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# The Blessings of



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The Psalms were written and sung by real people—not Disney characters. They are for people with all types of personalities—those with good qualities and flaws, the emotionally or spiritually stable, and those struggling with unmet needs. Psalm 133, classified as a “Psalm of Ascent,” may have been sung by the Jews returning to their homeland following Babylonian captivity. They had survived the journey with Uncle Levi, who snored, and Cousin Samuel, who liked to kick, not to mention Grandma Miriam and Aunt Jochebed who constantly fussed over who was the best at cooking by campfire. They finally arrived at their precious Mount Zion or Jerusalem and realized they were going to have to work side-by-side with these same folks in a massive rebuilding project.

When we dwell together in unity, we are doing what God created us to do.

We often use the terminology, my church family, but what happens when families get together for the holidays or family reunions? We enjoy good food, play games, and make wonderful family photos. We also typically endure a few fireworks and some less obvious or willfully ignored, smoldering embers. We need to learn that a little fight need not be a fatality—in our biological or our spiritual family.<sup>1</sup> Since none of us have arrived at the place of perfection, we need to keep loving and working with one another in this restoration process.

We cannot choose our biological family, but in any situation, if we choose only to be around those who always agree with us and require virtually nothing of us, we will never change. Even challenges in relationships can be effective motivation to seek God

and fall on our faces before the throne. When our journey is over, some of the people who most helped us fulfill God’s destiny for our lives may be the ones we wanted to be around the least.<sup>2</sup> Thankfully, the Father is more interested in our character than our comfort.

As we explore Psalm 133, we see how a descending motif reveals more reasons for our ascent to praising God for The Blessings of Unity:

1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!
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.
3. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the Lord commanded the blessing— Life forevermore.

## Precious Perfume

Prior to their exile, the Jews had been separated into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, but life had not always been that way. As brethren, they could trace their lineage back to Abraham. “Behold,” the opening word, calls us to stop and look at the goodness of this restored unity. They are dwelling together again. This implies more than a small family on a temporary trip, and it is “good and pleasant.” This word good (*tov* in Hebrew) is first seen in the creation account when God inspected His creation and said “Tov.”<sup>3</sup> When we dwell together in unity, we are doing what God created us to do, and this is “good.”

In Exodus, God’s goodness was equated with His glory. Unity becomes the reflection of His character in the community of faith and to a watching world. Jesus prayed, “My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as you and I are one, Father—that just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us, and

the world will believe you sent me” (John 17:20, 21 NLT). God often uses other people to help purge the unpleasant and nurture the good in us, even through tough times. A bunch of flowers never becomes a bottle of perfume until they are pressed. I suppose, we determine how sweet a fragrance is produced by the way we respond to life’s pressing circumstances.

Not only was this unity good, it was “pleasant” (delightful or sweet) like precious anointing oil. The Psalmist was not speaking of any cheap, common anointing oil. This “fragrant oil” was prepared from crushing the finest spices, then blended with olive oil to be used in the ordination ceremony for the High Priest, Aaron (Exodus 30:23–25). It was used for those set apart for special service to bring glory to God. Although every priest was anointed, only the high priest was anointed on the head (Exodus 29:7). A little sprinkle for the ordinary priests or the dab on the finger that we sometimes use would have been sufficient for ceremonial significance. Yet, the vessel was emptied so this fragrant oil flowed down from the head, upon the collar or opening of his garment (more literal understanding than skirt of his robe). On the shoulder pieces of the high priest’s ephod were two stones with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel engraved on them. On his breastplate were twelve stones with the seal of the 12 tribes engraved upon them. The idea is that oil once set in motion would flow over these stones. In other words, the unity would permeate the entire nation. When we dwell together in unity, the sacred fragrance emanates to all those around us. God says it is *tov*, or very good. We see a New Testament connection with Christ who was the anointed One, the eternal high Priest, who is ever interceding for our unity. Once it has begun to flow no one and nothing should be allowed to hinder its purpose.

## Descending Dew

The additional description the writer uses for this unity is the descending

dew of Hermon flowing upon the hills of Zion. Again to understand the fuller significance of this simile, we need a little geography lesson. Mount Hermon, located in the north, is the highest mountain in Israel. "Its summit reaches to about 9,100 feet and receives more than 60 inches of annual precipitation."<sup>4</sup> Commentators suggest that Mount Hermon's dew is so copious that a person camping nearby might awaken with their tent and bed soaked.<sup>5</sup> Mount Zion was located much farther south. Remembering, Israel had previously been a divided nation, we see the significance of the dew flowing all the way south to Mount Zion. The rebellious, scattered streams of Northern and Southern Kingdoms are now coming together as a unified river.<sup>6</sup>

The true Body of Christ would only be born in the souls of men and women who through knowledge and experience would move into a realm of understanding and humility that could bring a new dimension to the concept of unity.

Praise God, He can take what has been separated by human weakness or enemy interference and make it whole again! He longs to redeem and restore. How exciting that He invites us to be a part of the process. Ironically, rather than building walls like Nehemiah and the returning exiles did. God calls us to tear down walls that separate and divide.

In addition, this beautiful Mount Hermon with its thick forests, watery

ravines, and snow-covered heights produces an awesome effect when the different wind currents come together and sweep over it. The pristine freshness and power of the dew formed refreshes and saturates the surrounding area below. No wonder the base of Hermon is lush and fruitful, covered with orchards and gardens of unbelievable fertility even in a land of drought.<sup>7</sup>

What powerful spiritual imagery is seen in this commanded blessing of God where the wind of the Spirit brings people from all different backgrounds, races, and cultures together in peace and unity! In recent months, I have witnessed such uncommon unity among national, Christian leaders from mainline Evangelical, Protestant, Catholic, Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as we have prayed, worshiped, and served the kingdom of God together, seeking awakening in our nation. Thank God for harmony in the midst of diversity. In both biological and spiritual families, we can be very different and yet still experience unity.

Several of my friends have twin children. They have many similarities but are each unique creations of God. They do not get hungry or cry at the same time. Their parents will not refuse to feed one because the other is not hungry. Neither will God refuse to fill those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness simply because some family members do not want to come to the Thanksgiving table. However,

in a unified place of pristine freshness and plentiful living water, God wants the fruit of the Spirit to be rich and bountiful among all of us. A cornucopia of artificial fruit makes pretty decorations, but an abundance of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control brings unity and harvest for those who dream big and rejoice together.

If you have struggled with conflict and adversity in any arena of your life

do not despair. This danger of strife that threatened the New Testament church was because they were such passionate people of conviction and belief. The greater the enthusiasm people have, the greater the danger of colliding with one another every now and then. People who apathetically sit in neutral gear are not likely to run into any kind of warfare within or without the community of believers.

Christ knew a strong, vibrant church would not be built upon strife and division. The true Body of Christ would only be born in the souls of men and women who through knowledge and experience would move into a realm of understanding and humility that could bring a new dimension to the concept of unity. In a world with so much war, domestic violence, corporate maliciousness, and crime, people are searching for the unity, love and peace that can only be found in relationship with Christ. We need the visible demonstration of His body, the church, to match the head. Then the world will know that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. ☞



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<sup>1</sup> Beth Moore, *Stepping Up a Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent*, (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 2007), 154–156.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Warren Baker and Spiros Zodhiates, eds. *The Complete Word Study Old Testament* (Iowa Falls: World and AMG International, 1994), 2320.

<sup>4</sup> Loren Crowe, *The Songs of Ascents: Their Place in Israelite History and Religion* (Atlanta, GA: SBLDS, 1996), 114.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Baker, as cited in Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, vol. 3, (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing, n.d.), 173.

<sup>6</sup> Moore, *Stepping Up a Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent*, 158.

<sup>7</sup> Keil & Delitzsch *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Quoted in E-Ssword, Digital Software Version 10.0.5, Copyrighted by Rick Myers, Franklin, TN 2000–2012.