

Folks, how are you? I never again. If someone would just yell left to me when I get up, that would be great. Who's going to take responsibility this morning for that? Right there.

Okay, very good. Christina will take care of left and I'll do it. I'll turn it the left way. Good morning, folks. I loved seeing Josh.

He wasn't in the starting lineup. Did anyone notice that? But then they put him in quickly, so, yeah. Josh, thank you for jumping in on the synth. It's so nice.

Just nice to have that. Sean is out on vacation. We've got some new folks taking some key positions. Music worship was great this morning, guys. Thank you very much for leading us.

We are glad to have you here. If you were able to join us early, you enjoyed some, some delicious casseroles, cinnamon rolls, fresh fruit. Someone got all the chocolate milk before I got to it. But you know what? I'm in a very generous and forgiving mood.

So we're going to let that one slide. It was a great morning. Fifth Sunday's here at Sherwood Oaks are some of my favorites. Because we get together, we bring some food. We just enjoy a relaxing time, get to know each other, hang out.

Every once in a while, you talk to someone you don't know, which is a good thing. We're in a series in psalms. And this that we're gonna talk about today, I have a deep connection with. It comes later in the psalms, but because we had the breakfast this morning in time of fellowship, I thought, man, this is gonna be the perfect Sunday for my favorite psalm. Last week, Alan Burris kicked us off with psalm one, and next week we will be in psalm two.

Those of you who are following along or trying to rod psalm two. What psalm? Rodental two. You can look it up, follow along, get some insight into that one. We'll talk about that next week.

But this week we want to do psalm 133 real quick. Before I forget, Rob and Becky Muncie are now grandparents, and Tommy and Samantha Lee have successfully delivered themselves of yet another child. So that's on them at this point in time. We can cheer if we want, but I'm like, oh, buddy, no. She is a sweetie pie.

Big fat cheeks. She looks like a Lee. So there's, there's no denying her parentage there. But they'll be back with us on Sunday morning, hopefully prayerfully. But, yeah, if you get a chance to congratulate both of them, that would be great.

So here's what I'm gonna have us do. I'm gonna have us stand together we're gonna read psalm 133. It's a very short one, so you won't be standing long. I promise you. We're gonna read from the King James.

The new King James version. This is the version I grew up with. King James. Any people grew up with a King James version. So this is the new King James.

So it's slightly more contemporary language, but it keeps all the good uths and thous in it. So we feel familiar when we're reading it. So let's begin with verse one. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. 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. It is like the dew of Hermon descending upon the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing life forevermore. You can be seated. I've been to Israel a couple of times.

I want you guys to go when it's safe to go back again. We are planning another trip because it's just amazing. Every time we travel there's a few hot spots that everyone wants to see. You want to see Mount Carmel where the defeat of the prophets of Baal happened. You want to see sort of the Megiddo valley where the final battle is supposed to happen.

You want to see Bethlehem and do you want to see Nazareth? You want to see the Sea of Galilee. But there's always a sense of anticipation on as we're nearing sort of the end of our trip, circled around the entire country and we've gone down to the Red Sea and now we're the Dead Sea and we're heading back up the hill toward Jerusalem. Jerusalem is on everyone's like main destination. I want to see Jerusalem.

So you can sense the excitement as we leave the lowest elevation on the planet, the Dead Sea, and we make our way up 2500ft above sea level to the city of Jerusalem. It's so exciting. From ancient times it has been so the Bible. God commanded his early followers, the Israelites, to go to Jerusalem to celebrate some very distinct, different festivals. So jewish worshipers at the time of the festivals would leave their various hometowns, their villages or little towns and thousands upon thousands of them would travel together with their family and their friends, their neighbors and travel toward Jerusalem.

And there they would worship in this amazing temple, one of the wonders of the world. Many people say, this amazing temple. They would offer their gifts and the priests would make sacrifices. Their sins would be forgiven and then together they would feast and celebrate with their friends and neighbors, all the casserole you can imagine was there. It was an amazing event in their lives.

And because they were sort of going up elevation wise, and they were going to meet with the most high God, they called this going up Jerusalem. The songs they then would sing to get them to Jerusalem would be called songs of ascent. Ascent means going up. And so they would sing these songs along the journey, songs of ascent. And one of the songs they would sing would be this psalm that we just said, psalm 133.

And as I said, it's one of David's shorter psalms, but it's one of my favorites. And so today we're going to unpack some of the beauty that is in this very, very short psalm. I'm going to pray, and we'll get started. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for this beautiful thing right in the middle of our bibles, these psalms, these songs that different people have written that point us to their hearts and what you spoke to them, and you use them in a powerful way to speak and delight us and to educate us and inform us about who you are and who you want to be for us.

We pray and give thanks for your book, your bible, your songs to us. We give thanks in Jesus name. Amen. Anyone planning a road trip this summer with your family? I don't know if you've ever done road trips with your family, but I've heard that family road trips can be stressful.

Yes. No. No. Never. Never.

The boys and I, for some crazy reason, I thought I would take them to the most family friendly place in America, Las Vegas. So we're going to Las Vegas in August for different reasons. We're not going to gamble. I'm hoping I'm going to keep their money real little. But we decided we were going to go to Vegas to meet up with some friends there.

And I thought, you know what would be fun? We could do a road trip. So I calculated it. It's about 28 hours of driving, steady the way I drive. That's going to factor into about three days road trip.

And then I thought about the eight minutes it takes us to get from our house to the church. Eight minutes versus 23 hours. Thought, you know what? I'm going to spring for some southwest airline tickets, because this is going to be, we're going to all arrive basically intact. Now, just imagine that you're not traveling only with your kids, but your cousins and your siblings and their kids and their grandkids.

And not just them, but now your neighbors. Many of you have delightful neighbors. I have delightful neighbors. I wouldn't mind taking a short trip with them. But a long trip is another thing altogether.

Because it just becomes chaotic very quickly, doesn't it? And so I think that may be why they started this tradition of singing these psalms, these songs on their journey. Just to remind the kids and the adults to stay pleasant, to stay patient, to use kind, affirming words. Not to teach your sister or call your brother mean names. And they would sing to the kids in the back seat.

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together. And, sisters, behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together together in unity to dwell in unity lai la la I would make you sing the song, but we are out of time, so let's keep rolling

along. This psalm does more than entertain. It does more than distract the kids. It does more than just remind them to live together in unity.

I believe this psalm reminds them of something even greater. I think this psalm points them to the time of the Messiah, to the time of Jesus. Because at the very end of the psalm, it says this. Even life forevermore. Life forevermore always points to Jesus.

But let's start at the beginning of this psalm. It begins this way. Behold. The author writes, behold. Look.

See for yourself. Judge for yourself. Look how good and how pleasant it is when families, when siblings, when brothers, when neighbors live together in unity. We know, many of us, from very personal experience. What it's like to live with family that is not in unity.

It is very challenging, and I've heard stories. I know some of your stories. It is challenging and difficult when families don't live together in unity. But how good and how pleasant. David writes, how good and pleasant it is when they do.

It's like a song with multiple harmonies. It's like adding in the synth with the piano and the drums. And all of a sudden, everyone has a specific note. And a specific part to play. But together they create this amazing piece of music.

It's good and it's pleasant. And to lay into this. The author uses two examples that are unfamiliar to us. But would have been very familiar to the singers of this song. As they're traveling together.

He talks about the high priest. His name is Aaron. And he says this. This good and pleasantness is like precious oil upon the beard. Upon the head, running down on the beard.

The beard of Aaron running down on the edges of his garment. I think we have that scripture, guys. Is it up there? Do we have that, like, precious oil upon the head running down on the beard? The beard of Aaron running down on the edges of his garment.

Now this is precious oil. This is not ordinary olive oil. It starts ordinary, but then they do stuff to it. They infuse it with spices to give it a pleasant smell and to give it some medicinal quality as well. So not only would you see it glistening on the head and the beard, as they poured this holy oil over the head of the high priest, you could smell it, you could feel it, you could taste it if you got it on your tongue.

And because of that, it covers the entire spectrum of our human senses. It was a delight to the entire sense. It's holy oil. We talked about holiness a couple of weeks ago. Holiness simply means it's used for a specific purpose.

We're holy because God has a specific purpose for us. We're consecrated, and this oil is consecrated for a specific thing. Now, it was used for lambs, lambs that have been chosen to be sacrificed at the temple for these holy occasions. They would be perfect and without blemish. And once they were determined to be perfect and without blemish, these lambs would be then anointed with this oil, a spicy oil which would keep, and which would keep insects away and protect the skin from any bites or infections that they might get.

But not just the lambs, but the priest also who oversaw the sacrifices would be anointed. The regular priest would get a sprinkling, but the high priest, the chief priest, he would get a whole baptism of this oil. And they pour it over his head and run over his head. It would run down his head and onto his beard. Every priest had a beard.

If you couldn't grow a beard, you couldn't be a priest. And you'd make a great priest. So it would drip down over the beard. It would then pour down and drip down onto his chest. I think we have a picture of the robe of the high priest.

And this picture indicates this square thing on his chest. It hangs on his chest. There are twelve stones, there are twelve 1212 stones on that chest. Those twelve stones represent the different tribes of Israel. Precious stones that are on his chest.

And so the oil drips down off the beard onto the chest above the heart of the high priest. This beautiful thing. All these separate tribes, they're unified in this one thing, and they're covered with this oil. And it rests right over the, the high priest's heart. Maybe you're tracking with me on this, would flow down his beard and over those stones, and it would unite and cover them with this anointing, making them holy.

And then down, down, down, all the way to the hem of the priest robe, from the highest to the lowest, from the highest point to the lowest point that oil would consecrate and make holy. That's the first illustration the author uses. The second illustration is this. To make sure that his singers understood how magnificent and expansive this blessing that God commanded was. He gives another illustration.

He says this, two lines. It is like the dew of Hermon descending up on the mountains. Zion. Now, if you're just reading this for the first time, the way David writes this, you might think, and I did until my first trip to Israel when I'm like, what? You might think that Hamon is part of the mountains that Zion rests on in Jerusalem.

Because Jerusalem sits on seven mountains, you might think, oh, oh, Hermon must be one of those mountains. No, no, no. Mount Hermon is nowhere near Jerusalem. In the far, far, far north, up on the syrian border, it is 5 hours driving from Jerusalem to Hermon. From Hermon to Jerusalem, it would take you 61 hours to walk it.

If you travel with us to Israel someday you will get to visit Mount Hermon. It is the highest mountain peak in Israel. And the snow melt and the intensely heavy dew that falls on this

mountain feed the Jordan and fill the sea of Galilee. Now, you may not picture snow, Israel. The first time I was there, it was sleeting in the summer.

And we're up there and snow is coming past the windows of the bus. I'm like, what is this? Are you mean to tell me that Jesus walked around with snow boots on? Sometimes? Yeah, it snows in Israel.

Mount Hermon is called the Snowy Mountain, the gray haired mountain and the mountain of snow. There's a ski resort up there. This is a guy skiing. This is the north of Israel, right there. The region of Mount Hermon is cool.

It's verdant, it's lush, it reminds me of Bavaria. When you travel in northern Europe. It is gorgeous. Feels almost alpine up there. Jerusalem, on the other hand, is low, it's hot, it's dry, it's dusty.

Hermon gets its snow, gets its dew. It gets its rain from the heavens. The rain and the dew fall down the snow lands right there on the mountain peak. Jerusalem, on the other hand, gets all of its water from a cistern, from a well underneath the ground. But here's the cool thing.

Jerusalem gets its water from a spring called the Gihon spring. The Gihon spring is dependent upon the water tables to be to fill up. Those water tables are far, far, far below. The city. But those water tables are regulated by water levels in the Sea of Galilee.

So water flows from the sea of Galilee down into Jerusalem underneath the ground, and that's where they get the water there. The sea of Galilee is fed by the river Jordan. The river Jordan. I've been where it starts. The river Jordan is actually two rivers joining the river Dan and the river Hisbani.

Those two rivers are fed by the snow and the rain and the dewenheid from Mount Hermon. Do you see this? From the top all the way to the bottom of Israel, the blessings of God flow. The dew from hermon waters and feeds and refreshes the people of Jerusalem. Some people may mistake unity for uniformity.

Everyone agreeing on anything. If you're new to this church, I will let you in on a secret. We agree about 51% of the time with each other on important stuff because it's neither the point nor a possibility that we are going to agree all the time. Is it? There's an old rabbinical proverb that says, wherever you see two Jews, you see, you have three opinions.

That's true. That's true among us, too. That's not limited to Jews, by the way. But the psalmist makes this point. Where we live in unity, we don't have to press for uniformity.

Unity isn't created by removing our differences. Unity is created when we focus on what is shared. And what we share in the body of Christ is Jesus. Ephesians says this. Ephesians

four, three, six says, now, children, make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace, because there's one body that we share.

There is one spirit that we share. You are called to one hope, which we share. There is one Lord which we bow to, one faith that we claim. One baptism that we submit to one God and father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Paul would tell us, if we keep our eyes on what is shared, we will find ourselves living in this place of commanded blessing.

Commanded God says, no ifs, ands, or buts about it. If you are living in a place of unity, there will be a blessing. It is ordained, it is appointed, it is decreed. A decreed blessing. A place that is good and a place that is pleasant.

It's good and pleasant for ourselves. I love being part of a church where I don't deal with contention and disunity. I love being in a place where there's a sense of just, commanded, ordained blessing, where it's good and it's pleasant. It's good for us, but it's also good for those out there. God's blessing, you see, begins when we live in unity.

But it flows down, down, down. It has far reaching implications. When siblings live together in unity, the family is blessed, their children are blessed. When siblings live together in unity, guess what? Their cousin, their children, cousins of each other, live together in unity, they thrive.

Your family thrives in the blessing of unity. And when the sons and daughters of the most high God, determined to let nothing, nothing undermine their unity, the church grows and it extends its blessing far beyond the hills of Mount Hermon, far beyond the little circle that gathers here. But it goes down and down and down and spreads out and out and out. And the church grows and extends its blessing into successive generations and successive territories until the whole region experiences the blessings that originate right here among us. Ephesians five says, we are the church and our head.

Our high priest is christ. Literally, Christ means the one who is anointed. Hebrews says it this way. Hebrews 9:11. Christ came as high priest of the good things to come, the commanded blessing.

And he commissioned us to extend that blessing to the farthest reaches. Go into all the world. Here's what I want you to do. Go into all the world. Hebrews says this because he is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

This points to Jesus, who loves not just us. Those jewels on his breastplate. He says, I love you, but there's room for more. There's room for more. I want you to be.

Be not just partakers of this good and pleasant blessing, but I want you to be Extending it to others as well. I love this last part of that verse. He says he lives to make intercession for

us. The most poignant picture of the intercession that Jesus makes for us, we can see in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus is praying for his disciples and his followers before he goes to the cross and he prays for us. Very specifically, he says, may they live in unity.

Here's how he words it. I pray, he says in John 17, I pray that all of them 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. So that the world may believe. It begins here, but it goes down and down and down and out and out and out.

So the world may believe that you have sent me. When we live in unity, when we experience the blessing it is wonderful, but it doesn't end there. When we live in unity, the wider world sees the impact of claiming Jesus as the Messiah. They see and they respond, they receive him, and then they experience the commanded blessing of life forevermore. There, the Lord commands the blessing.

He commands it. He decrees it. This will be a blessed place and a blessed people. If we live together in unity, a road trip either brings out the best in their family or the worst. You may have heard this before.

I've always chuckled at it. To live above with the saints we love, oh, that will be such glory. But to live below with the saints we know. Well, that's a different story. We know from our own experiences that kids don't get along.

Parents can be difficult. Some of us have very difficult and challenging parents. We sometimes have to distance ourselves from relationships that are just destructive. Yes, sometimes. But unity flows down.

It has to begin somewhere. And when we set ourselves up and say, we want to be both the beneficiaries of God's command and blessing of unity, and we want to, we want to partake of it and we want to distribute it, we want to be carriers of this. We can be the start of beautiful blessings to people all around us. We can be a place where people see the good and the pleasant blessings of unity as we love and respect those underneath us and in our care. When we live together in unity, it gives us a picture of that eternal pleasantness and that eternal goodness that we will someday experience forever in the presence of Jesus.

Amen.

We're going to share in a time of communion here in just a moment. Talking about the hymn of that priest's robe reminds me always of the story that we find in the gospels of the woman who had this physical sickness. She had an issue of blood. What that issue of blood was, we really don't know. But it left her isolated, weak, feeling, forgotten and forsaken by everyone she loved.

The scriptures tell us that this woman sought out Jesus.

She was helpless and she was hopeless. And she says, I need help. I need hope. And she says, if I could just get to Jesus. And what did she say?

If I could just touch way down there, way down at the very bottom by his feet, the hem of his garment, if I can just touch that, I will be healed. I love that story. It is a beautiful story.

But the healing anointing was not in the fabric of his robe. It was in the person of Jesus. Living in the blessing and goodness of God begins by first reaching out and seeking out Jesus. He is our anointed high priest. And he says, whosoever will, no matter how weird or difficult or different you are.

And we're all weird and difficult and different in our own way. Amen, church. Amen, church. He invites you to be part of this beautiful breastplate he is building on his chest and over his heart, to be bound to his heart and to each other through that sacrificial love, anointing for us to experience that grace that flows down and down and down and then over us and through us and down and around us. Today, you may be here this morning and you feel helpless and hopeless, too unworthy to touch even the hem of his garment.

But if that describes you, Jesus says, no, no, no touch. Come, come close. Jesus says, consider taking your next step towards me. Don't leave today without talking to me or someone else that you trust about your next step with Jesus.

Let's pray. Jesus, as we journey together towards your holy city, towards our eternal blessing, towards this place that you have promised us that is good and pleasant and prepared for us, we pray. I pray for us as you prayed in the garden, that we would be one as you and the father are one in this moment. We thank you that we are held close to your heart. We are part of your family.

We thank you for the other jewels in this breastplate that are different than us, but you are, but are loved just as much. And now together, we are set in this beautiful, beautiful breastplate that reminds us of this unity that you call us to experience and live in. This blessing that you call us to live in and experience all because of your cross. We pray that the blessing that we experienced here would be felt and experienced all over this community. And not just here, but like the rivers and streams that flow all out of this county to other parts of southern Indiana.

We pray that your blessing, too, would bless and nourish and refresh others around us. Thank you for the bread that reminds us of your tangible, physical presence among us. Where we feel you, we sense you, we smell you, and the attitudes and actions of your children. We thank you for that cup, that juice that reminds us of that covenant promise you made with us. To never leave us.

To never allow that blessing to be, to be diluted, but to keep it fresh and pure as we follow and submit to you. Jesus, bless this time together and bless us as we journey together closer and closer towards you. We pray in your name. Amen.

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