

I still remember that night. It was Friday night in the High School stadium and it was halftime. Our local football team was not very good. So most people came to see the band play. Our marching band was rather big for the area we had around 120 members. 120 members playing two dozen different instruments, tubas flutes saxophones, bass drums, and xylophones trombones and baritones and more. All of them playing twice as many different parts of the same piece of music.

And while playing that song marching to 52 different spots on the field at varying speeds some as slow as 60 beats a minute some as fast as 180. The trick is that all of these movements are meant to be in complicated formations that the audience can see. Because even if you've never seen a marching band performed before you'd be able to tell when somebody is off. It's obvious if one flag is spinning slower than the other ones. It stands out when everybody is on their left foot and there's one person over there that's on their right. Or when everyone stops but somebody else takes a couple more steps. You can even tell when everyone's in a nice diagonal line and one person is just slightly 6 inches too far up.

But somehow on that night everyone was perfect. I didn't hear a single missed note. Nobody was out of step. That one flag girl that was always behind was with it. From up on top of the drum major stand I could see it all and I couldn't believe how perfectly united it was. A storm was actually coming in and it was supposed to rain so we were trying to hurry and get through as much of the show as we could. And right as the trumpets are blaring out the last big note the first movement. When I cut everyone off to stop lightning lit up the sky and Rain Came Crashing Down. So we just ran off the field. And I wasn't even angry or disappointed because I was just in awe of how United We Were.

There's something special that happens when people are united. Whether it is marching band or a sports team like Oklahoma girls softball team. The problem is that we rarely get to experience it. Or if we do we only get to see it as Spectators rather than participants. Our Psalm this morning in Psalms 133 is all about Unity. And the question I want us to wrestle with this morning is how can we get true Unity?

Point 1: Disunity is a curse (v. 1)

Verse 1, **"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity."**

This verse tells us about the goodness and pleasantness of unity. And we're going to get to how wonderful Unity is in our second point. But we need to see is that what this verse says positively is true. Positively it says that Unity is a good and pleasant thing. This also means that disunity is a bad and unpleasant thing.

In the Garden of Eden one of the first things that God said after He made man was that it's not good for man to be alone. That wasn't talking just about creating the institution of marriage. He meant that Humanity was created to live in unity with each other.

It is no coincidence that the first major act of sin after the fall was disunity between brothers.

And that disunity led to Cain murdering his brother.

part of the effect of the curse of sin is that we are no longer United.

That even brother will turn against brother.

That even in our families are in places where it should be easier than ever to be held together by Blood we can be ripped apart.

How terrible it is to experience that kind of division.

We experience that division now as a world.

We see other countries not as fellow human beings created in the image of God we are to love as our neighbors but as enemies and competition. Even in our own Nation we are divided.

Over and over I hear that we are more divided than ever as a nation.

We're divided by our values.

We are divided by our politics.

Were divided by religious beliefs.

And you can see the curse that that kind of division is.
When the things that divide us are stronger than what unites us you see how that starts to have very negative ramifications.
It's not good and pleasant to live in a divided nation.

It's bad when our families are divided.
Many of us probably have Division and disunity in our families.
Maybe there are people who cannot be in the same room together.
When you invite someone to come over they ask if that other person is going to be there because they won't be.
When you have division in your home it is incredibly unpleasant.

It is not just a curse because it is unpleasant.
Disunity is a result of the fall.
Sin tears us apart individually and corporately.
Sin divides us from each other.

Theologians argue over what God meant when He cursed the woman,
"your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you."
I'm not going to get into all of it.
But at the core I think it is about the disunity sin brings.
It tears what should be united together apart.

I am not going to spend very much time here.
Because we all know the discomfort and problems that division brings.
I don't think I have to convince you that living in a divided community is a curse.
We experience it daily all over our lives.

Point 2: Unity is a blessing (v. 1-3).

On the other hand, unity is a wonderful blessing.
This Psalm is all about the wonder and joy of experiencing it.

Verse 1, **"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity."**

Unity is good.

It is good in the same way that God declared creation was good.

That when God looked at the sun and the stars He said, **"It is good."**

Unity is a reminder of the shalom or peace we had in Eden.

It is good because it is what were always meant to experience.

It is also good because we can be content.

We do not need more.

We aren't seeking to leave the unity behind.

Nor are we trying to get something that could destroy it.

We are content to enjoy its goodness.

Unity is also pleasant.

The word here refers to things we can observe with our senses.

Things that our eyes see that delight like an orange and purple sunset.

Or the view of a valley from the top of a mountain.

Unity is like a pleasant taste.

It tastes as good as your favorite meal.

For me that would be the first bite of a massive steak burrito.

Unity tastes as good on your tongue as a cold glass of water after a hot summer day.

Unity is like a pleasant sound.

The sound of a group of people getting along is like a symphony.

It sounds as pleasant as a baby's laugh.

Or the sound of your favorite song.

Pleasant doesn't just mean "that's nice."

It is something that brings joy.

It takes us back to Eden.

It foreshadows what we will get to experience when Christ returns.
It is a foretaste of heaven.

This good and pleasantness is **"when brothers dwell in unity."**

This idea of dwelling together has to do with life.

It is the day today living.

It is when the house and the people that you live with or calm and united.

Is when your family is all on the same page.

It is when your city and your larger community is together.

It is not just when you are united about one event.

It is not just when you were united on one day.

It is when you have unity through the regular rhythms of life.

Remember these are the Psalms of ascent.

Israel is singing These as they ascend up the mountain towards Jerusalem.

They sing and pray these Psalms as they go for their annual pilgrimage to gather with the whole nation for worship.

That should be a uniting and exciting time.

But the real blessing is not just when there's Unity as people make pilgrimages.

The real blessing is when there is Unity as the people leave and dwell together.

When they can be United not just on the holidays but on the regular days.

When they can be United not just on the spiritual Mountaintop of Zion but in the valleys and everything in between.

David then uses two metaphors to paint a picture of the blessing of unity.

They may seem strange to us, but they made sense to Israel.

Verse 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!"**

So we have two things that the blessing of community is like.

He says that community is like oil poured on your head running down your beard.

And he means this as a positive thing.

I have a beard,

I don't think I would be very happy if any of you came and dumped precious oil on my head and it ran down my beard I would probably want to go take a shower.

But you have to look to the next verse to see that this is a blessing.

He says that this is Aaron's beard.

Aaron is Moses's brother.

And Aaron was chosen to be the first high priest in Israel.

Outside of the king the high priest would be one of the most important arguably the most important figure in the entire nation.

Every single Jew would know who Aaron is.

And they would know what this verse refers to.

This verse refers to the moment when the high priest is consecrated.

You can read about it in Exodus chapter 29.

It describes how you prepare the sacrifice for the priests.

You also prepare the sacrificial meals.

You bring the priests up to the entrance of the tent of meeting and you begin to put on the Priestly garments.

The high priests garments.

What Aaron would wear would be especially dazzling.

It would be a significant moment for Israel to watch as Aaron puts the robe on for the first time.

As the breastplate filled with all of the stones goes on his chest.

And after they are all dressed before they go into the tent,

they would take holy anointed oil and pour it on Aaron's head.

David is picturing this moment.

The joy and excitement that the assembly would feel as they watched the oil drip down there and said into his beard to touch the collars of the high priest's garment.

The oil was symbolic of their anointing.

Sometimes you might say things about pastors or preachers.

You might say something like wow they are really anointed.

Or you may say something more simple like God is clearly called.

God's hand is upon them.

They have been set apart.

The idea of anointing comes from this event.

It comes from when the priests would be Anointed with oil.

And the oil is symbolic of God's blessing.

It is symbolic of them being consecrated and made holy for this work they are engaging in.

It wasn't that long ago that we as a church ordained Rob for gospel Ministry.

Nor when you ordained me.

Were those not special days in the life of our church?

Wasn't it a day filled with joy as we watch the elders lay hands on us and pray over us?

As we took our vows to uphold the faith and to love and to care for God's Church?

We had a very simple ceremony.

We didn't have anything like the pageantry that's described here in the Old Testament.

Some ways it's a new testament reenactment of this moment that God is describing with Aaron.

On one hand it is to remind them of the joy of that day.

What a day that must have been when Israel was all gathered around to watch the first high priest and his sons be set apart for the priesthood. Some of the first sacrifices are made by their new priests.

Their whole future is ahead of them as a nation and it is a day of joy and celebration.

Because they are all united under these Godly leaders that God has clearly called.

But the blessing of unity is also like that anointing oil in another way.

That oil was a demonstration that the priests had been consecrated and made Holy by God.

It showed that they had been set apart by God

It showed that they were blessed.

In a similar way when we are united together, it shows that we have been blessed.

Jesus told His disciples that the world will know you are mine by how you love each other.

He says that our love and are you being united in Jesus is like that oil.

The oil ran down Aaron's head and beard to show to everyone that he was God's.

Our unity and love for one another is like that oil and should show the world that we are God's.

And it should be tangible and obvious.

If I dumped a thing of oil on your head you would notice immediately.

The love and unity that we have and the blessing that it brings should be obvious.

It should stand out the moment somebody walks in the room.

Verse 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."**

True Unity is as much a blessing as fresh dew in the morning.
Israel is a pretty arid climate.
They depended on the rain for moisture.
They couldn't just go out in the backyard and turn on the hose to water their crops or to get a drink.
So for them, the dew was a blessing.
They needed it in order to survive.

And Hermon is a mountain.
It is the tallest mountain in Israel.
Much of the year and has snow on the top.
Some of you have been to Israel may have seen it on your pilgrimage.

Mount Hermon is where much of the water for Israel comes from.
The snow and the rain often falls on the mountain.
And as that water melts it drips down and spreads throughout the nation.
Some of the streams and rivers that come down from the mountain eventually formed the Jordan River.
And Mount Hermon is on the North border of Israel.
Mount Zion is further south near Jerusalem.

The image he gives is the dew descending on all of his room.
That the rain and moisture they so desperately need would come down to them.
But the dew would come from as close to Heaven as they could see, and it would come to them.
This means that the blessing of the united community is refreshing.

We just had some of our good friends from Dallas come to visit us for a few days.
For a couple years we live together in the same apartment building on student housing while we were in seminary.
Brianna and Kendalyn would carpool together because they worked at the same school.

David and I would often grab a meal together or hang out in between classes.

And though we have many differences theologically there is a blessed Unity that our families have.

And it is always such a refreshing joy to get to spend time with them.

There are guests that you have that you can't wait till they leave.

Their guests that you have that you're glad you spent time with them but now you're tired and you need a nap.

And there are some people that you spend time with and it refreshes your soul.

David says the true unity should always be refreshing like that.

It should be like spending time with your closest friends.

It should be like precious rich oil and like the dew from the mountains.

Because unity is a blessing.

Unity is an incredible blessing but how can we get it?

Point 3: **True unity only comes through Jesus.**

The reality is that true Unity can only come through Jesus.

You cannot get true and Lasting Unity anywhere else.

You can find other kinds of unity but you won't find true Unity.

You might find false Unity.

This is the kind of unity that we most often see.

It is when people or places or a community or a team will put on a front.

They will act as if everything is okay but under the surface we know that we are not really United.

We can be United as long as we don't talk about that.

We can be United as long as we don't go there.

Well that isn't real Unity.

That's false Unity.

It is much like the Pharisees who clean the outside of the cup but the inside is disgusting.

That kind of unity is like a whitewashed tomb.

If you were having to pretend that you are not really experiencing true Unity.

Because true Unity can get into the hard stuff.

True Unity can have real discussions without threatening to destroy everything.

People will tell you you know you can discuss everything except for religion and politics.

Because we know that as soon as we discuss those things our false Unity might disappear.

Then we might have to confront the reality of what we really are.

That's false Unity.

It has the appearance of unity but not the substance.

There's also temporary Unity.

There's a kind of unity people can have around something.

And as long as the community is focused on that one thing they can be united.

A football team can be United by the uniform they wear and the desire to win the football game.

A group of Rescuers could be United in their desire to find someone who is missing.

A random group of Oklahoma's could be United in their desire to see their team win.

Or a group of people could be United by their love of the same movie or television show.

You see this, especially with fans of things.

They might be so United that they can throw conventions or conferences where they all just come to get together and celebrate the thing that unites them.

The kind of unity is real and good and wonderful.

But it is not true Unity it is only temporary.

This kind of unity only lasts as long as the thing everyone has in common is there.

But as soon as it goes away there's nothing else to hold people together.
The relationship begins to fracture.
And it can be so discouraging.

The reality is true Unity,
a Unity that is held together by more than just the fact that you and I happen to like the same things has to be based on something more.
It has to be based on something deeper than just our own desires.
It has to be based on something that can last.
It has to be built on the cornerstone.
It has to be built on Christ.
True Unity only comes through Jesus.

Verse 3, **"For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore."**

God has commanded the blessing of unity to come to His people.
Because true unity is a part of Life forevermore.
It is one of the consequences of Eternal life.
And eternal life can only come through Christ.

This is one of the things that the gospel accomplishes.
Because none of us are saved on our own.
It is not as if Jesus died on the cross just to save you and now it's just you and him and you can do your own thing you don't have to worry about anybody anywhere.
No part of what Jesus did is he adopts us into his family.
We are now Sons and Daughters of the kings of the cosmos.
And part of what that means is we are now brothers and sisters in Christ.
We are united by the blood of Jesus.

We should not be United in the same way as people are united and things that they like.

We are a part of the body of Christ.

We are one body.

And the unity that Jesus brings should not make any sense.

Jesus should unite people that honestly might not like each other if it wasn't for Jesus.

Have you met other Christians like that?

You don't have to raise your hand don't give yourself away.

You shouldn't feel bad in that moment.

You should recognize the Wonder of the Gospel.

Recognize the fact that you are united to somebody in your love for Jesus.

And that Jesus threw his work on the cross can help us be truly United in a way that we never would be apart from Him.

In the unity of Jesus should cross every line.

Jesus should unite people across class lines.

You should unite the rich and the poor.

That in the church we would be with people that we never would be otherwise.

Jesus should unite people across racial lines.

Were there has historically been tension and hatred and fear in Jesus there should be true Unity.

this is part of what the entire book of Acts is about.

God United the Jews and the Gentiles.

God United two groups of people who hated each other.

Who did not have anything in common who could not get along.

But in Jesus they were family.

Jesus should unite people across cultural lines.

That our churches aren't just all together because we're all from small towns and we all have the same cultural baggage and expectations. Jesus should and does unite people who have very little in common.

Jesus should unite people across national lines.

We should be United with people whose languages we don't even speak and can't understand.

Who's food dress music and everything about them is radically different than our own.

This is part of what God did at Pentecost.

When the Holy Spirit descended like fire.

And Peter preached and people from all over the world heard the gospel and understood it in their own language.

And all of them were saved and added to the body and community of God.

Babel was reversed as Jesus began his work of uniting us back together.

Jesus should Unite men and women.

Unites us as brothers and sisters who really do love each other and treat each other as we should.

Jesus should Unite churches.

We are not meant to be our own little kingdoms fighting and scrapping with one another for our piece of the pie.

We are not meant to be competing with one another.

We are to be United as a part of The Universal Church who's following Jesus.

One of the ways that we practice this as a church is that we gather every single week to worship.

We come together as a corporate body.

We come as members of the same community.

We come not just for our individual worship of God but so that we can do it together United by Jesus.

The commanded not forsake the Gathering of the Brethren because we are not to forsake our Unity.

Every week as We Gather for worship, whether we recognize it or not God is slowly uniting Us in him.

One way that this happens is through communion.

Originally I was hoping that we would observe communion this Sunday that we hit this passage but we have some problems with their communion supplies.

But I'm going to teach on it a little anyway.

One of the purposes of the communion meal is not just to remember Jesus but it is something that we do together.

It is uniting meal.

This is partially why when Jesus instituted the ordinance of communion there was one cup and one piece of bread.

They all ate and drank together from the same cup as a sign of their Unity.

Part of why you can't take communion by yourself.

I've had people ask me that before.

Or tell me that sometimes just to be spiritually encouraged they pray on their own and sit down and take communion to remember Jesus.

You can drink some juice or wine or eat some bread by yourself but that's not communion.

Communion takes the whole body.

You can't do that on your own anymore than you can have family dinner by yourself.

The family has to be there.

For you to take communion the whole Gathering has to be there so we can do it together.

It's not about the pastor leading it it is about the church partaking of it with you.

This is also why the Corinthians got in a lot of trouble in 1st Corinthians. They would come together and they would be divided. They would be fighting with one another they'd be arguing with each other.

Or someone would be over there taking communion and someone over there wouldn't get any.

And Paul told them I don't know what you're doing but that's not communion.

Because you actually need to be United as a church in order for that to be communion.

So one of the blessings of being united is that we do get to participate together in communion.

And one of the blessings of communion is that it helps unite us as we go together before the throne of grace.

So Jesus is the only thing that can unite us.

Jesus is the only one who can bring true and Lasting Unity.

Jesus is the only one who can bring true and Lasting unity and peace to our world.

And one day when Jesus returns he will bring it.

One day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess and every language on the Earth.

Every language that ever has been or will be will cry out and worship to our God.

And we will be United under one flag and it's not that one.

We will be United under one king and none of us get a vote on who it is because it's Jesus.

And when Jesus comes there will be peace on Earth and true Unity that will last forever.

And only Jesus can bring that.
In Jesus gives us a taste of it now.

CONCLUSION:

Disunity is a curse. Unity is a blessing. And true unity only comes through Jesus.

As we follow Jesus we are united with Him. And we are united to the greatest symphony and the great crowd of witnesses playing the same song for the glory of God. How good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity. May we experience that blessing through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us pray.