

Open House at Lyman

by Ken Baird

The unity of God's people is a direct result of the work of the Spirit of God, and it is next door to heaven.

Duration: 39:15

Scripture: Psalm 133:1, John 13:35, Philippians 4:5, 1 Peter 5:6-8, 1 John 3:14

Topics: "Church Unity", "Christian Harmony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by referencing Revelation chapter 4 and 5, highlighting the worship and unity displayed by the beasts, elders, and the Lamb. The speaker then turns to Psalm 133, emphasizing the importance of unity among brethren. They proceed to discuss seven unities that unify the people of God and promote unity within the church. The sermon concludes with a focus on the key to being of one mind in the Lord, which is to let our sweet reasonableness be known to all, as the Lord is standing by.

Transcript

Well, I'm greatly tempted to reminisce, because I've been around about thirty-five of those fifty-five years. But since I only have four grandchildren, I'll be six. Turn your Bibles, please, to Psalm 133.

Now, if any of you were up at the opening of the Atlantic Chapel, you will remember that this is the very psalm that I turned to that day. Well, I'm going to end on a little bit of this history as well. Well, I didn't get finished, but I have some additions to make.

And I want to read the 133rd Psalm, and make just a few remarks about it, and then go on from there. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious likeness upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirt of his garment.

As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore. This 133rd Psalm is near the end of a series of psalms which are known as the Songs of Degrees, thought to be chanted by the people of Israel as they went up from their various abodes to Jerusalem on the feast day, on the sabbatication. We won't go through the spiritual exercises of those people.

I began with the individual, and soon these became collective. But you will notice that they reached the sanctuary in the 134th Psalm. That is the Psalm of the sanctuary itself, and it would seem the Spirit of God

arranged the 135th Psalm to follow immediately after, although it is not entitled as Songs of Degrees.

This is the point I want to make of that. The fellowship of brethren together is next door to heaven. It is next door to the sanctuary.

It's the sweetest thing this time of heaven. Now, it's both good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity, a matter of dwelling together. Two similes are given, like the precious ointment on the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment.

That is one simile. The other is as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore.

Here is the other simile. It's like the precious ointment, the holy anointing oil, and it's like the dew of Hermon. I would like to make this the ointment, the Spirit of God.

I'd like to make the dew the Word of God. Now, you're going to have to grant me a little lightness because there's a little difference of opinion in regard to the dew. But I think that unity among God's people is a direct result of the work of the Spirit of God.

And I think also, using that other agent that she is as pritchy as the author, the Word of God. The Word of God will unify the people of God. In both instances, the action is done.

The ointment flows downward. It begins at Aaron's head and ends at his feet. The dew descends.

It's the dew of Hermon and the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. The blessing comes downward. And on that occasion at Atlantic, a number of years ago, I've forgotten just how many years ago it was, but we mentioned the fact that the dew has to have three things that obtain at the same time before the dew will form.

First of all, you must have a clear sky. Then you must have the presence of moisture. Then you must have a quiet atmosphere.

You must have a clear sky. Before there will be unity among God's people, or dissimilarly bears it out, there must be no clouds between us and the Lord. Sin must be dealt with, and there's nothing that will break up the unity of God's people as quickly as unjust sin.

There must be no clouds in the sky. Then there must be the presence of moisture. Oh, we must have moisture.

David could say on one occasion, Thou hast turned my moisture into the drought of sun. That's a terrible state of affairs. Oh, for moist, brethren.

For the moisture of the Lord. And then there must be a quiet atmosphere before you have unity among God's people. The quiet atmosphere of sitting in the presence of the Lord.

The quiet atmosphere which Satan would like to disturb on every occasion. Now, this is just a brief resume of what we took up at Atlantic at that time. Now, I would like to add another further little study which the Lord furnished on an occasion, oh, about six months ago.

We were at the men's retreat at Des Moines. Last autumn. We just mentioned this.

We hardly more than outlined it. If there's anyone here, and I believe there are a few brethren here, who were there on that occasion, you won't hear much of what you heard on that day because we just outlined our thoughts on that occasion. But I'd like to talk about seven unities of the people of God.

I was struck with these things that unify the people of God and we want to seek the things that make for unity among the people of God. These things will definitely, if we consider them at all, will bring unity and enforce unity, will promote unity among the people of God. Now, I'm not saying that these are the only things in the Scripture that deserve our consideration on the subject of unity.

When I got to seven, I thought, well, I've reached the perfect number and as so many other preachers do when they get to seven, they quit. So, I quit. When I got to seven.

Now, I'm not saying that this is exhaustive, but I want to leave those thoughts with you this afternoon. Now, the seven unities that go together to combine, compact, to make one of God's people. First of all, we have the unity of position.

And I'd like to refer you to Ephesians chapter one. Ephesians chapter one. Verse three, let's take a time and read.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and will not blame before him in love. Having predestinated us under the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. Now, here we have a combination in verse six.

Us. Accepted. In the Beloved.

In verse four, we have the word us in him. Here is the unity of position. We're all in Christ.

Blessed be the title of thine. Blessed be that unity. All in Christ.

Not some of us eighty percent in Christ and some of us eighty-five percent in Christ and some of us a hundred percent. We're all one hundred percent in Christ. The unity of position among all people.

How nice that is. Wherever you find a dear child of God, you immediately feel an affinity for that person because they are in Christ. They share that same blessed ground with you.

And oh, the wonderful meaning of that little word in. Look it up in a large webster's. On a bridge.

Sometimes. And you'll find words, oh, big long words like ramification or oh, I can't think of any more now. I guess I don't need to after that one.

But you'll find a very, very short sentence defining that word. You look up the definition for the word in. Do it sometime.

Find out what you find out about the word in. I'm not going to talk about what it means to be in Christ. We have other things to talk about.

But I'll say this. I've got this suggestion. If you're in a thing, it's bigger than you are.

And we're in Christ. Oh. What a place.

What a place that is. How grand. How large.

How expensive. I think probably that's what the Apostle Paul is referring to in his prayer in Ephesians 3 that we might know the length and the breadth and the height and the depth. He doesn't define what he's trying to he doesn't see what he's trying to define there.

But if you talk about those four dimensions you've got to be in the center of the thing that's being described before you can mention all four of them. And we're in Christ. We're all in Christ.

And that unifies us into the same precious bundle of light. The same light that flows through you is in you spiritually is in me. Christ in us.

And us in Christ. Oh. How wonderful that is.

Are we in Christ today? The unity of position. Being in him. Then I'd like to talk about the unity of purpose.

Philippians chapter 1 verse 27 When I let your conversation or manner of life be as it becometh the gospel of Christ that whether I come and see you or else the absence I may hear of your affairs that ye stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. That's what the apostle wanted to hear about the Philippians. A unity of purpose.

Striving together with one mind for the faith of the gospel. A common purpose will often unify any group of people. But here is a unity is a unifying force among God's people that has eternal results.

It's nice to combine and work with other people on different occasions. I recall when we built our chapel in Boulder, Colorado a number of years ago that there was real unity among us. We got to know each other very well because we did a lot of the work ourselves.

And the unity of purpose in building that chapel even brought us closer together in the Lord. We all, for instance, when we got a black thumbnail on our left hand well, welcome to the club. And I always get one.

But there was a real unifying force in the building of that chapel. Incidentally, if you don't want a black one, hold the hammer with both hands. But when I think of how closely knit together we were, it was nice.

You know, I like to work together. And it's nice to do things together. Isn't it? Really nice.

It's like building a chapel. Someone in a kind of a moment of nobility speaks about building a cathedral. Well, it wasn't a cathedral.

It was just a chapel. But you know, it wouldn't have been too bad if after we get a lovely facility like we've got here that we forget the real purpose in these things. Why have a building? To get all about things.

Be drawn together in unity over a project like building a building. Forget about a larger building in which we may have a part in church. Well, now that is where we may feel our oneness together as we strive.

A unity of purpose. Striving together for the faith of the gospel. Standing fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Do we forget these things? Do we forget? Had we have erected the building what the building is for, it's nice to have a lovely facility. And it is indeed a necessary accessory. It's something that God can use.

I don't believe that we ought to accept anything in the way of a building. I don't mean by that to go overboard, either. But I think it is nice to have a presentable facility to gather people to, but then not forget what the building is for.

I'm not going to press that point too much. But there is a unity among the people of God through striving together. And oh, can you think of a more noble purpose than this? Than to see people one to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Praying for one another, and striving for one another in this way. Now, there is a unity of profession and testimony of which the apostle speaks in the first chapter of 1 Corinthians. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 10.

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same line and in the same judgment. Someone says, how can this be? Is this possible among human beings? It's an admonition, isn't it? It's a command of the Word of God, isn't it? Shall we just write it off the books and say, impossible, impractical? I would hesitate to do that. But this is what the apostle says.

I beseech you, brethren, as you know the history of Corinth and they were carnal too, weren't they? And it's an evidence of carnality. The badge of spiritual maturity is love. And that is the badge of spiritual maturity.

When we have so grown into the likeness of our Lord, then we can love his people. We'll talk about the unity of love in a little bit. But that was not present at Corinth as it should have been.

There's another reason why these divisions crept in that got their eyes off the Lord. The emphasis was not on the Lord. They got their eyes on them.

If a brother in the Lord helps you in the Scriptures, do thank the Lord. Once in a while he'll need encouragement, especially if he can find the things that he plots. Pardon that flying expression.

You do, occasionally. Maybe a little word of encouragement would help out. But really, if a brother helps you, thank God for it.

Just thank God for it. They were not a one-minded Corinth. They were carnal.

They got their eyes off the Lord. And even the group that said, I am of Christ, said it in the wrong attitude. Does that mean the others weren't of Christ? Something to think about.

Let's be practical about this. How can we be in one mind in the Lord? When we've got as many different people and as many different minds as we have people, let's be practical. Let's be admonition practical.

I believe it is. He says, Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing. Let there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Garvey has it in his same opinion. And he says, impossible. Well, is it? Is it impossible? I think of another, in another place where the admonition is given by the Apostle Paul's two sisters.

And I think we have something of a key there as to how we may become of one mind in the Lord. Let's notice Philippians 4. He says in the first verse of the fourth chapter of Philippians, Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, and long for my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beseech Jodias, and I beseech Seneca, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

Now, these are female Greek names. They are sisters. Now, he says, I beseech them to be of the same mind in the Lord.

How would you like to have your name in the Holy Word of God forever and ever because you had a dispute with another sister? Well, these sisters have that doubtful distinction. Here they are. Jodias, and Seneca.

Now, he goes on to say, And I entreat thee also through your fellow help those women which labored with me in the gospel with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of length. Now, the apostle here is beseeching these two dear sisters to be of the same mind in the Lord. The area of their disagreement was in the things of God.

He goes on to say, And I help those women that labored with me in the gospel. He may be talking of Jodias and Seneca as far as I know. I wouldn't say that he wasn't.

But the area of disagreement was in the things of God I verily believe. Now, the apostle admonishes, Be of the same mind in the Lord. Well, let's read on.

Verse 4. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice! Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Now, most of you have Spofiel Bible.

I can hear you turning the pages all at once. I think it's a little bit important that we have that caption over verse 5. The secret of peace of God instead of over verse 6, because I believe that verse 5 goes with what has gone before. Let your moderation, your yieldingness, be known unto all men.

The Lord is at hand. I think that this is the key for being of one mind in the Lord. Someone has paraphrased this verse beautifully.

Let your sweet reasonableness be known unto all men. The Lord is standing by. Now, if you and I were standing together and having a dispute about the way a certain thing should be done, and the Lord was standing right here to silence, and we were conscious of His presence, don't you think that we would both turn to the Lord and say in effect, Lord, you resolve this.

Wouldn't we look to the Lord? Would He resolve it? What does it mean to be of the same mind in the Lord? How do you approach that position? I believe that the answer is right here. Looking to the Lord and waiting to hear what He has to say. I believe that when you wait long enough and look to the Lord in faith, that you will achieve.

The oneness of mind must be a thoughtful request. It may take a long time. Now, the things among God's people are not settled like they are in a democracy where an issue is resolved by a vote of the majority and through the satisfaction of a minority.

The Word of God, the order is this. One mind in the Lord. Now, if we are really anxious to have the Lord's mind about a thing and we'll quit our own prejudices in the matter, we'll pray and wait.

I believe that this is a practical admonition and I believe that it will be forthcoming. The unity of testimony and profession among God's people. Paul says, all of you speak the same.

Let's be practical. Let's wait on God and speak His mind. Now, there is a unity of love.

We must move quickly. I want to leave full time for my brethren. John chapter 13.

Some of these we're just going to touch very lightly on. Verse 35. John 13 and 35, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one to another.

This is a unifying force among people. The people of God love to one another. We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren.

May I ask a question of my audience here this afternoon? I don't know all of you. Do you love the people of God? Do you love to be with them? Do you love the people of God? Do you feel at ease in their presence? Or when they're coming your way, if you can do it without being noticed, do you take means of escaping their presence? We know we've passed from death into life because we love the brethren. And I suggest that if you feel ill at ease around true born-again Christian people, examine your foundation.

You may not be saved. We know that we've passed from death into life because we love the brethren. Now the same rule works in a different way.

Turn over, if you please, to the 15th chapter of St. John. John 15 and 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.

But because ye are not of the world, that I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. The world loves his own. Let me ask you, is the world unified? Are they unified? Yes, they are.

There's a horrible unity in the character of the world. They love their own. They know their own.

They act together. Let's move on quickly. 1 Peter chapter 5. I'm afraid I'm going to have to say pretty soon that this is going to be an outline.

1 Peter chapter 5. Verse 6. Humble yourselves therefore unto the mighty hand of God, we shouldn't neglect. Verse 5. Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder, yea, all of you who subject one to another. Be full with humility, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Humble yourselves therefore unto the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Here is a unity of experience. Experiences, having the same experiences, will unify the people of God together. When you go up against the devil, and you find out somebody else has been having trouble with his satanic majesty, you're drawn to that person.

And listen, incidentally, if you are having trouble with this devil, just see me. I'll give you some help. I hope I can help you.

I've had plenty of experience. I think the devil here, I think he's the contact. He's the one that makes our trouble.

So the apostle says here, whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. I like this. The unity of experience.

We all have the same problem. We're all beset by that satanic person. It ought to unify us.

We ought to find our sympathies together. We do find our sympathies together. And our experiences will unify us.

I know I've gone to Bible conferences in a state of despair, fighting against you see. In my younger days, thank God there's been a measure of deliverance. But I've heard the ministers of the Lord, those speakers, get up and speak the word of God in power and touch on the very things that were troubling me.

And then I have to say, greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. I was drawn to that person because they've had that circumstance too. We all have these circumstances and we ought to feel our unity together by reason of it.

We ought to be helping each other. We ought to be praying for each other. We ought to be sympathizing with each other.

There is a unity gained by experience. Our troubles will drive us together. We feel that a man and a woman becomes more like each other the longer they live.

I believe this to be true. A number of years ago I was at, a number of years ago, I won't tell you how long ago, I was at an Omaha conference and I saw a lady sitting across the room and I'd never seen her before and I said, that is Mrs. Ann O'Brien. And I'd never saw the woman before in all my life.

And I was right. I knew that. You know, there is a paternity gained by experience.

You take boys that have been to war together. You take boys that have gone through a certain experience together. You should be talking about this Bill.

You take boys that have gone through a certain experience together. There's a paternity there. Nobody else can join.

You and I are going through a worse war than this world knows anything about. We have common problems. We ought to feel our unity together.

We ought to stand together against the common enemy. Yes, there's a unity of experience. There's a unity of association.

When they were released they went to their own company, that's all I'm going to say about it. Last I must say something. Unity of worship.

Revelation chapter 4 Revelation chapter 4 and verse 9. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders, fall down

before him that sat on the throne and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power for Thou hast created all things and for Thy pleasure they are and were created. Verse 8 of chapter 5 and when he had taken the book that is the lion of the tribe of Judah and he had taken the book and the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the lamb and I don't think any of them looked around to see if the others had fallen down either. It was simultaneous.

They were worshiping. The four and twenty elders of course representing all the redeemed. The redeemed of Israel, the twelve tribes and then the twelve apostles and the foundation of the church.

There had been twenty-four in number. Four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the lamb and having every one of them harps of gold and violets full of odors to the prayers of the saints and they sung the new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof for Thou was slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation and hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth. There's a unity here.

A unity of worship of the Lamb of God. I don't think there's anything quite that unifies the people of God like the unity of worship. How close you feel to a brother and he pours out his alabaster box of ointment as we meet around the young ones.

You might have said something that ruffles you earlier in the week. When you pour it, hearing pouring out his heart and love to the Lord Jesus, you get with him. Right there.

A unity of worship. How nice to be unified in that respect. Nice to be able to build things together.

Nice to praise the Lord. It's nice to feel that one though if there's anything that will just loosen you up quite as much as that is to hear a brother pray. I love it.

I wonder sometimes how much more the Lord loves you. To hear our voices united. United in a common purpose.

Glorifying the one that loved us and died for us is a real unity of worship. Just a few thoughts about unity. May God join us together in one bundle of life that we may receive strength one from another and that we may get things done for God.

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