until it covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. We're laboring side by side in the gospel for the good news. Then look fourthly, the final shield to protect Christian unity is remembering that our names are written right next to one another's in the book of life. Look what he says at the end of verse three. Whose names are in the book of life. This is the book of life where all true believers names are written. And what he's exhorting these two women to do is to remember that they have the same Lord. Remember the genuine affection they have for all believers. Remember that they're gospel labor side by side. And remember he's saying your names are written right next to one another in the book of life.

You needed you were both so wicked that only the cross of Christ could save you. You're both so loved that your names are written in the book of life right next to one another and written in blood. Your names are written in the book of life. You're going to be in heaven together. You're going to be on the new earth together forever. Your names are written next to one another in the book of life.

It is the same father who unconditionally elected you and who adopted you. It is

the same blood of Christ that cleanses you from sin. It is the same spirit that raised you from your deadness and sin and gave you the gift of faith in Christ. It's the same heavenly pin that your names were written in the book of life.

That's what he's saying. There's shields to guard against it. our names. Next time you're bickering with a brother, my name is written right next to his in the book of life. We have the same Lord. We're striving side by side, laboring side by side in the gospel. And just remember the love of God for you, which will culminate in your love for God's people. Now, let me give you a few concluding just exhortations. And if you take notes, I would write down these scripture references. so that you can go and read them and meditate on them later today or tomorrow. Concluding exhortations, keep striving side by side for the gospel. Keep striving side by side for the gospel. Philippians 1:27. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you, that you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

Keep striving side by side for the gospel so that more sinners turn from their sin and believe on Christ. more saints are sanctified and grow in holiness. Keep striving side by side for the gospel. Philippians 1:27. Next, Ephesians 4 1-3. Walk in humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain unity. Walk in humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain unity. That's the exhortation. Here's what the word of God says. Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.

Third exhortation, remember our love for one another is a testament to our belonging to Christ. Our love for one another is a testament or evidence that we actually belong to Christ.

John 13:35, by this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

Fourth exhortation, love one another more and more. Love one another and be eager to grow in your love for one another more and more. Listen to how Paul puts it to the church at Thessalonica. 1 Thessalonians 4:9 and 10. Now, concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another. And for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more. I think that's a good exhortation from one of your pastors to you. I see a lot of love, unity, pleasantness, good and pleasant. I see that. And so I urge you, I see that you're loving one another. And I urge you, as Paul urges the church there, do this more and more. Keep increasing in your love for one another.

Love one another more and more. Fifth and final exhortation, remember Christ prayed for our unity and love. Christ prayed for our unity and love. John 17:20-23, I do not ask for these only. Christ says, not only those who are alive right now, but also for those who will believe in me through their word. He's saying, "I'm not praying only for my apostles who are right here, but also for those who will believe in me through the apostles going out and proclaiming the gospel that they may all be one, meaning all of us believers, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you. That they also may be in us. So that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you have loved me. May God give us the grace to be patient with one another, to be kind to one another, to love, not envy, not boasting, not arrogant, not rude to one another. May God give us the grace to not insist on our own way, to not be irritable or resentful, to not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoice with the truth. May God give us such love for him and for one another because of what Christ has done for all of us that we would bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. Pray with me.

Our Father in heaven, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together. When brothers dwell in unity, we ask you to give us unshakable unity with first of all ourselves as a local church and with other brothers and sisters in Christ across our city, across the state, across this nation, across the world. Help us to have a genuine love and affection for other believers simply because they belong to Christ Jesus. Give us that. Help us to be able to disagree about things and still love one another and be in unity. Help us to have different convictions or preferences or opinions or traditions and still be able to be in complete love and unity for one another. We ask you to bind us together. Help us to be eager to maintain the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. those who are unbelievers, we ask that you save them, that you give them this love and unity that we believers have together. Open their eyes to the depths of their sin and the sufficiency of Jesus to save them from their sin. Open their eyes. Give them faith. We ask you to purify your church. For those who are sick, heal them. The suffering, comfort them. the straying, convict them. Grant them repentance. And the striving, we ask that you strengthen them. Receive everything that we offer up now, the prayers, songs, Lord's supper, offerings, and our time of fellowship after the benediction. We offer all these things up to you as sacrifices of praise. And we ask you to receive them for Christ's sake. In his name we pray. Amen. Amen.