

Psalm 133

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[0 : 00] Overlook at God's Word, can I just say a word about the Lord's Day of Zervan Society? I have just taken on the post all the Scottish secretary.

I've just been in the post for about five weeks. And so the whole thing is new to me. I would appreciate your prayers for my wife and I to be settled into this new ministry.

As you heard at the beginning of the service, I've been in the pastoral ministry for over 29 years. So it is a big change to start an itinerant ministry.

We'll be preaching and teaching around Scotland. The ministry is a preaching and teaching ministry with a special emphasis on the Lord's Day itself.

Tonight, God willing, I will be preaching on the Lord's Day and I hope that you'll be able to join us then. Because I think that the whole issue of the Lord's Day is up for grabs.

[1 : 02] Many people who traditionally worshipped and kept the Lord's Day as a Sabbath, especially in Scotland, are now questioning that.

And I do feel that we need to reclaim the theological ground and the reasons why the Lord's Day is special, why it is still a Christian Sabbath, and why not only should the people of God, but the whole nation regard it as such.

Sadly, even in England, among a lot of our evangelical brethren, this is not the case. So what does the Bible say? And I'd like to address some aspects of that this evening.

We do have a magazine that comes out three times a year called Day One Christian Ministries or Day One Magazine. And some of you who are familiar with the ministry of the Lord's Day of the Heaven Society will know that the name is being changed to Day One.

The magazine is free and I'll have some issues of this available tonight for you. If you would like to get it on a regular basis, then you'd be able to do that.

[2 : 12] It keeps you up to date with the issues regarding the Lord's Day in the whole of the UK. It speaks through about other social issues, especially the drinking and alcohol problems of the nation.

And it speaks about our other ministries, which are evangelism and the publishing good Christian literature. Day One Prison Ministries, for instance, started 25 years ago, giving out several hundred diaries to prisoners in Romand or convicted prisoners in their prisons.

Now we give out 170,000 free diaries every year to prisoners through the chaplaincies in the prisons. It's an amazing ministry.

It's a reaping fruit for God. And we have a worker who goes in and preaches the gospel in the prisons all over the country. It's a worthwhile ministry.

It's one I trust that you might be able to support in prayer. We live in difficult days, don't we, for the gospel? Christians, evangelicals are marginalized.

[3 : 21] The churches are in dire straits. In England, the Anglican church is just perhaps about to rip itself apart.

And the nation needs the gospel more than ever. The people of God need to be praying. And we need to be sure of what we believe, so that we can answer those who ask us for good reasons, for the hope that's in us.

So please do remember us in prayer. Remember this ministry. And these catalogs will be, this magazine will be available this evening.

Let us bow together in prayer before we come to God's word now. Father, we thank you for your grace through us. And we come again to your word. We thank you that it marks the high point in our worship to you.

For we want to hear your voice. What does God say? Help us to be open to what you say. We know, Lord, that our worship is incomplete unless we respond in faith to your word.

[4 : 29] And Father, we do pray for this congregation. We pray you will bless the elders and the leaders, the members and the friends who call this place the spiritual home.

To bear witness to Christ and his glory from this place. And we ask that you will bless and encourage them. And if you look for a pastor to lead the flock, we pray that in the days that lie ahead, very clear leading will be given to them.

And that, Lord, they will know the Lord undertaking. Help them in this time of interregnum to know what it is to look to the Lord, to be patient and at peace in the Lord.

And grant in the days that lie ahead, you will make your will so very plain to them. We pray for any who are sick in the congregation. And we ask that you will raise them up.

We pray that they will be close to you and they will know your presence. And even if they think of us today, in the Lord's house on the Lord's day, that they might be comforted by the presence of the Spirit of God.

[5 : 32] We pray, Heavenly Father, for our nation. As we mentioned, it needs revival. We look to you, for we know that you are the God of revival. We thank you we are your servants.

But all without you, we can do nothing. So we ask that you will come among us, reviving your church, that we might be witnesses to all this nation again.

Not only to the nation, but again to the corners of the world. Oh, how we thank you that you are building your church in other continents. And we know that many are leaving those continents to return to the old nations, as it were, with a gospel message.

Oh, help us, Lord. Revive us, Lord. And we pray and ask these things in the name of our Saviour. Be with us now as we turn to the open Bible.

And help us by your Spirit. These things we ask through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen. I want you to turn now back to the Old Testament and to the book of Psalms and to Psalm 133.

[6 : 38] Psalm 100 and 33. It's on page 625.

Psalm, it's a short psalm. Three verses. Psalm 133, verse 1. How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.

It is like precious oil poured on the head running down on the beard running down on Aaron's beard upon the collar of his robes.

It is as if the Jew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. Well, there the Lord bestows his blessing even life for evermore.

Amen. I want to consider the topic this morning of local church unity in terms of this psalm because it speaks to us of a united people and the blessing that God brings to them.

[7 : 52] This psalm is contained in the last of the five books that make up what we commonly call the Book of Psalms. It also is part of the fifteen psalms that we call the Songs of Degrees or the Songs of Assents.

And it is the penultimate psalm in that list. The list begins on Psalm 20 and runs therefore through to Psalm 134.

They are called the Songs of Assents because it is regarded by most commentators that these psalms were sung as the pilgrims moved toward Jerusalem to come to worship God.

The title of this psalm that has a title is Blessing Seen in Zion. Blessing Seen in Zion. In verse 1 the author makes a statement about the unity among God's people.

He says how good and how pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity. And then in verses 2 and 3 of the psalm he illustrates unity's blessing saying first of all that it is like the precious oil poured on the head running down on the beard running down on Aaron's beard.

[9 : 20] And in verse 3 he says it is as if the Jew of Hermon were falling upon Mount Zion. We think that David was the author of this psalm.

The historical occasion is as we read in 2 Samuel chapter 5. The commentator Malcolm Poole writes the psalm was composed by David upon the happy occasion of the ending of the civil war between the two houses of Saul and David which having felt the side effects of discord and unity both the king and the people were most sensible of a great blessing of reconciliation and unity. So this psalm we think was written at the ending of the civil war in Israel. The war between Saul and David. The nation had been divided.

They had been divided along lines of family but now they acknowledge that the Lord has set up a king. He has an anointed and they will be united under that anointed one.

I suppose in New Testament terms there is a parallel in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 when Paul writes to Corinthians and he reminds them that some in the church are saying well I am of Paul and I am of Apollos and I am of Cephas and some say well of course we are of Christ we are above all that.

[11 : 05] And where there is this unity in the local church then there is very often more laxity and doctrinal confusion as there was in the church at Corinth.

And how important it is then for the church to have a pastor the church to have strong leadership for the church to know God's blessing and for the people of God to be united behind that God given order.

Notice that our psalm starts by saying how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

Now if you are reading from an AD or a New King James you will notice another word there. You will notice the word behold. Behold how good and how pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.

Sadly I think the NIV omits that. Because I think it's rather important to the whole psalm. I think it gives an emphasis to the phenomenon that is about to be described.

[12 : 20] Behold is there in the Hebrew word henei. It means to take notice. It means to look at and to survey.

And therefore he's saying I want you to pause. I want you to behold. I want you to listen to what I'm saying. I want you to think about it just for a few moments more than perhaps you normally would do.

And I want you to think about this unity. This glorious unity. This spiritual unity that can exist among God's people. Behold how good and how pleasant it is.

You see David wants to call attention to something great and something wonderful and something important. And what is it?

It is the unity of the people of God. He wants the reader to stop and look at this sadly uncommon sight. Jesus said in the Gospels where two can agree in anything it will be done.

[13 : 29] I wonder if you're like me and you're startled when he said if two can agree. He only needs two. Two is sufficient.

But even two find it hard to agree. And here he's speaking about a whole nation. Here we're thinking about a whole local church.

When the whole church is united oh what blessing oh what joy God will bestow. And I see in David's language here his excitement.

Behold how good and how pleasant it is. Israel and Judah as we've said had known much strife and division over the years. But now David surveying the unity of God's people reconciled under his leadership he can highly contain his joy.

He wants everyone to take note of this rare and beautiful sight. And so he says behold how good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity.

[14 : 40] He's excited here. And we should be excited about this concept for it promises great blessing. And then I see experience here.

How good and how pleasant it is. This is something that David feels. It's something that's touching his soul.

A thing can be good and not pleasant. And it can be pleasant and not good. Sometimes our medicine is unpleasant but it's meant for our good.

And often usually always God's chastening chastening of his people chastening of those whom he loves and for whom Christ died is chastening of his people is unpleasant but it's always good.

It's always good. But David is talking here about something both good and pleasant. something therefore that should be desired.

[15 : 50] Something therefore that should be pursued. Something in the very correct sense should be coveted. It's good and it's pleasant. And the commentators tell us that it's obviously good in its source.

The source of this blessing is from God himself. The source of this holy accord is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us.

It comes from above. It's the fruit of the new birth. And Christians who are born again are under new management. They are saved by God's grace.

And from their hearts then should flow love toward one another day by day. It's good and pleasant in its source. And it's good and pleasant in its nature.

the fraternal accord that David is speaking about here is not a negative thing. Sadly, our fellowship is sometimes negative.

[16:59] That is, we're not speaking here of the absence simply of quarreling or disagreeing. But we're thinking here in this psalm of a fellowship that's positive.

A fellowship that delights in one another. A fellowship that supports one another. A fellowship that's working for one another's good. It's an experience of unity in feeling and in actions which are loving and kind.

How good and pleasant in its nature. We need to experience this. We all should feel welcome at home in the local churches.

And we want to experience this. But this is what our heart longs for. How good it is. How pleasant it is in its source. How good and pleasant in its nature.

And of course, how good and pleasant in its effect. Under this banner, everyone is a brother.

Everyone is a sister.

[18:09] It matters not a color. It matters not a nationality. It matters not our own tongue. Under this banner, we're all God's children.

All relatives. And the Bible teaches that we redeemed our brethren because we have the same Father. Hasn't he begotten us by his spirit?

Aren't we born again? How privileged, dear friends, it is to be born again. Dead religion is cold and hard. It's legalistic. But all to be born again and faith arises in the heart and the joy of the Lord is a strength.

And that no matter how hard our pilgrimage or how easy, there is a peace that passes all understanding. He's our Father, we're begotten by God.

And the Holy Spirit is within us if we love the Lord. The Bible says we cannot be a Christian unless the Spirit indwells us. And if he indwells us, then we're brethren.

[19:19] And Christ, of course, is our heavenly Lord, our Savior. We are under his lordship. He is king of the church. He is the head of the church.

He tells us the way to live and walk. And of course, we have a common faith, one faith, one hope, one baptism. What good hope we have.

The gospel of truth, then, is that foundation on which we stand. We are not ashamed. Didn't Paul say we're not ashamed of the gospel? It's the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.

Let's not be ashamed. What? At home? At university? At college? Let's speak well of Christ. Let's gossip the gospel. Let's tell of his love.

Well, this pleasant fellowship is good in its effect. It inspires us. Isn't it good to leave the house of God on the Lord's day? They're fresh. We come from the oasis that God has provided for us.

[20:23] And we ought to feel more strengthened to face tomorrow, to face Monday morning at work, to face the studies, to face the calling that God has given us, to face the challenges of the new week.

That's how we should feel when we dwell together in unity. The local church then ought to be a happy family within which is experienced these good and pleasant things.

So we're not speaking something here that is false. We're not forgetting the importance of truth and righteousness, righteousness, but we're taking to heart the command that Paul wrote to the Ephesians that we read earlier, endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Or as in the NIV, make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. So David speaks of a new found amity.

is found among God's people who are united and full of joy. And the tribes have settled the differences and now are united under God's chosen leader.

[21:40] I pray that God will give you then a new pastor so that you might be united and move forward with him together. The New Testament churches then should be a place of peace.

The unity granted by grace and received by gift. is to be kept through forbearing, through loving, through lowliness of heart.

Didn't we read these things in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians? Let's just read them again. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians chapter 4 when he says, Be completely humble and gentle.

Be patient, bearing with one another in love. make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Be completely humble. He's looking for that meek character in those who are redeemed. The word gentle there sometimes is translated meekness.

[22 : 44] But gentleness is the outward expression of the inward grace of meekness. God and so when we're meek in heart, then we're gentle towards one another.

He wants us to be like that. He wants us to bear with one another. He wants us to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Can't you see then his excitement about this?

Behold it. My friends, when we see it, we've got to behold it. We've got to ask the questions, why is it so? Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.

And so there's excitement here and there's experience here. But there's also thirdly explanation here. For he illustrates for us then what he's talking about.

And the first illustration is the illustration of fragrance. unity, fragrance. It's like the precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes.

[23 : 59] Now he's speaking here then of what we read in Exodus chapter 30 verses 22 to 30. He speaks of the anointing oil that was poured on Aaron's head of his consecration into the office of the high priesthood of Israel.

And in Exodus 30 we're told that this oil was very fragrant. It was made up of five ingredients. It was made up of liquid myrrh, probably about four kilos of it, sorry, four litres of it.

Sweet smelling cinnamon, and it probably came from Sri Lanka, two litres. Sweet smelling cane, perhaps from India, two litres, and cassia, another four litres, and olive oil, about four litres of olive oil.

And it was made then, not in small quantities, but by the gallon, probably about three and a half gallons in this recipe. And it was used to anoint the tabernacle and its contents, the altar, and then Aaron and his sons.

It was the precious anointing oil of Israel. And it of course was an essential oil. Aaron is not admitted to the office of the high priest, except he is first anointed with this special ointment.

[25 : 27] It was essential to his commission and his public acceptance. And the oil wasn't just sprinkled on Aaron as we see from Psalm 133, but it was emptied over his head.

How vivid the description is. It was poured on the head and it ran down his beard and then it came over his shoulders and down his robe and it eventually came to the tip of his garments and it dropped onto the floor and there would be a fragrant and beautiful smell to the natural senses.

It was sacred to God. It was appealing to God and it was appealing to men. And of course it was a sanctifying oil as well.

But this anointing was essential to his public acceptance. It separated him to the task of his office. He was being sanctified to God given the role as a high priest of Israel.

And surely in this friend we see a saviour. A saviour who said the spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me to preach the gospel.

[26 : 57] And Jesus Christ is the high priest of the church for he is the head of the body. All things he must have the preeminence. Hebrews tells us he's the great high priest who offered himself as a sacrifice on Calvary, an acceptable sacrifice, making atonement for our sins.

And the oil in the Bible represents the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is required to sanctify the believer's service and make it sweet before God.

love. And dear friends, when believers love one another, as they ought to be, as they ought to sow, then that fragrance of love will fill the air.

When they walk humbly and obediently and believingly, then it is like this precious ointment. And believers need to know the anointing.

They need to have the Spirit that we might love one another. Jesus said, love one another as I have loved you, for this is my commandment.

[28 : 14] By this shall all men know that you are my disciples. So unity, I think, he is illustrating this sanctifying grace of, so the oil here is illustrating this sanctifying grace of unity.

It makes us ready, dear friends, for the Lord's presence. It's symbolic of the anointing that's so essential if the work of God is to be done well. So the illustration is an illustration of fragrance, but it's also the illustration in verse 3 of freshness.

It's as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. Hermon and the northern part of Israel, a high mountain. The oil in verse 2 represents the Holy Spirit in his sanctifying power and fragrance. But here in verse 3, the dew represents the Holy Spirit, but this time in his reviving power and freshness. Psalm 72 says, God shall come down like the rain on morn glass.

God shall come and it shall still be fresh. Or Hosea 14, I will be as a dew unto Israel. We need God's dew.

[29 : 38] We need the Spirit, don't we? We can't be united without the Spirit. When I first went to the church that I just left, I preached a sermon, on the need of the Holy Spirit.

Dear friends, we can't live without the Holy Spirit. We've got to walk in the Spirit. We need to pray in the Spirit. We need to be led by the Spirit.

Unless we have this whole anointing of the Spirit, this Jew from heaven, then we cannot have the unity that's destroyed here. The Jew is essential to the well-being of all the nature in the Middle East.

It's essential to the health and freshness of the plant life. It waters the earth, it produces growth, it sustains life. It refreshes the parched earth and the wilted fauna and flora.

Without the Holy Spirit coming into our church, we are just like wilted plants. Oh, how we need the presence of God. Verse 3 then speaks of the great quantity of Jew that descends from Mount Hermon.

[30 : 46] The heaviness of the Jew in Mount Hermon is legendary. And so it's speaking of copious amounts of God's presence. So the picture then is one of copious amounts of blessing of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

It is saying that fraternal unity is rewarded by freshness and life and growth among the people of God. Dear friends, this is a beautiful thing.

A Jew soaked land in the sight of the people of God, united in love and action. He's explaining what he means.

Precious. Fragrance. And at the end of verse 3 he reminds us of fruitfulness. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

our heavenly father bestows blessing where unity is found. Blessing in the spiritual realm is God's prerogative.

[31 : 52] We have it here in this psalm. For there the Lord, for there Jehovah bestows his blessing.

It's God's prerogative. Blessing is God's work. But are we seeking his blessing? Then we must look to God to command it and bestow it.

But we must also look to ourselves and ask, are we hindering the promised blessing that this psalm speaks of?

For out of true unity and fraternal love, there flows divine peace and a presence which bestows life forever more.

Paul writes to the Corinthians in his second epistle and says, live in peace and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Live in peace and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

[32 : 57] So where there's harmony, there will be happiness. Where there's concord, there shall be usefulness. where there's unity, there shall be fruit.

This is the message of Psalm 133. The great Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon says in his Treasury of David, referring to these verses and they quote, Oh for more of this rare virtue.

Not the love which comes and goes, but that which dwells. Not the spirit which separates, but dwells together. Never shall we know the full power of the anointing until we are of one heart and one spirit.

And then in typical spagronic manner he prays, Lord, lead us into this most precious spiritual unity for thy son's sake.

Amen. surely all the people of God will say Amen. Behold, dear friends, how good and how pleasant it is.

[34 : 13] Do we want something good and pleasant? Something like the precious ointment? Something illustrated by the Jew of Hermon? Then there's need for all of God's children then to dwell together in the unity of love and in a bond of peace.

When we see that, as I said, behold it. Ask questions. Why is it so? For it is seldom seen. Let's be excited about it.

Let's pray for it. Let's ask God for it. That we might experience it afresh. And let's remember that it brings the fruitfulness of our souls.

For their God commands. For they're the blessing. The Lord bestows the blessing. Even life forevermore. Isn't that what we pray for? We pray to see souls saved, our children saved, our friends saved, our relatives saved, our nation saved.

In one hymn book, this psalm has been made into a hymn. And here's some of the words of it. How good a thing it is, how pleasant to behold, when brethren learn to live at one, the law of love uphold, as perfume by its scent, these fragrance all around, so life itself will sweeter be, where unity is fine.

[35 : 51] God calls us afresh to remember that he gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey him. He calls us to remember that we can grieve the Spirit.

His presence can leave us, not ultimately, not completely, for we know that once in him, in him forever, thus the eternal covenant stands.

But we know we can grieve him, he can leave us for a season. Oh, let him never leave us, let us never give him cause to leave us. Let us always love one another, let us always be full of faith, let us remember that it is good and pleasant and brethren live together in unity.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[38 : 20] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[43 : 20] Amen.