

UNITY AND REVIVAL
Psalm 133

Intro: I trust that you are looking for and praying for a revival, a true spiritual awakening! We may already be in the beginning stages of revival. I say this, as I have said before, because of the way the Lord is working in so many places to restore the preaching of the doctrines of grace. A revival is an awakening, and from what we learn of revivals in Scripture, it begins when the Lord's people are awakened to the truth of the Word of God.

A revival always starts with God. He begins to move upon the hearts of His people, and then they get concerned about the very things which result in revival. Revivals are needed when the lives and the work of the Lord's people fall below what they should be according to the Word of God.

In Psalm 133 we have what could be the shortest statement about revival to be found any place in Scripture--just 3 verses, but verses full of meaning, and very important for anyone who is concerned about the blessing of God.

Note that there are three parts to the Psalm:

- 1) A statement about unity in v. 1.
- 2) Two illustrations showing the effect of unity in vv. 2, 3a.
- 3) The promise of revival in v. 3b.

It is very clear from this Psalm that unity is both a condition necessary for revival, and a characteristic of revival, as long as it continues. We have seen from other passages which we have considered that there is always opposition to revival, and that difficulties can arise among the Lord's people during a time of revival, but at the same time there is going to be a wonderful evidence of unity among God's people which is not observable in times of spiritual declension. So let us see what David said in writing this Psalm.

I. A STATEMENT ABOUT UNITY (Psa. 133:1).

You will notice that he did not describe unity here; he seems to assume that the people of God knew what he was talking about.

He began with, "Behold." This is a word used throughout Scripture to call attention to something especially important.

But here it means something which is very rare, and therefore worth noticing.

"How" -- not only "good" and "pleasant," but very good and very pleasant!

"Good" -- right (as opposed to that which is wrong in God's eyes).

-- good to see.

-- profitable.

-- that which produces joy.

"Pleasant" (a good translation) -- also enjoyable, delightful.

"For brethren" -- There can be no unity in this sense except among the people of God. There is no such unity except in the faith.

"To dwell together" -- (which means to be in the same place, in more than one way). Dwelling is not something which just takes places once, or once in a while, but it is a continuing way of life.

"In unity" -- which cannot be what man's idea of unity is, but the unity which is of God.

Unity is so important to some people that they will sacrifice anything to attain it. I see from the morning paper that the Democrats are going to concentrate on unity in order to win in the next election, but it will be a unity based upon compromise. This is the kind of unity that churchmen talk about--a unity in which the fundamentals of the faith are set aside for the sake of getting together! But this is not unity. It only appears to be.

False unity, which has reached its greatest influence in the ecumenical movement agrees to:

- 1) Forget about the doctrine of the divine origin, character, authority, and sufficiency of Scripture.
- 2) Forget about the Deity of Christ.
- 3) Forget about efficacy of the death of Christ on the Cross.
- 4) Forget about the necessity of salvation from sin.
- 5) Forget about the Biblical teaching regarding hell.

So it is a unity in which people do not believe much of anything Biblical.

What is Biblical unity? We need to know what we are talking about. The Bible is very clear on this subject.

Let us look at several passages of Scripture to answer this question. The answers are found in the OT as well as in the NT, but they are pointed out very specifically in the NT.

Biblical unity is:

- 1) Unity in the Faith, i.e., doctrinal unity. In true unity the Word of God is not ignore, but it becomes the very foundation of all that is believed and taught. Cf. Eph. 4:13.

Even among evangelicals there is a turning away from doctrine, and a real spirit of compromise. Bigness is more important than the truth.

- 2) A primary concern for the glory of God. Cf. Rom. 15: 5, 6.
- 3) Unity with regard to the mind of Christ -- as is seen in Phil. 2:1-16, one of the great NT passages on unity.

There are at least four things which stand out here:

- a) A united concern for the spiritual welfare of others. Cf. Phil. 2:2-4.
- b) Our union with Christ for humility and obedience
- c) Holiness of life (Phil. 2:8). (Phil. 2:14, 15).
- d) Oneness in our service (Phil. 2:16; 1:27).

May the Lord be pleased to give us such unity. May we "dwell together" in such unity!

II. TWO ILLUSTRATIONS which describe unity (Psa. 133:2, 3a).

They are two similes.

A. Unity is likened to "the precious ointment . . ."

B. Unity is "as the dew of Hermon . . ."

In the first we see its uniqueness; in the second, its miraculous character.

For the first, cf. Ex. 30:22-33.

For the second you need a map of the land of Israel. What will it indicate? Hermon is a mountain at the northern extremity of the land. It has three main peaks, all about equal in height (9,200 ft.) The range extends for about 20 miles, north and south. Today it is a part of Syria. But the significant thing about Mt. Hermon is that it spread dew over the land of Israel down to Jerusalem (over 100 miles south).

Both of these picture and illustrate the beneficial effects of unity.

Now we come to the effect of true spiritual unity . . .

III. THE PROMISE OF REVIVAL (Psa. 133:3b).

Notice where it comes from: "for there the Lord . . ."

Notice its certainty: "the Lord commanded." This is a

common OT expression. Cf. Lev. 25:21; Deut. 28:8 (see also v. 2); Psa. 42:8; 68:28.

Notice how it is described, as a permanent work: "even life for evermore." Cf. John 15:16; Ecc. 3:14.

Concl: Of what use is all of this to us?

- 1) We can be encouraged that this was the burden of our Lord's prayer for us in John 17:11, 20-23.
- 2) We have a great illustration of this in Acts 2, which begins in v. 1 with . . .
- 3) This is one of the Spirit's most important works. Cf. Eph. 4:1-3.
- 4) The revivals of Scripture (and throughout church history) also encourage us to expect that God may work again in our generation.

Let us pray and live with the possibility before us always that God may again be pleased to pour out the blessings of revival as He has in the past.