

When Brothers Dwell in Unity - Psalm 133 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

Imagine the sight. You are a traveler who, with a crew of people from your town has traversed the rocky soil of middle Israel on foot. The journey took a few days and difficult to sleep nights, and maybe in crazy heat, storms, and cold nights. As you journeyed your family saw people from other towns and regions on the same trek. In the final miles, a trip from Jericho to Jerusalem the road was packed with people making their way to Jerusalem for Passover or one of the other Pilgrimage Festivals. As you traveled your family has been singing a bunch of songs from Psalm 120-134, but you have saved a few for the end of the journey. You are fully aware of the tribalism, factions, and political groups that exist, knowing that your nation has a long history of infighting, civil disputes, and even wars among brothers. Yet, you are amazed as you walk through the walls and into the city seeing the myriads of people who are there for the same reason as you and your family, to experience the presence of God, to come before Him with your sin and receive sacrifices as the vehicle of forgiveness, to worship Yahweh together. As you walk in you hear the distinct sound of a tune you have known your whole life, a short song proclaiming, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity," so you look down to your kids and encourage them to join the song. As you sing you realize that this unity is a really hard thing, won't take much in this crowded city to get people arguing and fighting. Yet, the song expresses a beautiful truth and hope. When God's people do place His worship and glory at the center of their lives they will dwell in unity.

I am going to be honest, this Psalm scares me. It scares me because we live in such a time of division in our country. Yes, as long as I have been alive there have been myriads of social and political divides, and yes, there have been moments and seasons of unrest, protest and rioting. These things are not new. Yet, for several reasons the rhetoric is filled with so much more vitriol as people are canceled and marginalized for any disagreement from tribe. So people line up and live in fear of being cast out while others shout their ideas louder and louder. The sad thing is that this has crept so deeply into the church. Want to build a big church in this climate, choose sides and mix Jesus in with a brand of politics and people will flock. Or want to sell religious books, write one showing how certain pastors and religious leaders are sell-outs to the leftist or right wing agenda, speak of how they are shepherds for sale for abandoning the cause (mind you, not the cause of the Gospel and the mission of Jesus). Books will fly off the shelves. Even in the church, division sells. We are no longer able to hear a different perspective, to consider the view of a person who sees an issue differently. Those who study the church have pointed out that those who claim to be evangelical Christians are increasing more Biblically illiterate and unclear on the core Christian doctrines. At the same time, they are more political and in increasing numbers want to attend churches who agree with them politically. Pause here, feel the weight of our moment. Those who claim Christ in our culture are unsure and really uninterested in the faith once for all delivered to the saints. On the other hand, we argue and divide along the cultural lines as we baptize Jesus into our social and political view point. Clarity here, both, or should I say all sides do this, a people who do not know the doctrine of the Trinity embrace this view of the faith with no thought. Into this world the song of Psalm 133 rises and invites us to sing.

And its not just this Psalm, the call to Christian unity is one of the clearest and most repeated calls in the Scripture. There is no place this is clearer than Jesus' prayer in John 17. The night before He would go to the cross for us, Jesus prayed with His disciples around the table during the Last Supper. Jesus begins by praying for the 12, but He

quickly turns to the prayer to a prayer for all who will eventually believe because of the Gospel and doctrines those men would pass on. Jesus could have prayed anything for us. He could have prayed for our strength to endure persecution, or boldness to proclaim the Gospel. He could have asked the Father to keep us from stumbling and falling into heresy. So what did Jesus pray for in this moment? Unity! That, "They may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me (John 17:23). The unity of the church really matters, and the basis of our unity is Jesus, His cross and resurrection, His redemption, and His mission. We are to fight for unity, not fight against our brothers and sisters over issues that are a mere blip on the eternal radar. And why? The prayer makes it clear, when the church is unified in love for Jesus and sacrificial love for each other it looks so crazy different that the world will take notice and see the love of Jesus displayed. "How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!"

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 Chron icles 35	2 Chron icles 36	Titus 1	Titus 2	Titus 3	Lamentati ons 1	Lamentati ons 2

Reading from this past week: Psalm 133

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Psalm 134

Family Worship

Song - *Holy Forever*

<https://youtu.be/lkHgxKemCRk?si=psaMIA4lYKqVqx6g>

Gospel Project

Unit: The Church's Hope

Story: Jesus will return one day.

Big Picture Question: What is the hope of the church?

Answer: The church looks forward to Jesus' return when He will make all things new

Scripture: Revelation 19-20

New City Catechism

Question 33: Should those who have faith in Christ seek their salvation through their own works, or anywhere else?

Answer: No, everything necessary to salvation is found in Christ.

Verse: Galatians 2:16

Scripture

Psalm 133

- What are some things dividing the church right now? Are most of the things you name things that Jesus would consider of utmost importance?
- Why is Christian unity so good, pleasant, and beautiful?
- Do we drift toward unity naturally? Why or why not?
- How can we fight for the type of unity expressed in the prayer of Jesus?

Prayer

*Pray for our students headed back to school, and for Christian teachers seeking to be missionaries to our schools.

*Pray for the unity of Jesus' church, both here at Genesis and around the world. .