

The Blessing of Unity

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[0 : 0 0] Well, with the Lord's help this evening, if you would turn with me to the book of Psalms. The book of Psalms and Psalm 133.

The book of Psalms, Psalm 133. It's on page 624 if you're using the Pew Bible. Psalm 133. And we'll just read that psalm. It says, a song of ascents of David. Behold 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 collar of his robes.

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls in the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord has commanded the blessing. Life forevermore.

[1 : 1 1] In our current climate, there's a lot of talk about division, divorce and separation.

All we have to do is look at the news. And we're reminded about Brexit. We're a united kingdom that's severing its union with Europe.

And of course that's proving a difficult and messy business to try and unravel years of legislation. But then a little closer to home, we have the independence movement with the Scottish National Party always planning their next referendum.

And they want to sever a united kingdom of nations and government that's over 400 years old. And I'm not taking sides on all these things, but there's all these separations that are going on.

And then there's the sad reality of divorce and separation within homes and families. And it's said that on average, 42% of marriages in the UK, they end in divorce, which is so sad and so heartbreaking.

[2 : 1 7] Because it causes upset for everyone involved, especially children. And you know, we can look at our continent. We can look at our nation.

We can look at the homes and families that surround us. We can even look in the church. And all we see is division, divorce and separation.

And of course the root cause is sin. And that sin, it raises its ugly head in many forms and in many ways. Such as pride and arrogance.

But you know, the main instigator of division, divorce and separation is the devil. Because that's what his name means. He is the divider.

And you know, all this talk of division, divorce and separation, it's very sad and it's very discouraging. But you know, when we come to Psalm 133, we are reminded of the blessing of unity.

[3 : 1 5] The blessing of unity. Because we're reminded here that that's where blessing is. That's where blessing is to be found.

It's in unity. And particularly Psalm 133, it's speaking about the unity of a congregation. And you know, I love Psalm 133 because it's part of this group of 15 Psalms called the Songs of Ascents. And these Songs of Ascents, they're numbered from Psalm 120 all the way to Psalm 134. And as we've been singing through some of them, we've been saying that they are pilgrim psalms.

They're the songs that were sung by the Jewish pilgrims as they travelled together towards Jerusalem for the annual festivals that were held there. And they're called the Songs of Ascents because Jerusalem was situated on a high mountain called Mount Zion.

And all the pilgrims, they had to ascend towards Mount Zion to gather in their desired destination. But you know, what's interesting about these Jewish pilgrim psalms is that all these Jews, they would begin in their homes and in their families and in their neighbourhoods.

[4 : 3 4] And they would all gather together as friends and families. And they would all congregate together as one congregation. And just before they would begin their journey towards Jerusalem, they would meet at this central point in their village or town or city.

And from there, they would leave as one congregation and as one people. And they would begin their journey up towards Jerusalem. But just before they would set off, just before they would leave their home, someone would shout from within their travelling group.

Someone would say, let us go up. And the congregation that had gathered together, they would all respond by saying with one voice, we will go up.

And then they would begin their journey towards Jerusalem as this one congregation. And that's what we were singing about in Psalm 122, which was a song of ascents.

The psalmist says, I joyed when to the house of God. Go up, they said to me, Jerusalem within thy gates, our feet shall standing be. There was this great blessing of unity as the congregation travelled together towards Jerusalem to worship the Lord.

[5 : 51] But as we consider this psalm this evening, I want us to think of Psalm 133 as a sermon. It's a sermon about the blessing of unity.

And I say that because I believe that Psalm 133, it follows the pattern, you could say, of preaching a sermon. Because the pattern that's often associated with preaching a sermon is the pattern state, illustrate, and apply.

State, illustrate, and apply. That's the pattern Jesus often used. State, illustrate, apply. Jesus would make a statement, he would then illustrate it, and then he would apply it.

State, illustrate, apply. But that's what we see here in this sermon on the blessing of unity. We see the statement in verse 1. We see the illustration in verse 2.

And then the application in verse 3. State, illustrate, apply. So they are our headings this evening. State, illustrate, and apply. So first of all, we'll look at verse 1.

[6 : 57] The statement. It says, A song of ascents of David. Behold how good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together, or dwell in unity.

You know, the first thing I want you to notice about this sermon on the blessing of unity is the preacher. Because we're told in the title that this is a psalm, and it's not only a song of ascents, but it was written by King David.

King David is the preacher of this sermon on the blessing of unity. Which means that this song of ascents, it wasn't written from the perspective of the travelling pilgrim, like many of the other songs of ascents.

This psalm was written from the perspective of King David. And you know, you can almost imagine David as the king in Israel, and he's writing these precious words as he looks out of his palace window in Jerusalem.

And as David looks out over the horizon, all he can see is this great congregation of people walking towards Jerusalem. And as it was in their custom, they had come from all over the nation.

[8 : 10] They'd come from different homes and different families. They'd come from various villages and towns and cities. And they've all come together in unity as one congregation to worship the Lord.

And for David as the king in Israel, this must have been an amazing sight to see. It must have been so exciting for him to see thousands of people walking towards the city of Jerusalem.

But it would not only have been an amazing sight to see, it would have also been amazing to hear. Because as these traveling pilgrims, as they were walking together as a congregation, they were all singing.

They were singing these songs of ascent. They were singing Psalm 121. I to the hills will lift mine eyes. From whence doth come mine aid?

My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth hath made. They were singing Psalm 122. I joy to unto the house of God. Go up, they said to me. They were singing Psalm 125.

[9 : 13] They in the Lord that firmly thrust shall be like Zion hill, which at no time can be removed, but standeth ever still. These traveling pilgrims, they were walking together as one congregation, and they were all singing these songs of ascent.

And you know, it must have been amazing to hear all their voices singing songs of praise to the Lord. And it must have been amazing to see them all coming to Jerusalem to worship together. And as David sits in his palace watching these crowds of people coming to worship, he begins to write Psalm 133. He writes, Behold how good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity. And you know, it seems that David, he's in awe at this large congregation gathering together to worship the Lord. And he's in awe because he says, Behold.

Behold. And in the Psalms, the word behold, it's important because David is saying, Stop and consider this. Stop and consider what's being said here.

[10:26] David is urging us to stop and think about this glorious image of worshipers coming together in unity to praise the Lord. And David is saying, Stop and wonder at what the Lord has done.

because he's called these people to worship. He's called them to gather together to praise him. And he's gathered them from all over the land, from their villages and their towns and their city, from north, south, east, and west.

And he's called them to come together to worship. And they've come. They have come to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. And they've come to sing the songs of Zion.

And you know, David, he's saying here, Look at this. What a glorious sight. Look at what the Lord has done. This is the doing of the Lord.

It's wonderful in our eyes. He says, Behold, how good and how pleasant it is. David, he gives this double emphasis.

[11:29] How good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity. And David says, It's so good. It's so good to see people gathering together to worship the Lord and sing his praise.

It's so good to see people from different homes and different families and different backgrounds and different upbringings. And they're all gathering together to worship the one Lord.

And David says, It's so precious to see people coming together, to sit together, to dwell together in unity. unity. It's a precious sight to see people coming to praise the Lord.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity. And you know this word pleasant that David uses?

He says, how pleasant. The word pleasant carries the idea of sweet singing. And it emphasizes to us that David was in awe of all these people coming to Jerusalem to worship the Lord.

[12:39] And as they came closer and closer, their voices of sweet singing would have become louder and louder. And David is saying that the sound of sweet singing was so pleasant to hear.

Because as these pilgrims arrived in Jerusalem, as they were singing all these songs of ascents and praising the God of heaven, he says there was this sweet heavenly sound that rose up from their hearts in worship to the Lord.

And you know, my friend, that's what it should be like when we come together in worship. There should be singing and there should be praise. There should be this desire to lift up the name of Jesus.

But you know, there are some of you here who don't sing. You know, there's nothing more encouraging for a minister than to hear people singing. But some of you don't sing.

You don't even open your mouth. You don't praise the Lord who made you. The Lord who keeps you. The Lord who sustains you. Why is that? Why don't you sing?

[13:51] And you might say, I can't sing. But the Lord doesn't ask for perfect singing. He asks for worship. He asks you to ascribe worth to his name.

Because that's what worship is. It's all about ascribing praise and honour and glory to God because he is worthy. Worship is about ascribing worth-ship to God because of who he is and what he has done for us in Jesus Christ.

And our worship, whether it's poor or professional, our worship is to be a joyful noise to the Lord. So there's no excuse for not singing in church because we have come here this evening.

We've gathered together this evening to worship God. And David is reminding us this evening that our gathering together in worship it's a good thing and it's a pleasant thing because we're sitting together and dwelling together in unity.

Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity. But notice how David describes the congregation of people.

[15:06] These people who have come together to worship the Lord. He describes them as brothers. They're not just acquaintances. Or friends or neighbors or cousins.

David says they're brothers and sisters. There's this close bond between them all. There's a unity among them. There's a union between them as they come together to worship the Lord because they've all come together with one mind.

One focus. One desire. They've come to worship the Lord. And you know David he illustrates this unity and the union among the congregation.

He illustrates it in verse 2 because in this sermon on the blessing of unity David makes a statement about how good and how pleasant it is for a congregation to dwell together in unity. but then as we go into verse 2 David illustrates his statement. So state and secondly illustrate. Illustrate.

[16:13] He says 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.

And so in verse 2 David illustrates the goodness and the blessedness of people coming together in worship and dwelling together in unity.

And David illustrates this by describing the precious ointment that was poured upon the head of Aaron when he was ordained to his office as high priest.

And you know it's quite an interesting illustration to use to describe the blessing of unity among a worshipping congregation to use this illustration because in the Old Testament in the book of Exodus after the children of Israel had left Egypt and they were all travelling through the wilderness it was then that the Lord gave directions to Moses on how he is to be worshipped because the Lord wasn't to be worshipped any way that the people chose.

The Lord was to be worshipped in the manner and in the fashion that he commands in his word and the Lord commanded Moses to set apart the tribe of Levi.

[17:35] They were to be priests. They were to be ordained to the holy office of ministry in which they were to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people and they were to lead the people in worship.

The tribe of Levi were given a special and a sacred role in serving the Lord. But it was Aaron. Aaron who was Moses' brother. He was ordained to the office of high priest.

And Aaron's responsibility as the high priest was to be this mediator between God and the people. But Aaron he was set apart and ordained to be a high priest by being anointed.

And as David describes here Aaron was anointed by pouring precious oil upon his head. And it was precious oil because it was made up of the best spices and it gave off the sweetest fragrance.

We're told in Exodus chapter 30 that the holy anointing oil that was made from 500 shekels of liquid mar, 250 shekels of sweet smelling cinnamon, 250 shekels of sweet smelling cane, 500 shekels of cassia and a hin of olive oil.

[18:54] And with all these ingredients, these sacred and special ingredients, the holy anointing oil, it had this sweet fragrance. But for David here, the sweetness and the blessing of unity, it was when that holy anointing oil was poured over the head of Aaron.

That when Aaron was dressed in all his high priestly garments and he came to the door of the tabernacle, Moses was to take this holy anointing oil and he was to pour it over Aaron's head and anoint him.

And notice, David notes the flow of the precious oil. That as the holy anointing oil was poured upon Aaron's head, it flowed down his face, onto his beard.

He mentions the beard twice, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron. And it goes down his beard, onto his garments, down his robes, right to the edge of his feet.

And David, he describes this flow of precious oil that was poured upon his head and that it ran all the way down to Aaron's feet. And David says, that's what the blessing of unity is like.

[20:14] It's like a sweet fragrance of oil that flows from the head of the high priest to his feet. And you know, that's the imagery we're given in the New Testament where Jesus, he is the king, he is the head of the church and the church is the body.

Jesus is our great high priest. He is our mediator between God and men. And as the head of his church, every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, it flows down to his church through him.

And you know, this is the wonder and glory of it. That all the blessings of salvation, our redemption, our adoption, our justification, our sanctification, and ultimately our glorification, all our worship, all our prayers, all our unity, our oneness, everything is to be in his name.

And it's for his name. And it's to lift up his name. Because there's no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. It all comes down to us from our king and head, Jesus Christ.

And you know, there's nobody left out. We might think we're like at the feet of the body of Christ. But the flow is from the head right down to the feet.

[21:44] Everyone is covered. And you know, when Paul considered the beauty of what Jesus has done for his church and what Jesus is still doing for his church, all he could say at the end of

Romans 11 is, oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be glory, he says, forever and ever. Amen. My friend, David is reminding us that the blessing of unity is to be found by being one in Christ.

Christ. The blessing of unity is to be found by being one in Christ. And this is what Paul reminded the Galatians. He said, there is neither Jew nor Greek.

There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and there is no female. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And we read earlier Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

[22 : 51] He speaks about Jesus as the head and the church as the body. But he urged them at the beginning of chapter 4. He says, 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. And Paul said, we have to do this because there is one body.

There is one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

My friend, the blessing of unity is to be found by being one in Christ. And you know, that's what the word anointed means. It means to be Christed.

Aaron, you could say, he was Christed with precious oil when he was ordained as high priest. He was anointed with the blessing of Christ. And you know, that's what happens when we gather together in worship.

[24 : 00] That's what happens when we come together in unity. That's what happens when we sing the sweet songs of Jesus together. We're anointed with the blessing of Christ.

We're anointed with the blessing of Christ. My friend, when we gather together in unity, it's a good and a pleasant thing because we are anointed with the blessing of Jesus Christ.

And you know, this is where the application comes in. As we said, Psalm 133 is David's sermon on the blessing of unity. David is following the pattern of state, illustrate, apply.

In verse one, he made the statement that it's good, it's pleasant for us to dwell together in unity. In verse two, he's illustrated it by reminding us about the sweet fragrance that came from the oil poured upon Aaron's head.

But then in verse three, we have the application. So state, illustrate, and apply. We'll read the psalm again. He says, Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity.

[25 : 10] It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard of Aaron, running down on the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion.

For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore. David applies his sermon on the blessing of unity by likening it to the dew that fell upon Mount Hermon.

Mount Hermon is the highest mountain in the land of Israel. It's much taller than Mount Zion where Jerusalem is situated and where all these pilgrims were ascending.

But Mount Hermon, it's so tall that it's said that the dew which fell upon the mountain of Hermon, it fell like heavy rain.

It didn't fall like this invisible mist, but it fell and it falls like heavy rain. And so what David is saying here is that the blessing that flows down to us from our great head and high priest Jesus Christ.

[26 : 19] That blessing, that anointing, he says, it will fall upon us like heavy rain, like the heavy rain of Mount Hermon when we gather together in unity and worship the Lord as one congregation.

My friend, when we come together in unity, we are anointed with the blessing of Christ. But what is the blessing of Christ? What is this promised anointing?

We're told at the end of the psalm, life forevermore. Life that shall never end. The blessing of Jesus Christ is the promise of eternal life.

And David says, it's there that the Lord commands the blessing. It's there among the people, among the congregation, among the worshippers of the Lord.

It's there that the blessing of Jesus flows down to us in the promise of eternal life. Do you know what this means, my friend?

[27 : 23] That it's here, it's here that we will receive the blessing of the Lord and the promise of eternal life. Not in a building, but in a gathering such as this one, when people come together in

worship to praise the Lord.

It's here in the worship of God, under the word of God, hearing the will of God. This is where blessing is. This is where you will have that refreshing dew poured upon your soul.

This is where you will be strengthened and encouraged and challenged by God's word. This is where you will be confronted and consoled by the great comforter Jesus Christ.

This is where you will be reminded about your need to do business with God and close in with Christ and commit your life to him. My friend, this is where you will hear about the promise of eternal life that will never end.

Not in a building, but our gathering together as a congregation to worship the Lord. God. And you know, I just want to close by echoing David's sermon of state, illustrate, and apply.

[28 : 40] I want us to apply it to ourselves. Maybe personally, maybe directly, because the truth is it's good and it's pleasant to see so many of you here in church.

and you've been faithfully coming out week by week while we've been worshipping here in Borg. Some of you have been coming both morning and evening and it's so encouraging to see, so encouraging.

But you know, having considered David's sermon on the blessing of unity and the importance of gathering together for worship, as we resume services in Barvis next week, I don't want this to stop. I don't want it to go back to the way it was. I don't want to only worship with you once a month or only during the morning service.

I don't want you to withhold the blessing of unity by staying in your home or staying away because this psalm is reminding us that we are one congregation we are not Barvis or Barv, we are one congregation living together in one parish under one ministry, a ministry that many of you signed a call for and we're to be together, we're to worship one Lord, we're to support the work of the ministry together both in Barvis and here in Barv and we're to support that ministry whether that's church services or testimony evenings, we're to support the ministry as one congregation and you know I don't want anyone using excuses as to why they don't come to church, whether they're making lunch or they're too tired that they can't come to church in the morning,

[30 : 45] I don't want anyone using the excuse that they can't be in church because it's too far away, whether it's in Borv or it's in Barvis, because the thing is we all travel to town most days of the week, which is much farther.

My friend, David's sermon on the blessing of unity, it should remind you that you withhold the blessing of unity by staying in your home and staying away.

And yes, you might want to come out and support this building, a building that's been here for many generations and it's good for you to support this building and maintain the building.

But you know, I tell you, it's far more important for you to seek the blessing of Jesus upon your life. Because the reality is this building will still be standing when you are gone.

This building will still be here. these stones will still be standing when you are in the ground. So what's far more important for you is to be anointed by the blessing of Christ and receive the promise of eternal life.

[31 : 59] That's why we're to come and gather together, united as one congregation. Because it's here, not in this building, but in our gathering as a congregation.

That's where the blessing is. It's here that the Lord will command the blessing. That life that shall never end. Life that shall never end.

Is that not what you want? Life that shall never end. And so David, his sermon, as he sees all these people coming to church, church, he writes this sermon on the blessing of unity.

And he follows the pattern, state, illustrate, apply. In verse one, he made the statement, it's good and it's pleasant for us to dwell together in unity. In verse two, he illustrated the blessing of Jesus Christ upon his people by reminding us of this sweet anointing oil that flowed down the body of Aaron.

And in verse three, we have the application. We are one congregation living in one parish under one ministry.

[33 : 19] And we are to gather together to worship one Lord Jesus Christ because he is the only one who promises to us life, life that shall never end.

May the Lord bless this sermon to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for David's sermon and the reminder of how good and how pleasant it is for us to gather together in

unity.

And help us, Lord, we pray in our worship, all that we would be of one mind and one heart and one focus, or to see another save Jesus only, that our longing and our heart's desire would be to lift up his name, to glorify him and to enjoy him forever.

To know, Lord, that when we are in Christ, we are united to him by faith and we receive all the privileges of the sons of God. But help us, Lord, as a congregation, to have one focus and to have one desire, that in loving Jesus we would love those around us and desire for them that they too would come, that they too would worship the Lord with us and exalt his name together.

Bless us, Lord, we pray thee, bless our time together, we ask, that as we go into a new week, that whatever is before us, help us, Lord, to know thine hand upon us for good, that for those who may be going on holiday, Lord, that thou would us grand travelling mercies.

[35 : 05] Keep us safe, we pray, keep our going out and our coming in from this time forth and even forevermore. Take away our iniquity, receive us graciously, for Jesus sake.

Amen. We shall conclude by singing the words of that psalm, Psalm 133. Psalm 133, page 424.

And we'll sing the whole psalm. Behold how good a thing it is, and how becoming well together such as brethren are in unity to dwell. The whole psalm to God's praise.

Behold how good the feet it is On top, the covering well Together such as brethren In unity to dwell Like precious ointment On the hay that turned The bearded road In their own spirit

Unto the stern Did all of his garments go As Hermon's Jew The Jew that died On Zion hills descend For there the blessing God commands Like that shall never end The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all

[38 : 00] Now and forevermore Amen