

# Unity Eulogised

Psalm 133:1-3  
*Halifax: 19 March 2006*

## **Introduction:**

For the last six weeks or so, our theme-psalm or psalm-of-focus has been Psalm 45.

- We sang this Psalm each week to correspond with our sermon series in Matthew where we have been looking at the revelation of Jesus Christ to His disciples.
  - In this series,
    - We have seen how Christ began to speak to His disciples more directly and clearly about who He was
      - and about the work that He had come to do.
    - First, we saw how He confirmed and expanded upon Peter's Confession that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God.
    - Then we saw how He revealed that as Christ, He was to go to Jerusalem, suffer many things at the hands of the Sanhedrin, and be killed.
    - Then He presented His glory to Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration where they saw His deity revealed through His flesh...
    - And last week, we saw how He returned from the Mount and displayed His glorious power on earth to deliver us from our misery.

Today, I want to introduce you to a new theme-psalm that we will use as we move into a section of Matthew that speaks about how we are to live in His Kingdom.

- Of course there have been other sections about this already—especially the Sermon on the Mount...
  - But now that Jesus has told His disciples that He is going to be killed,
    - He is giving them instructions about how to live in love with others in the church that He has just now promised to build on the foundation of their testimony as inspired apostles.
    - They need to know how to live in the new community.
- The Psalm I have chosen for our theme-psalm as we study this portion of Matthew is Psalm 133, the “Unity Psalm” as it is affectionately called in the ARP.
  - Today, I want to expound this Psalm to you.
  - It is my prayer that this will help you to benefit more from this wonderful song as you sing it over the next few weeks.

The whole Psalm is a eulogy about unity.

- A eulogy is a statement of commendation or praise of something...
- Psalm 133 does nothing but call our attention to the excellence and desirability of brotherly concord among God's people.

**I. You see that the Psalm opens with a call to behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.**

- . You are simply called to take a look—to behold—to consider—the excellence of fraternal unity!
  0. David does not tell us how good unity is...
    - He calls us to look for ourselves—behold how good—how pleasant
      - Some of you have had sour marriages that Jesus has turned around—how good and how pleasant it is to dwell in unity!
      - We have known division in our church before, but now how good and how pleasant it is to dwell in unity!

TRANS> You are called by this psalm to take a good hard look at how good and how pleasant it is...

0. Surely this is something the church desperately needs to do!
  - . In all her history, there has never been a period of sustained unity in either the Old or New Testament.
    - God's people do such foolish things to destroy unity that you would think we don't realise how good and pleasant it is!
  - . What do you see today?
    - 0) On the one hand,
      - you see Christians dividing over a thousand trivial differences...
        - While we ought to care about doing things the way God has appointed, there is no need to form a new denomination about every little detail until we alone are left...
        - We are not yet perfect and if there are some differences about worship or about eschatology, we don't need to make a big fuss...
        - We can discuss these things, and we should, but we don't need to divide over every little thing...
          - Allowance must be made for growth and change...
          - Some brothers keep dividing over this and dividing over that until they are alone.

- See how Jesus, on the other hand, waited for His disciples to grow.

TRANS> So on the one hand there is this diving over a thousand trivial differences...

0) On the other hand,

- you see so many who, in the name of unity,
  - are willing to divide from Christ in order to get along with their brethren!
  - They are willing to forsake the clear and essential teachings of God's word in order to preserve unity!
    - We have churches that ordain homosexuals, that allow their ministers to reject the deity of Christ, and all sorts of other heresies!
- Those who tolerate such conduct in the name of unity actually divide themselves from Christ Himself!
  - They forsake unity with Him to have unity with their brethren!
  - Joining Baal worshippers is not to unite with God's people, but to forsake them.

. Our actions would indicate that we just don't cherish unity the way we should...

0) We don't promote it...

0) We don't pray for it...

0) We allow ourselves to act in ways that are contrary to it...

0. David, who wrote this psalm, certainly knew that this is true...

. For years, he experienced such division with Saul that he had to live in the wilderness to preserve his life...

- And then, even after Saul died...

- the kingdom was divided by civil strife—

- for 7½ years only Judah would recognise David as king...

- and then at last the kingdom was united...

- But even after this,

- David experienced a division that was even more painful—division within his own household,

- especially when his son Absalom rose up against him.

- . David was always a lover of unity,
    - but surely it must have seemed to him that by and large,
      - God's people did not cherish unity...
        - Their actions showed otherwise and so do ours today.
        - How we need to step back and take a good look at how good and how pleasant unity is!
          - Do you want in your home and in your church?
          - Do you cherish it?
- . But just what does it mean for brethren to dwell together in unity?
0. Above all, I think it refers to the communion in love that we are to have with each other.
- . Communion with each other has to do with open and exuberant giving and receiving.
    - When you dwell together in unity with your brethren,
      - It means that you are constantly giving to and receiving from one another...
      - It means that you are giving your life for them and they are giving their life for you.
      - It means that everyone looks on everyone else's needs and happiness as his own... and so
        - instead of being divided off from each other,
        - we are united—love is being exchanged back and forth from one to another with eagerness!
  - . God made us to live in this kind of unity with every other human being, and He has commanded us to live this way from the beginning!
- 0) This is the kind of unity that God the Father has enjoyed with God the Son and with God the Holy Spirit from all eternity...
- There is, among the members of the Trinity, an everlasting unity of love where each person continually gives to the others in ways that are beyond our understanding.
  - The Father gives all things to Son, and the Son always does what pleases the Father.
    - Love continually flows back and forth from one to another.

- 0) When God made us, He made us to live in a similar kind of unity with each other...
  - ) But for us, as His creatures, our communion begins with communion with Him, our Creator...
    - . It begins with the communion He gave us with Himself in the Garden...
      - As the fountain of life, He is the source of everything for us...
        - Every good and perfect gift is from Him...
        - In Him we live and more and have our being...
        - What do you have that you did not receive?
    - . He made us to receive from Him the fullness of life as His creatures,
      - I mean everything from food and clothing to kindness and wisdom.
      - If you have it, it came from God
        - We receive all from Him...
  - ) But He made us not only to receive, but also to give back to Him.
    - This you are to do in two ways:
      - . First, you are to give back thanksgiving and praise—
        - you are to worship Him for all His goodness and kindness to us...
      - . Secondly, you are to freely give to your neighbour for His sake...
        - You are to take from what He has given to you and share it with others...
        - God does not need your gifts,
          - but He receives them when you give them to your brother.
          - You love Him when you care for the sick or feed the hungry.
            - You give back to Him by giving to your neighbour.
            - When brethren are doing this, they dwell together in unity.

TRANS> And so you see that He made us to always live with each other in the love that He has enjoyed from all eternity!

- . Now I would ask you,
    - Isn't this beautiful?
      - How good and how pleasant!
        - a world of perfect communion where everyone lives for the good of his neighbour and where there is this constant communion of giving and receiving with God at the centre of it all!
      - Truly how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in such unity!
0. But of course you all know too well that sin has broken this sweet unity!
- . Instead of unity, we have division.
    - Instead of giving and receiving there is taking and destroying.
      - Instead of love there is hatred.
    - It seems that if we are not fragmented by division, then we are unified under oppression.
      - Our societies swing back and forth from fragmentation where everyone does what is right in his own eyes...
        - to rigid authoritarianism where selfish leaders oppress their subjects.
      - If we are not torn into a thousand pieces by the anarchy of an unprincipled and undisciplined society,
        - then we are oppressed under the thumb of a Hitler or a Stalin...
        - and if we have neither extreme, we have a mixture of the two!
          - Seldom do we dwell together in real unity as brethren!
  - . You have all experienced **how bad and how unpleasant** it is to live in this disunity!
    - Some of you have experienced the pain of a broken home,
      - many of you have known the agony of a church spilt...
      - You all know the division in the world today that is going on between Islam the rest of the world...
    - You have known what it is for the barriers of division to go up and set people at odds with each other...
      - For the communion of giving and receiving to be turned into a fellowship of attacking and being wounded by your neighbour.

- . The unity of the brethren that God appointed is destroyed whenever His commandments are broken.
  - 0) He tells us that the summary of His law is to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.
    - When we violate His commandments, we cease to live in the sweet unity that He has appointed.
  - 0) This is especially true when we violate the first table of the Ten Commandments, those first four that call us to love God...
    - ) If you worship another god than the true God, you are cutting yourself off from the One who is the source of all true giving and receiving.
      - Though people may join together in rebellion against the Lord and against His anointed,
        - And though they may work together and support one another in such rebellion...
        - It is not really unity that they promote, but division!
      - It is division because by worshipping other gods, they cut themselves off from their Creator who is the fountain of all giving.
        - Soon they will have nothing at all to give.
      - This is what happened to the human race when Adam and Eve forsook God—
        - They cut us off from the fountain of life.
    - ) So it is with idolatry and blasphemy and Sabbath breaking (the second third and fourth commandments)...
      - When you are no longer richly drinking from the fountain of your Creator, and are no longer returning worship and praise to Him...
        - You cut yourself off from the very foundation of true communion.
      - If you do not have the LORD, you have nothing worthwhile to give to anyone else...
        - You were made to share in His goodness with your neighbour, but if you reject Him,
          - even what you now have from Him will soon be taken away.
    - ) It is very important for you to understand this concept...

- . There have always been attempts at unity not rooted in God—such as there was at Babel...
  - Sometimes such unity even has as its very basis the rejection of God's authority so that everyone agrees to do what they want instead of submitting to God!
  - Such unity always leads to destruction!
  
- . That is why it is absolutely imperative that you never try to establish unity by rejecting God's truth!
  - It is one thing to realise that we are all not yet perfected and to allow for differences with each other...
    - but it is quite another thing to say that error does not matter!
    - Think about it...
      - Is it not much **worse** to be united in error than it is to be divided?
      - If the Nazis are all perfectly united, it is worse than if they were divided because their unity is not rooted in God.
  
- . Attempts to create unity by avoiding truth have been the great error of the modern church...
  - The ecumenical movement has been a communion of rebellion, leading to death,
    - rather than a communion of obedience, leading to life.
  - God must be at the centre of our unity or it is a wretched unity.
    - If we are giving and receiving polluted or poisoned waters to each other,
      - we are not giving and receiving life but death.

TRANS> You see how real brotherly unity is destroyed when the first table of the Ten Commandments is ignored...

- 0) Unity is also destroyed when you violate the second table of the Ten Commandments...
  - ) Instead of giving and receiving honour as the fifth commandment requires, we cast reproach and insult...
    - Parents who do not require honour from their children may do so in the name of love, but the Bible says they hate their children...



- ) Instead of giving and receiving life as the sixth commandment requires, we murder and destroy...
  - Sometime like abortion is touted as love to the mother (just as murder always get some unwanted person out of the way), but it destroys the unity of the brethren.
- ) Instead of giving and receiving chastity as the seventh commandment requires, we violate and commit adultery...
  - We claim that we are being free and gentle to tolerate adultery and immorality, but in fact we are chewing up the very building block of unity—the family as God ordained it.
- ) Instead of giving and receiving wealth as the eighth commandment requires, we steal and vandalise...
  - We think we are running a business to lovingly support our family, but if we are not being honest in that business, we are destroying unity.
- ) Instead of giving and receiving truth as the tenth commandment requires, we tell lies...
  - We think we have unity in our gossip ring or our support group, but in fact we are destroying unity...
  - We think we are showing love to withhold the doctrine of eternal punishment, but in fact we are hating our neighbour.
- ) Instead of giving and receiving best wishes as the tenth commandment requires, we envy and eye what is our neighbour's.
  - We think it will do no harm as long as these evil thoughts remain in our heart, but in fact we destroy brotherly concord.

TRANS> How sin has broken the sweet communion that God designed for the human race.

- But somehow, David is able to point to brethren enjoying such unity.
    - He bids us to look at it and consider how precious it is:
      - “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”
      - David seems to know of a place where this unity is to be found...
        - But where?
          - To what does David point?
0. You can be sure that when he speaks of the unity of the brethren, he refers to the unity we have restored in Jesus Christ!

- There is no real unity to be found apart from Him!
  - The Old Testament saints had unity in Christ promised and now we have unity in Christ given...
    - but without Him, there is no true unity
- . You see, Christ came to reconcile the sinful human race (in particular His elect) to God the Father.
  - 0) He is the brother who came to give...
    - He gave Himself for us to make our communion with God complete.
      - You see, our communion with God was broken by the fall...
      - In our rebellion, we ceased to give back to God the two things that are required of us (that I mentioned before)...
        - We did not give Him either the thanks and praise He requires...
        - Nor did we give Him the service to our neighbour that He requires.
  - 0) But Jesus came to give to His heavenly Father the worship and service that is required of us...
    - ) Not only did He give to God the worship and service that is due from every individual...
      - but He also gave to God the price that was required of us because of our rebellion...
      - There was a debt of justice that required us to bear God's wrath and curse...
        - But Jesus paid the full price when He suffered on the cross.
          - He gave to God what was required of us to make our communion with God complete!
          - He opened the channels of giving and receiving by giving to God what was required of us.
    - ) Now we have this good news to preach to the world...
      - the good news that whoever believes in Him has eternal life!
      - that is, if you believe in Christ for salvation, you are brought back into real communion with God!
        - Through Him, God has received all that is required of you so that your service is now accepted by Him.

- . Jesus brings us back into the circle of divine love so that we can once again give and receive from God...
  - And our giving to God includes giving love to our neighbour as an expression of our love to God.
    - Where you have two Christians loving their neighbour through Jesus—giving and receiving—you have brothers dwelling together in unity.
  - It is a beautiful thing—how good and how pleasant it is!
    - It is what we will do to perfection in heaven!
    - It is beautiful to see that Jesus, by His very act of giving to us, re-establishes giving and receiving among men.
      - He came receiving from His Father and giving to us so that we might begin giving and receiving again.
      - That is why His commandment is that we love one another.
        - That is how we are known as His disciples.
        - That is what He has restored us to
          - How good and pleasant thing a thing it is!

## **II. Christian unity is like the oil that was poured out on Aaron’s head.**

- That is what David says in verse 2.
  - v. 2: “It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments...”
- . In Aaron, we have a picture of Jesus Christ, anointed with the Holy Spirit.
  0. As the high priest, Aaron was anointed with oil—a lot of oil...
    - so much that it ran down his beard and then on down to the very skirts of his garments!
    - It was poured on his head with great extravagance just like the extravagance of the woman who poured oil on Jesus at Bethany.
  0. Now this oil running down the high priest is a picture of Holy Spirit being given to Christ in such extravagant abundance that He is given to every member of Christ’s body.
    - You see, the Spirit is given to Christ our priest because Christ has opened up communion with heaven again between God and man!
      - We receive from God the fullness of the Spirit, and by the powerful working of the Spirit, we are able to love our neighbour!

- The fruit of the Spirit is, above all else, love!
  - It is by God's gift through Jesus Christ that we are able to give to one another!
- . Consider how good and how pleasant this oil is!
0. First of all, the oil used to anoint the high priest was holy oil...
    - The particular formula was not to be used for any other purpose than to anoint the priest.
      - To say it was holy means it was set apart to be used only for God's appointed purpose.
    - So it is that the Spirit with all His gifts and graces is given to us only for the purpose of serving God.
      - Our service to our neighbour is to be dedicated entirely Him.
  0. Secondly, oil used to anoint the high priest was to be of a certain formula appointed by God...
    - We have just seen that it was not to be used by other purposes, but it was also the case that no other oil was to be used for this purpose.
    - This reminds us that the true unity of the brethren does not come by following our own ideas or our own commandments...
      - It does not come by walking in the spirit of the world or the spirit of legalism or the spirit of rebellion...
      - It comes only when we are filled with the Holy Spirit to walk in God's ways and keep in step with His Spirit.
        - I have already showed you how wrong things go when we, in the name of love, turn from God's commandments.
        - You will find unity that is good and pleasant only when you walk in the Spirit.
  0. Thirdly, the oil to anoint the high priest was very fragrant...
    - It was made with the finest of spices and let off a very delightful aroma.
      - This reminds us that when we are filled with the Spirit and live in communion of the Spirit,
        - there will be a sweet savour that pleases God and man.
    - When you walk into a home or a church, there is a savour of love wherever the oil of the Spirit is found...

- It is there between husband and wife, parents and children, elders and members, and one member to another.
  - It is a place of pleasant and sweet communion.
0. Fourthly, the oil to anoint the high priest was very precious—
- It was rare and costly...
    - And so we must remember that Jesus Christ had to pay a huge price to purchase this oil for us—
      - He had to bear the wrath and curse of the Father.
  - Wherever we have this communion, let us cherish it as purchased at so great a cost...
    - And let us therefore be willing to whatever price we must pay in order to live in loving holy communion in this world...
      - If there is persecution, know that the communion in the Spirit is worth it!
      - If your brother is in need, give sacrificially knowing that the communion of the Spirit is worth more than your riches...
      - If you must be patient and longsuffering to maintain communion, be willing to pay the price.

TRANS> So you see how Christian unity is like the precious oil that was poured on Aaron's head...

- It is given to us by Christ so that the whole body might be full of love forever and ever.
  - How good and how pleasant it is!

**III. In verse 3, David goes on to say that Christian unity is also like the dew of Hermon.**

- Hermon is a Mountain that arises some 10,000 feet.
  - In the area all around it, very heavy dews fall—
    - These dews provide moisture in places that would otherwise be parched and barren.
- . Now wherever there is Christian unity, and there is this giving and receiving of love from brother to brother that I have spoken about,
  - 0. It is just like that dew of Hermon that gives moisture to what would otherwise be barren and fruitless land.

- Jesus promised to give the Spirit to His people in such a way that rivers of living water might flow from their inmost being to others...
  - . The service of love that results is a service that is very fruitful...
    - It is a service that gives refreshes thirsty souls.
    - It is a service that ministers gently to the one who has gone astray...
    - It is a service that rebukes the stubborn ones...
    - It is a service that strengthens the weak...
    - It is a service that teaches and instructs with all wisdom...
    - It is a service that prays with and for others...
    - It is a service that feeds the hungry and clothes the naked...
    - It is a service that comforts those who sorrow...
  - . This dew of Hermon falls faithfully and fully to water souls
    - It speaks the truth in love so that we may grow up in all things into Him who the head—even Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.
    - Wherever it goes, it produces life.
0. This means that wherever brothers are unified, there is this fruitfulness—people are growing and being helped along...
- . If you are dwelling in Christian unity at home, the dew of Hermon is bringing forth fruit—the members of your home are growing in grace...
  - . Likewise, a friendship in Christian unity is a friendship that produces fruit—you and your friend are growing in grace through your communion...
  - . The same in the church where brothers dwell in unity—there is growth in the Spirit producing new life.
- . But why is this so?
- Why is it that wherever there is Christian unity, there is much fruit?
0. It is because, as it says in verse 3,
- “For **there** [where brothers dwell together in unity] the LORD commanded His blessing...”

- It cannot be that God should command a blessing and that a blessing should not come.
  - When God says, “let there be light,” there is light...
  - When He says, “let there be blessing,” there is blessing.
  - The home and the church and the relationship where there is this true brotherly love will be a fruitful society because God commands His blessing there!
  
- 0. And you see what the blessing is that God promises...
  - It is “Life forevermore.”
  
  - . This “life” is nothing else but life as God at first created it to be!
    - The life I spoke about before that lives in communion with God, receiving all things from Him,
      - and returning to Him worship and service—service to our neighbour.
  
  - . God promised to give this life long ago when He first called Abraham.
    - In Gen 12, He said:
      - “I will bless those that bless you and I will curse those that curse you.”
  
  - 0) Now what was He saying to Abraham but that those who dwell in unity with Abraham and his seed would be blessed with eternal life...
    - Abraham’s seed is Jesus Christ!
      - And as we have seen, it is by union with Jesus Christ that a barren, lost world is restored to living communion with God.
    - If you have union with Jesus Christ,
      - you have the life that God promises...
  
  - 0) And so we may conclude that it is in that society where Christ is that God commands His blessing.
    - That is where brothers dwell together in unity and that is where eternal life is!
  
  - . But realise what that blessing is!
    - It is the blessing of this unity about which I have been speaking...
      - It is the blessing of the communion of love with Christ and all His people forever and ever...
      - The communion of love that gives and receives and brings forth fruit and joy.

- This is the life that God brings His redeemed people into forevermore.
  - It is the life they are given through Jesus.
- . But where does it all begin...
  - 0) If God commands His blessing where brotherly unity is,
    - And His blessing is the life of brotherly unity...
    - Then which comes first?
      - The blessing that brings the brotherly unity or the brotherly unity that causes God to bless?
  - 0) My brothers and sisters, it begins with Jesus Christ!
    - He is the one who comes into a barren world giving Himself for us...
    - God blesses wherever Christ is because wherever Christ is, that is where brotherly love is.
    - If you are joined to Jesus Christ in loving faith, you have this life...
      - and you have it because Christ has brought it to you.
      - How good and how pleasant it is to dwell together in unity with Him!