

PSALM 133

This psalm is a brief encomium on unity and brotherly love, which, if we did not see the miseries of discord among men, we should think needless; but we cannot say too much, it were well if we could say enough, to persuade people to live together in peace. Some conjecture that David penned this psalm upon occasion of the union between the tribes when they all met unanimously to make him king. It is a psalm of general use to all societies, smaller and larger, civil and sacred. Here is,

- I.** The doctrine laid down of the happiness of brotherly love (v. 1).
- II.** The illustration of that doctrine, in two similitudes (v. 2, 3).
- III.** The proof of it, in a good reason given for it (v. 3); and then we are left to make the application, which we ought to do in singing it, provoking ourselves and one another to holy love. The contents of this psalm in our Bibles, are short, but very proper; it is “the benefit of the communion of saints.”

~~HERE~~ PSALM 133:1-3

BROTHERLY LOVE

A song of degrees of David.

Here see,

I. What it is that is commended — *brethren's dwelling together in unity*, not only not quarrelling, and devouring one another, but delighting in each other with mutual endearments, and promoting each other's welfare with mutual services. Sometimes it is chosen, as the best expedient for preserving peace, that brethren should live asunder and at a distance from each other; that indeed may prevent enmity and strife (⁽¹¹³⁾Genesis 13:9), but the goodness and pleasantness are *for brethren to dwell together* and *so to dwell in unity, to dwell even as one* (so some read it), as having one heart, one soul, one interest. David had many sons by many wives; probably he penned this psalm for their instruction, to engage them to love

another, and, if they had done this, much of the mischief that arose in his family would have been happily prevented. The tribes of Israel had long had separate interests during the government of the Judges, and it was often of bad consequence; but now that they were united under one common head he would have them sensible how much it was likely to be for their advantage, especially since now the ark was fixed, and with it the place of their rendezvous for public worship and the centre of their unity. Now let them live in love.

II. How commendable it is: *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is!* It is good in itself, agreeable to the will of God, the conformity of earth to heaven. It is good for us, for our honour and comfort. It is pleasant and pleasing to God and all good men; it brings constant delight to those who do thus live in unity. *Behold, how good!* We cannot conceive or express the goodness and pleasantness of it. Behold it is a rare thing, and therefore admirable. Behold and wonder that there should be so much goodness and pleasantness among men, so much of heaven on this earth! Behold it is an amiable thing, which will attract our hearts. Behold it is an exemplary thing, which, where it is, is to be imitated by us with a holy emulation.

III. How the pleasantness of it is illustrated.

1. It is fragrant as the holy anointing oil, which was strongly perfumed, and diffused its odours, to the great delight of all the bystanders, when it was poured upon the head of Aaron, or his successor the high priest, so plentifully that it ran down the face, even to the collar or binding of the garment, v. 2.

(1.) This ointment was holy. So must our brotherly love be, with a pure heart, devoted to God. We must love those that are begotten *for his sake that begat*, ~~GR1~~ 1 John 5:1.

(2.) This ointment was a composition made up by a divine dispensatory; God appointed the ingredients and the quantities. Thus believers are *taught of God to love one another*; it is a grace of his working in us.

(3.) It was very precious, and the like to it was not to be made for any common use. Thus holy love is, in the sight of God, of great price; and that is precious indeed which is so in God's sight.

(4.) It was grateful both to Aaron himself and to all about him. So is holy love; it is like *ointment and perfume which rejoice the heart*. Christ's love

to mankind was part of that *oil of gladness* with which he was *anointed above his fellows*.

(5.) Aaron and his sons were not admitted to minister unto the Lord till they were anointed with this ointment, nor are our services acceptable to God without this holy love; if we have it not we are nothing, ~~411~~¹ Corinthians 13:1, 2.

2. It is fructifying. It is profitable as well as pleasing; it is *as the dew*; it brings abundance of blessings along with it, as numerous as the drops of dew. It cools the scorching heat of men's passions, as the evening dews cool the air and refresh the earth. It contributes very much to our fruitfulness in every thing that is good; it moistens the heart, and makes it tender and fit to receive the good seed of the word; as, on the contrary, *malice and bitterness* unfit us to receive it, ~~411~~¹ Peter 2:1. It is *as the dew of Hermon*, a common hill (for brotherly love is the beauty and benefit of civil societies), *and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion*, a holy hill, for it contributes greatly to the fruitfulness of sacred societies. Both Hermon and Zion will wither without this dew. It is said of the dew that it *tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men*, ~~411~~¹ Micah 5:7. Nor should our love to our brethren stay for theirs to us (that is publican's love), but should go before it — that is divine love.

IV. The proof of the excellency of brotherly love. Loving people are blessed people. For,

1. They are blessed of God, and therefore blessed indeed: *There*, where brethren dwell together in unity, *the Lord commands the blessing*, a complicated blessing, including all blessings. It is God's prerogative to command the blessing, man can but beg a blessing. Blessings according to the promise are commanded blessings, for he has commanded *his covenant for ever*. Blessings that take effect are commanded blessings, for *he speaks and it is done*.

2. They are everlastingly blessed. The blessing which God commands on those that dwell in love is *life for evermore*; that is the blessing of blessings. Those that dwell in love not only dwell in God, but do already dwell in heaven. As the perfection of love is the blessedness of heaven, so the sincerity of love is the earnest of that blessedness. Those that live in love and peace shall have the God of love and peace with them now, and

they shall be with him shortly, with him for ever, in the world of endless love and peace. How good then is it, and how pleasant!