

=STORIES BEHIND THE PSALMS=

Lesson 8

Psalm 133

AIM: to teach my pupils the story behind Psalm 133

POINT OF CONTACT: The Jews made three pilgrimages a year to Jerusalem. These were the biggest times of the year. As they traveled, they sang Psalm 120 through Psalm 134. The most beautiful of these is Psalm 133. Here they sang of unity. Ask the pupils to tell you some particular time in their lives when unity and fellowship seemed extra sweet, when everybody got along real well and it was fun.

INTRODUCTION: Let us notice two main things for this lesson: (1) the reason there was unity, and (2) the joy of that unity.

I. THE REASON THERE WAS UNITY.

1. They were all going the same direction. You see, they were marching toward Jerusalem. When people go in the same direction, there can be unity. Suppose, however, some had been going to Bethlehem, some had been going to Nazareth, some had been going to Capernaum, and others to Jerusalem. There could have been no unity. They could not have sung together. This is what the prophet meant in Amos 3:3 when he said, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" There should be no union of God's people unless there is a unity of purpose. We must be going in the same direction. That is why, when a church gears its life on soul winning, there can be unity. Everything is built around the same purpose and for the same cause, and so there can be unity.

Here would be a good place to stress to the young people the importance of marrying someone who is going the same direction. The more a couple has in common with each other, the more likely they are to have a happy marriage. It is wrong, of course, to marry an unsaved person. Not only that, it is also wise, if possible, to marry someone from the same church and the same neighborhood, from the same background, with the same tastes and likes, and the same purpose in life, etc.

2. They had the same goal. Their goal was to get to Jerusalem and praise the Lord, to observe the feast, to rejoice with God's people, to feel God's presence, to delight in God's work. This is, of course, very important for unity.

These are days when we hear a lot about unity. Churches are merging, denominations are going together, the World Council of Churches is flourishing, and the cry of the day is, "Let's go together." This can be true only if we have the same goal. If one person believes in the virgin birth and the other does not, there can be no unity. If one believes the Bible is true and the other does not, there can be no unity. God tells us in the Bible that we cannot plow with an ox and an ass together. God forbade the Jews to sow diverse seeds in the same place. God wants us to fellowship with His own people and have unity with them but not to compromise our convictions nor the Word of God or to have a false unity with others.

3. Notice the words, "for brethren to dwell together in unity," Psalm 133:1. Unity is for brethren. In other words, only the sons of God can have true spiritual unity. Those who do not believe in the virgin birth and those who have not been born again know nothing about this kind of unity. This is the unity God's people should have.

II. THE JOY OF THAT UNITY.

1. It is good and pleasant for God's people to have unity. Read Psalm 133:1.
2. "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," Psalm 133:2. This ointment was the oil representing the Holy Spirit. It is only the Holy Spirit Who can give us true unity. There was a sweet scent in this oil. Aaron was the high priest, and it was wonderful when the oil was poured on him. Ah, how sweet the smell is to others when God's people live together in harmony! Picture the high priest here. He is in his priestly garments; he is being anointed. Oil covers him completely. How wonderful it is! Others can smell the sweetness and can see the anointing. God's people can also

see and smell the sweetness and the anointing when we can get along with each other. It is obvious when they fail to do so. It is either a good testimony or a bad testimony.

3. It was like the dew of Hermon. Read Psalm 133:3. Hermon was a high mountain and a long way off. It could be seen for many miles. The same is true when God's people dwell together in unity—it is a testimony from afar off. The church that learns to dwell together in oneness and harmony is the church that is seen from a great distance and whose light shines a long distance from home. It is a model church. Ah, would that God's people could learn to dwell together in unity so that others may see from afar off what we have! Then they, too, will want the Christ Who draws us together.
4. When we dwell together in unity, it answers a prayer Christ prayed. Jesus prayed in His great intercessory prayer of John 17 that His people be one even as Jesus and the Father are one. Think of this oneness! How pleased the Father is when we dwell together even as He and the Son dwelt together even before the world was created. See John 17:21.
5. There is power in unity. The Lord said that one shall chase a thousand and two shall put ten thousand to flight. Teacher, take a book to class and ask a member to tear out a page. It is easy to tear one page. Put all the pages together and ask the member to tear the book. This is impossible. Satan can sift us as one, but when we get together, there is strength and resistance!

CONCLUSION: One day a pastor noticed that a certain member had been absent. He went to the member's house to inquire as to why he had been missing the services. When he arrived, that member was sitting at the fireplace warming. The pastor asked about the absence and why it had been so long since he had come. The church member replied, "Pastor, I don't need to go to church. I can be as good a Christian at home as I can at church."

The pastor took the tongs from near the fireplace, took one coal, and removed it from the fire. Gradually the coal burned less and less, until finally, its fire went out. The member said, "Pastor, I see the lesson. I will be there Sunday."

None of us can live as good a Christian life apart from God's people as we can with the people of God. Let us be faithful to fellowship with God's people and God's church, and let us dwell together in unity!