

Good and Pleasant

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[0 : 0 0] Psalm 133. Psalm 133. I thought that Zechariah might have a hard time tonight. Lydia normally sings with him. She's on her way to Thailand, as they said.

And so I thought for a moment he was just going to do a silent protest. And her honor just set the mic down and not sing until she returns. Psalm 133. We continue in these songs of ascent. They're called pilgrim songs.

The Israelite pilgrims, they would rehearse or sing these songs as they were traveling to the annual feast. Three annual feasts that we've looked at before in the book of Deuteronomy. And here's the celebration of the blessings of this covenant fellowship seen in the unity of brothers.

The celebration of this covenant fellowship that they have. I'm going to read to you the three verses for you. It's short, but it is loaded with rich, wonderful truth tonight.

As I read, I want you to look for a few things. You'll see that the psalmist here expresses how appropriate the delight that they would have in dwelling together. He says it's good and that it's pleasant.

[1 : 0 1] Also, you'll see that they compare it here in assembly with the anointing oil of the priest and the dew of Mount Hermon. And we'll speak about what both of those mean. How the anointing oil flows down from the priest's head through his beard to his collar.

And how the dew of Mount Hermon is falling on Zion. And then lastly, we'll see how the psalmist emphasizes that Zion is where the Lord bestows the blessings of life.

Verse 1. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard. Even Aaron's beard that went down to the skirts of his garments.

And the dew of Hermon as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord had commanded the blessings, even life forevermore. First thing that we see here is how fitting and pleasing it is for us to dwell together or for brethren.

It said how good and pleasant. Goodness means it's what ought to be done. It is the correct thing to be done. And pleasant means it's something that we would want to happen both together.

[2 : 0 6] Not everything in life comes like that. Thought about the candy. I think it's good and plenty, right? I thought about giving everybody good and plenty. At first was thinking it was good and pleasant. I'm thinking, I can't believe they made a candy after this.

And then after Googling it, I realized it wasn't good and pleasant. It was good and plenty. But a lot of things don't come together like that. Luke, my nephew over here, he is going to be married soon.

And so he is now seeing the joys of taking care of a home, right? And so there's responsibilities that he has with washer and dryers and all these different things that are needed.

But they're not necessarily pleasant. There are other things in life that we might consider pleasant, but they may not be good for us. I'm thinking chocolate-covered pretzels, all right?

I'm thinking of things like that. But when you can find something that is good for you, prescribed to you by God, and it's pleasant, what a wonderful place to stop for a little bit and say, thank you, Lord, for it.

[3 : 03] Here in this story or in this song here, it is speaking about the fellowship of us dwelling together. It's our duty. It's our delight. It's our job.

It's our joy. It's unity that's brought together by being more than just being in the same location. Psalm 135.3 says, Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good. Sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant.

It's coming together, dwelling together. So the psalm says, For brethren that dwell together. I think we could very quickly have an idea what it means to dwell together. But to make sure we really dial in exactly what's being said.

First time we see this in Genesis. It speaks in Genesis 13.16. It says, It speaks of people coming and setting up a tent.

One family had set up shop. Another family says, We're going to come besides you, and we're going to dwell together. And it grew, and it grew. This was so that they could defend one another.

[4 : 06] The family interests. They could work together. Think maybe like extended family. We all say that on a time. This person is like an uncle to me.

This person is like an aunt. These people are like family to me. What we're saying is that we dwell together. That we share our lives together. Another time in Judges, it speaks about this dwelling together.

And it says in Judges 19.6, And they sat down and they did eat and drink both of them together. And so that speaks of spending time together. This dwelling together. In this case, they're dwelling together as they are on a journey.

And so they're not just in tents together, but they're celebrating truth together. They're not just surrounding a camp, but they are in Christ. So I said at the offset of the sermon that they are celebrating this covenant fellowship, that they have found unity together inside of a truth.

It wasn't geographical location. It wasn't in their tents. It wasn't in their vocation. It's that they were all coming together to celebrate a truth. A.W. Tozer speaks about a unity that's rooted in the goodness and praise of God.

[5 : 16] He says it like this. Has it ever occurred to you that 100 pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? It's a wonderful picture how unity should happen.

We don't pursue unity. We pursue truth. And the result of that is a wonderful unity. In that same book, The Pursuit of God, he says, Unity comes into church not as we pursue, but as we pursue God together.

Pianos are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard, to one which one must individually bow. So 100 worshipers meeting together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be where they to become unity conscience and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.

We were just encouraged to turn our eyes upon Jesus and to look to Him. And in pursuing Him, there's a closeness that we get to experience that only a fellow Christian can really understand.

You can read a psalm like 133 and say, I know exactly what it is that you're talking about. I kind of miss the kids tonight. I know that they're going to want them. But they make this place a lot more lively, all right?

- [6 : 28] It's a little calmer in here, but I enjoy that. But y'all are harder than the kids because you don't look like you're moving at all, all right? You look like you're painted there.
- So I'm going to need a little bit of help. This is something that I would do in FCA when speaking about the power that we could have as Christians on a campus together. And so I'd ask all of them, and some of you, not everybody is Jared Farrell and still a natural athlete.
- Some of you have resigned a long time ago. So name the sport that you might have played in school. And so say, all of you, yell out your name and the position you play in sports on the count of three.
- One, two, three. All right. But Gina is the only one in here that's excited about it, all right? One more time. Just make up something, all right?
- Nobody's going to know. Just say something. One, two, three. All right. Fantastic. So that did not have much say, much power. Then I said, how about this?
- [7 : 27] On the count of three, you're not going to say your own name. You're going to say Jesus. And you're not going to talk about what position you have because that isn't the most identifying thing about you. It's Jesus.
- So how about on the count of three, we all say Jesus. Ready? One, two, three. Jesus. See, you're good at that, all right? You aren't very athletic, but you guys love Jesus. And our softball team is very much evidence of that fact, all right?
- We do love Jesus, all right? We're out there, you know, encouraging other teams. This is our year, though. This is our year, all right? And so that unity together around Jesus, we all say our own thing.
- We all promote our own agenda. We try to make a name for ourselves. You'll go through school, and you won't make the difference that you could. But if you and your friends will get together and say, my name doesn't matter. My position doesn't matter.
- The thing that I want to have to speak about is Jesus. And then unity, it's a blessing that flows from God. That's what we have in verse number two for us.
- [8 : 25] And like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment. This precious ointment that was poured upon his head ran down from his beard all the way to his collars and down to the very bottom of his garments.
- It's anointing oil for the priest. The psalmist first compares these people's dwelling together to the oil that was used to anoint the priest, Aaron. If you'd like to read about it, those of us with a beard, we wake up every morning and we read Exodus chapter 30 about the anointing oil that was a special oil prepared for the sanctuary use.
- And, but you can read about it. But later on, look at, if you will look at Luke or Leviticus chapter number eight, verses one through three. I'll read it. Maybe you can follow along in your Bible.
- But this gets brought up. The ceremony of anointing recalls the wilderness experience that's described here in Leviticus. And it says, And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread.
- And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The idea of this anointing oil that was used for the sacred purpose would have been, they would have caught on very quick to what was being spoken about.
- [9 : 50] But it doesn't take a whole lot of imagination. You haven't needed to see this before. In your life, I guess in our context, we would think about the pies that goes in Zachariah's face, all right?

When Lydia anointed his beard with a shaving cream or a pie, this vacation Bible school, and it stayed with them, and it flows down. But some of the things, this unity, it speaks about running down.

You're going to see this expression twice, this running down. Unity among brothers, according to the simile, is from God, and it sets the relationship apart as spiritual and useful here.

It's more than they could ever deserve. It was more than that was needed. It was going to flow down. Jackie Chris left some essential oils on my desk one time for Stephanie around Christmas time.

And Brett, I thought, I wondered what it would be like if I was to put cinnamon essential oil in my beard, all right? I'm pretty sure I saw Jesus that day, all right? It was a bad idea.

[10 : 50] It was not just a little dab in my hand, the bit of like here. That's what I did. This is not what we're talking about. We're talking about an excessive amount of oil to the point that it is made for that purpose, the flow downward here.

It's excessive from the head, the beard, all the way to the collar. It's not negative or messy. That's not what it's speaking of here. It's speaking about abundance and the unity of people was a blessing that came down from heaven and that came all over those people.

And I ask you tonight, and I know that you have on a Thursday night, most certainly you have, experienced the love and fellowship that comes from God through his people.

And it's just one of the most wonderful things in all the world. It really is. The reason we preach through the Bible is because it allows us to make sure we preach the whole counsel of God and we have varied topics.

But if I did not do that, I promise you about every third sermon, I would preach about Christian fellowship and how wonderful it is. My life was absolutely radically changed as a teenager when I stood around in church fellowship in the home of the Henson's stealing no-baked cookies from her cookie jar and realizing this is one of the most wonderful things, this side of heaven.

[12 : 06] And until I can go to heaven to be with Jesus, I want to spend my days with his people. It was something that flowed from God down to me through his people.

And that's the direction that we're talking about, that down here. And it continues. So the first one is this picture of it flowing down. And the next one is the dew of Hermon, verse 3. And the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessings, even life forevermore.

And so, as I said before, these people quickly would have known the dew of Hermon. What's so wonderful is that the Bible allows us to know the power of those statements by giving us the history, the education, the geography, and everything we would need to really appreciate this verse.

So Mount Hermon was the highest mountain in Israel. For its dew and gentle rains kept the hill alive with moisture. A hundred miles to the south is Jerusalem, the city of David, the holy place where people met God in his tabernacle.

And unity among brothers is like the life-giving dew of Hermon settling on Zion. And because the Lord had established this as his plan, and it was wonderful.

[13 : 19] It was life-giving. This fellowship, it flowed down, came from God, and it was life-giving. Over the last few weeks, getting ready for our missions conference, we've spoken, we've been speaking a lot about one to another around the church.

And if you come anywhere near me, you probably know this about me. I just find one thing at a time that I just kind of obsess about. And I think about it and talk about it. And I do that for several weeks. And then I pick something else, all right?

And I do that. For me right now, the thing that I'm obsessing about is this idea of member care one to another, not as a program of the church, but as channels of life-giving encouragement from God through his people to one another.

And in our missions conference, we're going to speak about how, and then Pastor Dutrie will encourage us in the joyful duty that we have to develop, send, and care for our covenant members.

I'm working on that sentence, all right? I'll have it down by the missions conference. But that joyful responsibility that we have, that not only would that love that God would pour into our hearts, would pour over in the local community and one to another.

[14 : 31] But it would be so strong that it would not be stopped by distance, that we would really care for those that are on the other side of the world as it was given to us to do as from the Lord.

And so the Lord commanded this blessing, verse 3, and the dew of Hermon, as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore.

The psalm has made a transition from the simple idea of people dwelling together to a sanctuary where the blessings are bestowed. And the whole idea of this blessing harmonizes with the emphasis on their dwelling together in their lands.

This whole idea of blessing harmonizes with the emphasis of dwelling together around God's word and praising. Community is praiseworthy, but dependent on the Lord. I love seeing community take place around me.

I love it. Dan, I'm getting into football, as you know, and Tuesday night lights, that's the middle school version of Friday night lights, all right? And we were out there together, and after the game, there's the coach who's standing at the end zone, and all the players are around them, the cheerleaders are behind them, all the family is standing, waiting for their kids.

[15 : 47] And there's just hundreds of people, 30 minutes after a game, and like a little girl, sorry, little girls, all right? But like a little girl, I get emotional. I just look at this, and I just think, how wonderful is this?

Because I just know that kids aren't supposed to grow up running on football fields by themselves. That kids aren't supposed to be growing up doing things and looking up and nobody paying attention to them.

But for me, in my life, it was the local church that was always there to cheer me on, whether it was on the sports, the basketball, or it was in Bible drills, or when I went off to college, they were always there for me.

And I want, with everything in my life, to give that to your kids and the next generation that follows, because it's just, it's life-giving, and it's from God, and He gives it to us in abundance.

And we're not going to run out of it. You're not going to just love so much that we just dry up. That's not going to happen. So before we sing that song, which y'all did a very good job on, I would say, that we sung God Bless the Tie That Binds, we'll sing that as we end the night.

[16 : 54] And as we sing, maybe you'll take a moment, and you'll thank God for the Becky Henson's in your life that had no baked cookies, and who was always caring for you. And maybe you would renew your commitment to say, that's what I want to be in this church as well, what's been given.

But before I get to that, how wonderful the fellowship, how much more the fellowship that we have between believers. It's called good, and it's called pleasant. And so here's some more of that dew that has descended from above upon us.

Ephesians 2, 3 through 18. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of the commandments contained in ordinances, for to make himself twain one new man, so making peace.

That's how God made the church. His son died so that we could be brought together. And so that he might be reconciled both unto God and one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, and came and preached peace to the one which were far off, and to them that were nigh.

For though him we would both have access by one spirit unto the Father, the death of the cross brought peace with God, and allows for unity among those of us who have access to the Father by his death.

[18 : 14] Jesus Christ, who lived the perfect life in my place, died to make the church possible. And so I want to give my life to it, and I want to encourage you to do the same as well.

He said, he said, it is good and pleasant. So we're brothers and sisters who gather not at a single appointed temple, but we rally around the single anointed person dwelling together with each other as we draw closer to him.

One more time, not your sports team, and not your occupation, and not even your name, but that one name that matters. One, two, three.

Jesus. Blessed be the tie that binds. Our hearts is Christian love. The fellowship of kindred minds is like that above. Heavenly Father, I thank you for this church family.

Lord, I thank you that I have not had to walk away from the Christian warmth that you at a young age, put a church in my life that allowed me to be raised and lorded so many ways, Lord, this church continues to allow me to grow in my family.

[19 : 20] And I am so tremendously blessed by them. Father, you said for us to behold, for us to stop and to listen. Tonight at this psalm, we behold, we stop, we listen, we pay attention to what you have to say for us.

Father, you said that it's good and it's pleasant what we are doing. And we dwell together in unity. Not one that is forced, not one that is fabricated, one that is upheld by programs, but one that is held, Lord, by us finding our identity in you.

One in finding us knowing and loving and celebrating you. Father, it's like a precious ointment that flows down from our head to, Lord, my beard, Lord, down to my garments.

It just covers my life absolutely completely. Every part of my life, Lord, has been touched by this Christian fellowship that you allow me to be part of. And I say thank you. As to do with Herman, Lord, it has been life-giving.

At times, Lord, when my life felt dry and I needed something, one of these people walked into my life as a cold drink of water. Lord, I thank you for it. It is beautiful.

[20 : 24] It is wonderful. And it is the blessings of eternal life, Lord, that we have felt already in our lives that you have given to us. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.