

The Beauty and Blessing of Unity  
Psalm 133

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is  
when brothers dwell in unity!*  
<sup>2</sup> *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!*  
<sup>3</sup> *It is like the dew of Hermon,  
which falls on the mountains of Zion!*  
*For there the LORD has commanded the blessing,  
life forevermore.*

You have no doubt experienced conflict at the supper table, perhaps especially at a holiday meal like Thanksgiving or Christmas when families of differing opinions gather for those celebrations.

ILL - Our family has differing political opinions, so before we sit down, Teana will often say, *“We only talk about Jesus.”*

- a) This Psalm is one of the Psalms of Ascent; 15 Psalms between Psalms 120-134 written to be sung as Israel made their way to Jerusalem for special occasions, perhaps like the Day of Atonement.

Geographically speaking, Jerusalem is on a mountain, so people always move up to get to it and down when they leave.

These psalms prepared the hearts of the people for unified worship. Israel was often divided for various reasons and this psalm is particularly important because it reminded the people of the blessing of unity.

- b) Last week's Psalm

- *Sons of Korah* = musicians

- *Gittith* = the only stringed instrument mentioned in the Psalms - made in Gath like our Mennonite friends in Chucky at Auntie Ruth's
- King David: Commentators are divided - v5 "Zion" & v9 "anointed"
  - You read this week that David took Zion in 2 Chron 11
  - David's tomb, the Last Supper room, Oscar Schilder/ Catholic & Horatio Spafford/Protestant (*It Is Well With My Soul*)

c) Psalm 132 depicts David bringing the ark of the covenant to Zion.  
 Psalm 133 pictures God bringing blessing upon Zion.  
 Psalm 134 reveals that God blesses the pilgrims from Zion.

### First: The Gift of Unity. 1

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

The potential disunity Israel might experience is presupposed by their unity.

*During the pilgrimages, the Jews enjoyed an ecumenical experience on their way toward and in Jerusalem. The pilgrims came from many different walks of life, regions, and tribes, as they gathered for one purpose: the worship of the Lord in Jerusalem.*

Willem VanGemeran

*Pilgrims faced not only the potential disharmony within individual families, but the tensions of getting along with others in competition for the same resources for lodging, food, and water. In addition, there may have been clan rivalries that could disrupt the peace of a pilgrim encampment after days of weary travel.*

William D. Barrick

That sounds like us trying to get to church on a Sunday morning, doesn't it?

- a) “*Brothers*” - They were united by birth; we by the second birth. In David’s mind, a brother is a fellow worshipper. All those who worship God together.
- b) “*good*” = *towb* = Gen 1:31 - “very good” and Ex 3:2 - “fine/ beautiful”
- c) “*pleasant*” = *delightful/sweet sounding*

**Psalm 81:2 - *Raise a song; sound the tambourine, the sweet lyre with the harp***

- d) “ *dwell*” = *to abide* (as in a city or a marriage) Deut 25:5 = only other occurrence of ‘brothers dwelling together’
- e) “*unity*” = *together* (like on a journey or a task)
1. - As the Trinity is one, we are united by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:15-19).

John 15:9-13 - *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. <sup>12</sup> “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

- The source of unity - *As the Father has loved me...*
- The sharing of unity - *so have I loved you*
- The maintenance of unity - *Abide in my love...love one another*
- The sacrifice of unity - *lay down your life for your friends*

2 - “As the Trinity is one...” This is the unity. We have unity. Unity is a gift, not an achievement.

Notice vs 2 & 3 - “running down” x 2 & “which falls on” x 1. Unity is not worked up but given down.

God has gifted us with a unity that resembles and demonstrates his unity

ILL - Creation - Gen 1:1-3

- God = Author of creation
- Spirit = Arranger of creation
- Jesus = Agent of Creation

ILL - Salvation - Eph 1:4, 7 & 13

- God = Author of salvation - Planned
- Son = Agent of salvation - Purchased
- Spirit = - Assurance of salvation - Protects

First: The Gift of Unity. 1

**Second: The Cost of Unity. 2**

*<sup>2</sup> 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!*

Exodus 30:22-25 & 30-32 - The LORD said to Moses, <sup>23</sup> “Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh 500 shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, 250, and 250 of aromatic cane, <sup>24</sup> and 500 of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. <sup>25</sup> And you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil... *You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests.* <sup>31</sup> *And you shall say to the people of Israel, ‘This shall be my holy anointing oil throughout your generations. <sup>32</sup> It shall not be poured on the body of an ordinary person, and you shall make no other like it in composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you.*

David pictures unity like costly oil, something special and that produces a sweet aroma.

For David, unity is holy.

*What a sacred thing must brotherly love be when it can be likened to an oil which must never be poured on any man but on the Lord's high-priest alone!*  
Spurgeon

And it's not just something we experience. It runs down Aaron's head, beard and clothes.

*The anointing oil intended for the head (Exod. 29:7) was not confined to it, nor could its fragrance be contained. Exodus 29:21 provided explicitly that after the pouring of the oil on the head, some was to be sprinkled on the robes: 'and he and his garments shall be holy'.*"  
Derek Kidner

Unity is always costly. It may initially appear to cost more than division - it is easier to be divided than united - but, eventually division costs more than unity.

ILL - The division between Israel (10 northern tribes) and Judah (2 southern tribes) led to the eventual dissolution of the entire nation. It was like a body breaking and tearing.

Jesus often used the word "one" to define unity (John 17: 11, 21). He illustrated this oneness among His followers by the oneness or sameness which existed between Him and His Father (John 14: 10, 11). He then prayed that we would be one (John 17:21) as he and the Father are one.

What does unity cost?

*Eph 4:1-3 - walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

- a) Humility
- b) Gentleness
- c) Patience

- d) Bearing with one another in love
- e) Eager to maintain unity

See also: Ro 12:3-12 & Col 3:12-14 for other building blocks to unity  
 We know the cost of our unity - "*the precious blood of Christ*" (1 Peter 1:19). We are called to remember that and act accordingly .

First: The Gift of Unity. 1  
 Second: The Cost of Unity. 2  
**Third: The Benefits of Unity. 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.*

**Picture of Mount Hermon** - Mt. Hermon (sacred mountain) is in northern Israel and straddles the border between Syria and Lebanon and 9,000 feet above sea level. It is covered with snow for most of the year.

In a land bordered by on the West by the Mediterranean Sea, fresh water is like gold and Mt. Hermon supplies it for Israel as the fountainhead of the Jordan River.

**Picture of Mount Zion** - Compare the picture to Mount Zion and you can understand why Mount Hermon is so important and what a blessing it is.

**Picture of David's Tomb** - (Note the woman speaking to her child and the seats)

The 'dew' of Hermon falls all the way to Zion and provides it with life-giving water.

Think about how Hermon makes Zion flourish! Unity does that.

Are you ready? Zion has no natural water. Its water comes from Hermon. We have no natural unity. Our unity comes from God. It is supernatural. But it does make its way all the way from Hermon to Zion - 99 miles.

And it is ‘there’ in Hermon’s Waters at Zion that “*God has commanded the blessing.*”

And what is the blessing? “*Life forevermore.*”

Bottom line: Unity is like life forevermore. We are going to live in unity forevermore. Unified life now is a precursor, foretaste of life forevermore.

### **Conclusion:**

David knows what unity and disfunction both look like. He suffered under Saul and it experienced the disunity on a personal and national level. You’ve been reading about it.

Unity is good because it reflects God’s nature and purposes “*to unite all things*” in Jesus (Eph 1:10).

It is important because Jesus died to secure it and it is a major aspect of our witness to the world.

Unity is pleasant because it makes life flourish.

What are you doing to foster unity?

What are you doing to endanger unity?

### **Community Groups:**

1 - How is life in your home?

2 - Are you seeing life differently through this pandemic lens?

3 - How is your daily Bible reading?

4 - Let’s read Psalm 133.

5 - Define unity.

6 - How are Christians united?

- 7 - What illustrations of unity have you participated in or witnessed?
- 8 - What illustrations of disunity can you share?
- 9 - What is it about living (traveling) that makes unity so hard?
- 10 - Why does God prize unity?
- 11 - How does unity reflect God's ultimate purposes in creation? (Eph 1:10).
- 12 - How is the Trinity unified? Where in the Bible do you see this?
- 13 - Why does David compare unity to the oil running down Aaron's beard and clothes?
- 14 - Read Eph 4:1-3, Ro 12:3-12 & Col 3:12-14. What are the building blocks to humility?
- 15 - According to verse 3, what is the benefit of unity?
- 16 - What are some benefits of unity that you have experienced?
- 17 - What do you do to foster unity?
- 18 - How do you counsel someone who does not honor unity?
- 19 - What might you be doing to hinder unity?
- 20 - How is unity broken?
- 21 - What steps can you take to prize and work toward unity?
- 22 - Read John 17:21. Take the time to pray for unity at Heritage.



