

The Blessing of Unity, Psalm 133

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Introduction

Jaimashi and good morning, my name is Brad and I'm one of the pastors here. This is Chali and she will be interpreting today's message. Before we begin I would like to honor someone. Over the past year Dan Bush has served both Antioch and Asa. His understanding of Nepali language and culture has especially been a blessing. He is currently taking another position. Dan, on behalf of everyone, thank you for serving brother. We pray blessings on your next steps.

I invite you to open your Bibles with me to Psalm 133. You can find on page 519 if you're using one of the Bibles in the chairs. The title of today's sermon is "The Blessing of Unity". The main idea of the sermon is this: God's gift of unity is ours to cherish and maintain. The outline of the passage will look like this:

- 1) Unity is Good and Pleasant - v. 1
- 2) Unity Comes Down from God - vv. 2-3a
- 3) Unity Shows That Jesus Dwells with Us - v. 3b

With that said, if you are able, please stand with me to honor the reading of God's word. Because the Bible commands the public reading of Scripture, we will read it in both languages. Church, hear the word of the Lord:

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

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. Psalm 133*

यात्राको एक गीत, दाऊदको भजन।

1 जब दाज्यू-भाइहरू एक साथ मिलेर बस्छन
त्यो अति नै राम्रो र आनन्दपूर्ण हुँदछ।

2 हारूनको शिरमा पोखिएको यो एक सुगन्धित तेल जस्तो लाग्छ।
त्यो तेल उनको दाहीबाट झर्दै उनको विशेष लुगाहरूमा बहन्छ।

3 यो हर्मोन पर्वतबाट आएर सियोन पर्वतमा झरिरहेको हिउँ जस्तो छ।
किनभने यो सियोनमा थियो,

जहाँ परमप्रभुले अनन्त जीवनको आशीर्वाद दिनुभएको थियो। भजनसंग्रह 133

Amen! You may be seated.

Exposition

One of the most valued experiences in the United States is when you get your driver's license. Getting a car and a license is a rite of passage. It means you can go anywhere you want, anytime you want. It's like you have become an adult. You no longer depend on others. The opposite is true later in life. When someone becomes too old to drive, it is a very difficult experience. The person is often sad they cannot go anywhere they want. They are now dependent on others again.

This is because American culture is very individualistic. Whether you were born in America or not, it affects you. Of course, it's not all bad. But it does make it hard to understand and obey parts of God's word.

The book of Psalms was the songs of God's Old Testament people. And Psalm 133 celebrates the *unity* of God's people. Even though we are the *United States*, unity does not come natural to us. You can see that in all the fighting between races, classes, age groups, political parties, family members, even churches. Because we were all created in the image of God, we all long for true unity. We all look for a place to belong.

But because we also depart from God's design, we also resist true unity. This is what the Bible calls sin. The prophet Isaiah puts it this way,

*All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way, Isaiah 53:6*

6 हामी सबै भँडा जस्तै लक्ष्यविहीन घुमिरह्यौं। हामी सबै आ-आफ्ना बाटो तिर लाग्यौं। परमप्रभुले हाम्रो दोषहरू माफ गरिदिनु भयो अनि हामीले आफ्ना सबै दोष उहाँमाथि थुपार्यौं। यशैया 53:6

So, when we see true unity, it is absolutely amazing.

1) Unity is Good and Pleasant - v. 1

This brings us to our first point this morning: unity is good and pleasant. Read with me in verse 1:

*¹ Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity! Psalm 133:1*

जब दाज्यू-भाइहरू एक साथ मिलेर बस्छन
त्यो अति नै राम्रो र आनन्दपूर्ण हुँदछ। भजनसंग्रह 133:1

The first word we read here is “Behold”. The author, David, really wants to get our attention.¹ What does he want us to look at? That unity is really good and really pleasant. Now, we don’t know the exact occasion here. Maybe it was when David became king, and all of Israel gathered with him in unity.² What we do know is some experience of unity was amazing him, so amazing that he wrote a song about it. And his people would sing this song as they gathered together in Jerusalem.

It also gives the picture of an extended family being able to live near one another, farming the same land, and taking care of one another. And not just blood relatives, but also debtors, slaves, and offenders, all being treated as brothers. It is people united to God, and therefore united to one another—even though they have many differences.³

And David was so excited about this because he had seen the opposite. As a king he had experienced the disunity that comes from jealousy, hatred, war, gossip, unforgiveness, pride. He had seen its destruction and felt its pain.⁴ All of us have also experienced disunity at times, in the church or in our family. We have seen its destruction and felt its pain. In both American and Nepali churches, it is normal for churches to split in two. Brothers and sisters, this should not be!

We will all feel tempted to turn to our own way sometimes. But here is what we must remember in order to fight for unity: it is good and pleasant. Why is being one so good

¹ W. S. Plumer, *Psalms*, Geneva Series Commentaries (Chelsea: Sheridan, 2016), 1137

² Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1973), 488

³ *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 1110; Kidner, 488

⁴ Plumer, 1139

and pleasant? Because our God is one! He is Father, Son, and Spirit, one God. We cannot be like God unless we too are one. And to be one, is good and pleasant.

2) Unity Comes Down from God - vv. 2-3a

But even if that is not enough to keep us united, David has more reasons. This brings us to our second point: unity comes down from God. Read with me in verse 2:

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! Psalm 2-3a*

2 हारूनको शिरमा पोखिएको यो एक सुगन्धित तेल जस्तो लाग्छ।
त्यो तेल उनको दाहीबाट झर्दै उनको विशेष लुगाहरूमा बहन्छ।
3 यो हर्मोन पर्वतबाट आएर सियोन पर्वतमा झरिरहेको हिउँ जस्तो छ।
किनभने यो सियोनमा थियो 133:2-3a

Here we have two descriptions of what unity is like. First, it is like oil running down Aaron's head and robe. This refers to the book of Exodus.⁵ God had set his people free from slavery through Moses. Afterward, God made Moses' brother Aaron a priest. Priests helped the people remain united to God. They made sacrifices for the sins of the people. On the day Aaron became priest, precious oil was poured on his head. This costly oil was for no other use. How good and pleasant it was to see and smell. This showed that Aaron was now appointed to God's holy work. It was a wonderful gift coming down from God.⁶

The second description of unity is like dew falling from Mount Hermon to Mount Zion. Hermon is the tallest mountain in Israel. Zion is another word for Jerusalem, the capital city of God's people. Dew is what allowed the land to be fruitful, especially in the dry season. So once again, how good and pleasant to have it! It also was a wonderful gift coming down from God.⁷

These two descriptions are clearly teaching us something: unity is a gift that comes down from God. Unity is not something we create on our own. We don't just choose to

⁵ Exodus 30:22-33; Leviticus 8:10-12

⁶ Plumer, 1138; ESV, 1110; Kidner, 488-489

⁷ ESV, 1110; Kidner, 489; Plumer, 1138

be in the family of God. God has to invite us, and make a way for us. He did that not just by pouring oil, not just by causing dew to fall, but by sending his Son, Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that we were all once outside God's family. But Jesus came down and made peace between us and God. He paid the price for us going our own way, by dying on the cross, being buried, and rising again. Then he ascended to heaven and sent his Spirit. That means when we believe and receive the Spirit, we aren't just united to God—we are also united to one another.⁸

This is how things were meant to be among God's people. If we see unity as a costly gift, if we see unity as a fruitful blessing, *we will cherish it*. We will sit together at lunch today. We will be patient with our differences in language and culture. We will work through our conflicts. We will see that Satan hates our unity, because he hates Jesus.⁹

3) Unity Shows That Jesus Dwells with Us - v. 3b

But when we cherish our unity, it shows that Jesus dwells with us. This brings us to our third point this morning. At the end of the psalm we read,

*For there the Lord has commanded the blessing,
life forevermore. Psalm 133*

जहाँ परमप्रभुले अनन्त जीवनको आशीर्वाद दिनुभएको थियो। भजनसंग्रह 133:3b

The Psalms are deeply connected to a particular place: the temple in Jerusalem where God's people worshiped. It was there that God's blessing fully flowed. It was there that God dwelled with his people. And where God dwells, there is life. When God's people were relating to him rightly, they were united to him and to one another. This unity is what God intended and commanded.¹⁰

And it is still what God intends and commands. Before Jesus died he prayed for us in John 17. Do you know what he prayed? He prayed that we would be one, just like he and the Father are one; so that the world would know that God still wants to dwell with his people.¹¹

And so Paul commanded us in Ephesians 4:

⁸ Ephesians 2:11-22

⁹ Plumer, 1140

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 28:1-6; Kidner, 489; Plumer, 1138-1139

¹¹ John 17:20-23

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. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:1-6

म कैदमा छु किन कि म प्रभुको हुँ। परमेश्वरले तिमीहरूलाई उनका मानिस भएर जीउन चुन्नु भयो। अब म तिमीहरूलाई परमेश्वरका मानिस भएर कसरी जीउनु पर्छ त्यो बताउछु। **2** सधैं नम्र र कोमल बन। धैर्य बन र आपस्तमा प्रेम पूर्वक रह। **3** आत्मा मार्फत तिमीहरू शान्तिपूर्क एक-अर्काका सम्बन्धित छौ। शान्तिको बन्धनले यस सम्बन्धलाई अटूट राख्ने भरसक कोशिश गर। **4** शरीर एउटै छ र आत्मा एउटै छ। आशा पनि एउटै छ जसकोलागि परमेश्वरले तिमीहरूलाई बोलाए। **5** एउटै प्रभु, एउटै विश्वास र एउटै बप्तिस्मा छ। **6** परमेश्वर एउटै हुनुहुन्छ जो सबका पिता हुनुहुन्छ। उहाँ सर्वोपरी हुनुहुन्छ, हरेक कुराबाट काम गर्नु हुन्छ अनि हरेकमा हुनुहुन्छ। एफिसी 4:1-6

This means we don't just cherish our unity, we also seek to maintain it. We don't just go our own way. We are not just individuals, but one family. This is why we are still sharing Integrated Gatherings. This is why we are sharing potluck lunches in one room. This is why we pray for more international churches to be planted and join this. Because here the Lord has commanded the blessing—not in a place, but in a people: the body of Christ.

Conclusion

This is why we are still celebrating baptisms together, the inclusion of new members of God's family...

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