

Psalm 133:1-3 (NIV)

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

19-133-1-Making Christian Unity a Reality

church, unity, love, communion of saints

Ps.133:1-3

The world's thirst for peace is quenched at Christ's well of unity.

INTRODUCTION:

–[**After D-Day**, a fellow told General Eisenhower, “It’s great how you were able to coordinate all the teams in that great enterprise.” He quickly corrected him: “Not teams, but team.”] *D-Day* exemplified the power of unity.

–There’s great beauty in the unity described in **Psalm 133:1-3**, *How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. **But,***

I. The Peace of Unity is Seldom Realized

- A. “*Pray for world peace!*” is a popular exhortation, because all know it must come supernaturally. Yet when Christ, “the Prince of peace,” came, He was rejected by the religious and political systems.
- B. Humans want *world peace* but often attempt it without God:
 1. [The earliest attempt was by those who built the *Tower of Babel* after the Flood. God had to confuse their languages so they would follow His plan for humanity to spread over the whole planet.]
 2. [In the 1500s, **Thomas More** wrote *Utopia* (meaning “no place”). It told of a scholar’s dream about how the world should be, but “no place” like it exists.]
 3. [After WWII, the **United Nations** was established to facilitate world peace. But it hasn’t brought an end to war, nor has it united the nations!]
 4. [**The Forbin Project** was about a computer bringing world peace by taking over all weapon-systems and threatening destruction for noncompliance.]
 5. [Finally, **Bible prophecy** says people will surrender their allegiance to an antichrist on his promise of world peace, right before the end of the world.]

TRANS: When God put this longing for world peace in human hearts, He knew it required a *unity based on truth*. Only then could it be *truly and fully realized*, as in v.1– *How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! In Christ, God offered the world that peace: **HOM.idea**.*

II. God’s Plan Is for Christians to Manifest Unity

- A. *Unity is in the very nature of Christian faith*– **Eph 4:4-6**, There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were

called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. [When **a magnet touches iron filings, they all cling together**; *Jesus is like a magnet: His presence draws us all together.*]

- B. *Union with Christ* is the **basis of Christian unity**, **not** uniformity of *personalities, ideas, or desires*. (We—being so diverse from each other—find our unity in *one Person* and in *the truth of His will*.)
- C. Jesus prayed in **John 17:21-23**, that all of them [us] may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so **that the world may believe that you have sent me**. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity **to let the world know that you sent me** and have loved them even as you have loved me. (One of our most powerful tools in Christian evangelism is our own *unity!*)

TRANS: God created **the human thirst for world peace**, and He wants to **quench it at Christ's well of unity**. But *why is the well so dry?*

III. Christians Can Get Distracted from Unity—it happens by...

- A. **A party spirit**— **1 Cor 1:11b-13a**,...there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided?... (The **answer is obvious**: *No!* but Christians *do* get divided, when they become **more allegiant to a de-nom-ination than to Christ**.)
- B. **A critical spirit**— **James 4:11-12**, Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it... But you—who are you to judge your neighbor? (*Unity can be maintained, if critiques are made in love rather than judgment*.)
- C. **Bitterness**— **Heb 12:14-15**, Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. (If we lack *forgiveness*, we lack the *Gospel of peace*.)
- D. **Doctrinal strife**— Christian faith isn't *loyalty to a list of legalistic rules or denominational doctrines* but *living a holy life of love*— **Gal 5:6**, For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is **faith expressing itself through love**.
- E. **Proud self-interest**— **James 4:1**, What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? (If believers insist on *selfish whims and wishes*, true *unity will be sabotaged*.)
- F. **Listening to the accuser**— Satan, "the accuser of the brethren," tries to get us to adopt and spread his accusations to divides us.)

TRANS: Jesus came "to seek and save that which was lost." When we lose the *peace of unity*, His Cross paves the way back to it. So, *if the well is dry*, how can we refill it? How can we rerefresh that **well of Christian unity at which the thirst for world peace is quenched?**

IV. Having the 'Mind of Christ' is the Key to Christian Unity

- A. **Repentance** [*metanoia*: 'change of mind']— **James 4:8-9**, Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. (Disunity is *sinful! Weeping over it by drawing near to Christ's heart* puts us *where unity can happen*.)
- B. **Resisting the enemy of unity**— **Eph.4:27**, and do not give the devil a foothold. (We must evaluate our *attitudes and actions*, to see if we are truly *following Jesus* or are being *manipulated by Satan*.)
- C. **Forgiving offences**— **Eph.4:31-32**, Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (If we have *trouble forgiving a fellow-believer*, we need to *go to the foot of the Cross* and watch *how Jesus did it*.)
- D. **Tolerance**— **Rom 14** is all about maintaining unity (using religious disputes over *vegetarianism* and *Sabbath-keeping* as examples).
- E. **The love of Christ** eliminates all that threatens unity— **John 13:34-35**, A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (Again, *Christian unity is the testimony of love* for which the *world is thirsty*. It's *not about human effort*, but about a *relationship with the God of love through Jesus Christ*.)

CONCLUSION:

—The last phrase in **Psa 133:3** is a **promise** about the *power of unity*: "*For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore,*" in other words, *life everlasting, eternal life!* That's what the "Gospel of peace" is all about: *eternal life* through Jesus Christ, "the Prince of peace.")

—Each congregation where that Gospel is preached must be a *living testimony of the peace* brought by *Christian unity*. There God "bestows his blessing." That "*blessing*" is *salvation, eternal life*, and it turns a church into **a well of peace and unity at which a thirsty world can drink**.