

## Unity Flows From The Head Downwards - Psalm 133

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!

<sup>2</sup> It is like the precious oil [of consecration] poured on the head,

Coming down on the beard, even the beard of Aaron,

Coming down upon the edge of his [priestly] robes [consecrating the whole body].

<sup>3</sup> It is like the dew of [Mount] Hermon, coming down on the hills of Zion;

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing: life forevermore.



This beloved Psalm holds the theme of unity within its words, however it should be noted the Hebrew word for “unity” in verse 1 is *yachad* meaning, “together,” “both,” “joined.” Therefore the end of verse 1 is better translated, “when brethren are joined in dwelling” or “when brethren dwell together”. [bibletools.org] As the 14<sup>th</sup> Psalm of Ascent what is being described as good and pleasant is, “the dwelling of brethren together” especially as they gather for the Feasts of the Lord in Jerusalem to worship God in the Temple.

Unity made perfect is exemplified in the very life expression of the Trinity, in the “togetherness” and communion between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is a deep passion of the Lord’s for His Church. [John 17:20-23] Scripture and experience teaches us three characteristics about this **togetherness – holy unity**.

**It is Precious** – “For holy unity [togetherness] is like costly anointing oil, precious as fragrant anointing oil.” [Psalm 133 Message and Living Bible]

**It is Powerful** – For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. [Matthew 18:20] Consider the strength of oneness when the Israelites **gathered together to rebuild** with Ezra and Nehemiah. [Ezra 3:1-2, Nehemiah 2:17-18] Consider the strength of oneness in the book of Esther when all the people fasted and prayed to the Lord. [Esther 4:12-16, 7:3-6] Consider the strength of Oneness when the apostles gathered together (to wait and pray) on the day of Pentecost. [Acts 2]

**It is Fragile:** We are no different than the church Paul spoke to in 1 Cor. 11:17-18, we come together not always for the better. There are divisions, fights and quarrels amongst us. [James 4:1-3] Scripture tells us that holy unity is not only the Lord’s desire for us but, it has happened and it is possible...BUT there are preconditions and it’s time for those preconditions;

**Our responsibility: Preparing our hearts:** As we are now in the last days of preparation for Herrnhut let us not forget to prepare our hearts. Matthew 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.”

[The following excerpt re offense is taken and adapted slightly from a booklet; “Dealing With Offence” by Albert Zehr]

*Offense is one of the primary tactics which Satan uses to divide and make ineffectual followers of Christ. Interestingly the word “offense” is derived from the Greek word, skandalon which described the part of a trap where the bait was attached. If the prey took the bait, it would set off the trap entrapping them and subjecting them to the intention of the trapper.*

**Reflections:** “The Lord wants to prepare and refine us for our work in the final harvest [Heb. 12:5-6] When we look at scripture we find that many of the Lord’s most useful servants had to learn to overcome offences and that these experiences [our expectations or

interests were not met or our integrity affronted] bring to the surface untransformed aspects of our inner being. If we allow God's light to shine and His hand to work, the experience of offence can actually speed up our growth and transformation.

**The dangerous state of offense:** This state yields a harvest of frustration, anger, suspicion, and ineffectiveness. We have two choices; hold the other to account or forgive them, keeping in mind if we do not forgive – we ourselves fall away from God's forgiveness and His grace to forgive.

**Resist taking offense:** King David tells us, "Great peace have they that love thy law and nothing shall offend them." [Psalm 119:165] Paul exhorts us **avoid offending others**, "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy without which no one will see the Lord." [Acts 24:16, Hebrews 12:14]

**The secret to deal with offence:** Joseph's ability to deal with offence was in his knowing and trusting the sovereignty of God. This is why he was able to say, "You intended to harm me but God intended it for good." [Genesis 50:20]

Before we gather in Herrnhut, ask the Lord to anoint you in His grace and His "Light" to expose in you any "offense," that which you experienced and/or that which your actions or words caused. Pray as the Lord leads using the scriptures listed.

**Forgive in your heart:** Matthew 7:1-5, 18:21-35, Romans 3:23

**Drop it:** Proverbs 20:22, Ephesians 4:26, Romans 12:19

**Clear it:** [In some cases as the Lord leads] Matthew 5:21-24

**Receive cleansing:** 1 Peter 1:22, 1 Corinthians 6:11

**Walk in true wisdom:** But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. James 3:17

**God's Sovereignty and Grace:** The Book of Ezra recounts the story of the Israelites release from exile in Babylon. Twice we are told that **God moved upon the hearts of men** [His great grace and favour] "*The Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm; "The Lord, the God of heaven...has **appointed** me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel... and may their God be with them...Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites—everyone **whose heart God had moved—prepared to go up and build** the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. ..When the seventh month came and the sons of Israel were in the cities, **the people gathered together as one man** in Jerusalem. [Ezra 1-3:2]*

**"A heart moved by God"** draws our eyes and expectations off of ourselves and lifts them heavenward - for the grace which only comes from God to accomplish His purposes and bring us, His people into the precious union of His Spirit. A heart moved by God opens the way before us and works in and amongst us the togetherness required for us to gather, to join together and to build a dwelling place for Him. May this be our experience and great joy as we come together in Jesus name – to become a holy dwelling place, living stones built up into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [1 Peter 2:5]

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, Immanuel, only you are good and only in you can my life bear good fruit. I acknowledge that true and holy unity of the brethren flows only from you the Head, downwards over the Body to whomever hearts will be moved by you. Lord, forgive us for the times we have tried to create "unity" through works rather than through you. Forgive us our pride to think we could do this on our own. Forgive us when we have assembled with hands unclean and hearts unpure. Forgive us in your great mercy. Abba Father, as I follow the way of your Son Jesus Christ I sing praise to you, for your love is better than life. Give to me the grace to wholly devote myself to you – the world behind me - the cross and Christ before me. Fill me with your Spirit to live in the position of Christ's victory to become nameless and faceless with a heart made courageous and established in your love, obedient to your will. Oh that you would fill me with your love! A love that is pure, patient and kind. A love that is not proud, nor easily angered or self seeking. A love that rejoices in truth and always hopes. Create in me a clean heart, an unoffendable heart – a heart that knows you use all things for the good of those who love you and who have been called according to your purposes. Here I am Lord declaring your goodness even to the nations – continue to grow me, transform me, indwell me so that as I come together with my brothers and sisters in Herrnhut, I would be joined to them and together we would experience your desire for us; "brethren dwelling together" beholding your glory and enjoying the blessings you command.