

United and It Feels So Good  
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Psalm 133 (MSG)

1 How wonderful, how beautiful,  
when brothers and sisters get along!  
2 It's like costly anointing oil  
flowing down head and beard,  
Flowing down Aaron's beard,  
flowing down the collar of his priestly robes.  
3 It's like the dew on Mount Hermon  
flowing down the slopes of Zion.  
Yes, that's where God commands the blessing,  
ordains eternal life.

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Wonderful  
Beautiful  
Good  
Pleasant

In trying to tell us just how wonderful, beautiful, good and pleasant it is for siblings – brothers and sisters - to get along with and be united with one another – the Psalmist compares it to two things;

- LIKE costly anointing oil flowing down Aaron's head and beard – onto the collar of his priestly robes
- LIKE the dew on Mount Hermon – flowing down the slopes of Zion

I don't know about you, but initially this doesn't do much for me .... With oil running down my head and onto my clothes, I think, "well, that's gonna make a mess." And dew on a mountain? Sound nice and maybe even pretty, but why compare that to getting along with my brother? Have you met my brother?

Clearly these references are contextual, applicable and more readily relatable to **his** time and place.

SO ... to get the full understanding of JUST how wonderful, beautiful, good and pleasant for brothers and sisters to be united with one another, we need to learn and understand the Psalmists references.

BEING UNITED IS HOLY

*like costly anointing oil  
flowing down head and beard,  
Flowing down Aaron's beard,  
flowing down the collar of his priestly robes.*

There are many instances in the Bible where oil is used for anointing. Remember what it means to anoint. To anoint means to rub or pour oil on something, typically to make it special or sacred.

In Psalm 133, the reference is to Exodus and Leviticus and the anointing of Aaron and the process in which anointing oil was used to ordain him and his brothers into the priesthood. There is an elaborate process described in order to make clothes, structures, materials and sacrificial animals ready for God, and part of those rituals include **hallowing** Aaron, making him holy.

*22 Moreover the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 23 "Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane, 24 five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. 25 And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. ---- 30 And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister to Me as priests.*

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There is no way to know precisely the conversion rate of Biblical shekels to modern American dollars, but scholars roughly estimate that one shekel in Moses' time is roughly equivalent to 16 grams of silver in today's time<sup>1</sup>. This week, silver was trading at \$26.26 per troy ounce. So ... the holy, anointing oil that God instructed Moses to make was worth approximately \$20k in today's money.

To anoint Aaron, Moses was told to pour this expensive, perfumed oil on his head – not just a drop of oil - NO, POUR IT! Pour it this costly, fragrant oil, so abundantly that it flows down his head and his beard – so much that it gets on the collars of his robe.

How wonderful, beautiful, good and pleasant is it for you and me to be united? For all of our brothers and sisters to be united in harmony?

It's HOLY. Unity is so holy and precious, that it's like \$20,000 perfumed oil being poured on your head so abundantly that it runs down onto your collar. The oil goes everywhere – your head, neck, chest, arms, hands and feet. This holy oil flows all over us, the ENTIRE body of Christ, transforming us into a beautiful chancel of grace and mercy. That oil anoints you – it dedicates you to God and your siblings.

This is how precious and wonderful unity with our brothers and sisters is. Unity is so essential, enjoyable and effective that it's like this sacred oil that equips and empowers us to transcend the everyday aspects of life and become one in Christ.

BEING UNITED IS FRUITFUL

*It's like the dew on Mount Hermon  
flowing down the slopes of Zion.*

2) Dew from Mount Hermon

Have any of you been to Israel? I've been there – in July! While it's beautiful and sacred, when it comes to the weather, it's simply HOT. Israel is mostly arid and dry with long, hot, rainless summers. Most of the rainfall happens in the far northern part of the kingdom, toward Mount Hermon, the highest mountain at 7,336 feet. On Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, in the southern part of the kingdom, the rainfall is only 1/3 of that on Mount Hermon.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/673063/jewish/Whats-the-value-of-the-biblical-half-shekel.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/673063/jewish/Whats-the-value-of-the-biblical-half-shekel.htm)

You can image how different the two mountains look. Mount Hermon, 120 miles north of Mount Zion is greener, lusher and more fruitful. Mount Zion, with hotter, dryer weather in the south and much less rain, is more barren, rocky and browner.

How wonderful, beautiful, good and pleasant is it when brothers and sisters get along?

It's like plentiful and abundant dew, moisture and rain that has fallen on Mount Hermon, flowing down **onto** Mount Zion in Jerusalem, 120 miles away. The dew on Mount Hermon is life-giving, sufficient to produce an abundant harvest and it falls everywhere. That's how wonderful, amazing and powerful unity is. It can permeate geography and boundaries, allowing God's fruitful blessing to flow from one mountain in the north to another mountain 120 miles away. The blessings of UNITY make the impossible, possible.

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***Once upon a time two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side by side. They had been sharing machinery, trading labor and goods as needed without a hitch. Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference which exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.***

***One morning there was a knock on the elder brother's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I am looking for a few days of work", he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there. Could I help you?"***

***"Yes!" said the elder brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor, in fact, it's my younger brother and we don't get along. Last week he dug a wider passage for water into his farm. But he ended up creating a very wide creek in between our farms and I am sure he did it just to annoy me. I want you to build me something, a structure of some sort, so that we don't have to stand and see each other's face from across the wide creek."***

***The carpenter said "I think I understand the situation. I will be able to do a job that will please you." The elder brother had to go to town for supplies, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day, so he left the carpenter to his work. The carpenter worked hard all that day measuring, sawing, and nailing.***

***At sunset when the elder brother returned, the carpenter had just finished his job. The elder brother's eyes opened wide and his jaw dropped. It was not what he had even thought of or imagined. It was a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, beautiful handrails. And to his surprise, his younger brother across the creek was coming to meet him with a big smile and arms wide open to hug him.***

***"You are really kind and humble my brother! After all I had done and said to you, you still have shown that relations can never be broken! I am truly sorry for my behavior", the younger brother said as he hugged his elder brother. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox on his shoulder. "No, wait! Stay a few days. I have a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother.***

***"I'd love to stay on", the carpenter said, "but, I have many more bridges to build!"***

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Families, communities and nations experience significant challenges that can be very divisive. In the bible, we see how stew and a birthright caused division between Esau and Jacob. We see that jealousy and a coat of many colors led a band of brothers to sell their youngest sibling, Joseph into slavery.

In Matthew 12:25, Jesus said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.”

On June 16, 1858, Abraham Lincoln, running for an Illinois state senate seat gave his now famous “house divided speech,” advocating to end slavery. It was seen as radical and many said it is why he lost his bid for the senate ... but a couple of years later, many would say it was pivotal in helping him win The White House.

Today, we are a country experiencing division...racism, COVID, economics, immigration, and many other issues. Many believe we are so divided that we may never recover because we are so focused on selfish thoughts and independence above all else. Others think differently; those things may be happening, but we have the potential to be of one-mind and purpose – united with one another, as we are united with Christ (Phil 2). Time will tell. It always does.

In the midst of division, if we focus on Jesus and his exemplary life, **that** will naturally and automatically unite us easier and stronger than if we focus on being united.

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Psalms 133 states the obvious; how great it is when we all live in harmony ... and conversely the inference of how much it sucks when we don't.

Psalms 133 poetically shows us that “God doesn't discriminate in a community worshipping in unity. When unity settles in a community – be it family, church or even a nation – it brings blessings and great joy to everyone.”<sup>2</sup>

In the words of Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, “Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious – the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into God's most excellent harmonies.” (Philippians 4:9 MSG)

Psalms 133 ends affirming God's blessing in unity. When God's children, all brothers and sisters of the human race, live in harmony and are unified in love and compassion --- **in THAT unity**, God ordains eternal life.

UNITY is holy. UNITY is fruitful. Unity is salvation.

AMEN

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<sup>2</sup> Green, Joel B. et. al., editors, Connections: Year A, Vol. 3. Pg. 234.