

## ACTS OF WORSHIP—SUPPLICATION: PSALM 133

### Psalm 133

*A song of ascents. Of David.*

- <sup>1</sup> How good and pleasant it is  
when God's people live together in unity!  
<sup>2</sup> It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron's beard,  
down on the collar of his robe.  
<sup>3</sup> It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.  
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,  
even life forevermore.

### MESSAGE NOTES

#### Social and Historical Context

This song was widely used when thousands of pilgrims would come back to Jerusalem for celebrations of different kinds. Most scholars would say it was originally written when the tribes of Israel would get together after they were separated by force of Exile, different wars or fights among themselves, now together on the crowning of David, as King.

#### Basic Structure and Message

This psalm focuses on how a community interacts with all its members. Do they evidence and sustain strong bonds of unity and harmony of fraternal nature? A community with real unity and harmony will experience high degrees of enjoyment, satisfaction and pleasure. Advocates for a human conduct that has intrinsic benefits and glorifies God. This is not a revealed truth, but more an anthropological observation of human life, family or society.

#### Verse 1

Starts with **admiration**, admiring something if not new, certainly freshly re-discovered. But also has an **exclamation**, "How good" ... something with unique high levels of quality, purity and specific rare beauty, a refreshing delight!! Living together as sisters and brothers in **unity** (together, on the same page) and **harmony** (coordination in movement).

#### Verse 2

Presents two examples of what that is like, first is the image of the consecration or anointing of Aaron, as the first high priest. The formula for the anointing oil was very specific, considered holy and forbidden to use by other humans or make it for any other purpose. This is a very powerful image that connects with every person in Israel, illustrating the sacredness of this act and placing the "living in unity and harmony" in the community as sacred.

#### Verse 3

The second example is Mount Hermon, about 100 miles north of Israel, so high that some parts are covered with the perpetual snow. The dew there is said to be so heavy that in the morning it looks like it rained there overnight. Mount Zion, on the other hand, is very dry and desert like. This second image communicates that the heavy dew from Mount Hermon comes every night, overnight over to Mount Zion, refreshing the dry lands, bringing nourishing water. It is needed and beautiful.

This is both, a **promise** and a **test**. Living in genuine unity and harmony is the only environment where the Lord **promises** his blessing (the presence and power of the Holy Spirit). As a **test**, we can measure God's presence and power in a community, based on how much genuine harmony and unity is there. God's blessing is directly proportional to the level of unity and harmony in a community.

## Possible Conclusions

1. Every community is called to learn to live in unity and harmony. Christ has already given us the basis of true universal unity, his death and resurrection. We do not have to create unity, we have to live it out and sustain it. We're not looking for homogeneity but **unity in diversity**. We have many different gifts, talents, ways of thinking, needs, challenges and opportunities. (Romans 12, 1 Peter 2, Ephesians 4). By divine design, we humans are very different from each other, so it's not asking us to think, act or primarily believe the same, (**Orthodoxy**) but rather (**Orthopraxy**) is asking us to live in practical terms with respect, joy, humility, appreciation, equality, honoring the dignity every human being has, and intentional welcoming each other, regardless of ANY and ALL our differences.

2. Living in harmony and unity is equated to a sacred act/call, we move into the sacred dimension of our lives. It takes God's intervention. We are, like Aaron, called to live a "Royal Priesthood" (1 Peter 2) living in harmony and unity. The early church was very diverse. It was composed of many different clashing ethnic groups, social classes, slaves, servants, women, foreigners, rich, poor, uneducated etc. The followers of Christ had to learn to live in unity and harmony even though all of them came from antagonistic backgrounds, they naturally were thinking, acting, believing and reacting differently. **We exercise our sacred call every time and in every situation when we intentionally decide to create peace and live in unity and harmony.**

3. The key question is: when you hear the word **sisters** or **brethren**, who comes to your mind?

**A Common response** would be people we work or closely interact with.

**A Sociological perspective** would say, people that are like us, think, behave, look, live, eat, dress and walk like us.

**In Biblical teaching**, brethren must include any and every inhabitant of the world in general and particularly, every person who has come to know Christ, regardless of where they live, the color of their skin, their culture, language and the specifics of common behaviors or traditions.

Are we living and promoting peace? Harmony? Unconditional positive acceptance?

4. This specific teaching, call and expectation from God, comes to us in what we would say is the most difficult and challenging time of our lives, as individuals, families, nation and world. There is so much confusion, anger, fear, hate, violence and corruption, that the church has a unique opportunity to lead with clarity of thought, humility, love, trust, patience, peace and transparency in everything we do. It starts by developing our intimacy with Christ and by acknowledging we are called to be faithful witnesses for Christ right here and right now.

- **This is what it means to be faithful witnesses, living a missional life-style.**
- **This is the historical time and cultural setting we were chosen to live in.**
- **This is how we raise our prophetic voice, individually, as a family, church and nation.**
- **This is where we die to our pride and humbly construct unity, harmony and peace.**
- **This is the only way to really demonstrate God's character today again.**