



Approaching God

Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passage.

Psalm 133 - Community

Passage Introduction:

Our membership in the church is a corollary of our faith in Christ. We can no more be a Christian and have nothing to do with the church than we can be a person and not be in a family. Membership in the church is a basic spiritual fact for those who confess Christ as Lord. It is not an option for those Christians who happen by nature to be more gregarious than others. It is part of the fabric of redemption. So the question is not "Am I going to be a part of a community of faith?" but "How am I going to live in this community of faith?" Psalm 133 presents what we are after: "How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony!" The psalm puts into song what is said and demonstrated throughout Scripture and church: community is essential. Scripture knows nothing of the solitary Christian. People of faith are always members of a community. Creation itself was not complete until there was community, Adam needing Eve before humanity was whole. God never works with individuals in isolation, but always with people in community.

Eugene Peterson - *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Read the passage slowly 2 or 3x's.

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

Psalm 133 - A Song of Ascents (NLT) - 1 How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony! **2** For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head, that ran down his beard and onto the border of his robe. **3** Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon that falls on the mountains of Zion. And there the LORD has pronounced his blessing, even life everlasting.

Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- As you meditate on this short passage, what makes "harmony" or "unity" or "getting along with other believers" so difficult? What specifically might be keeping you from it right now?

- Eugene Peterson says that “anointing oil” represents two things in the scriptures: “Oil, throughout Scripture, **is a sign of God’s presence, a symbol of the Spirit of God.** Oil glistens, picks up the warmth of sunlight, softens the skin, perfumes the person....And, more particularly here, the oil is an anointing oil, **marking the person as a priest.** Living together means seeing the oil flow over the head, down the face, through the beard, onto the shoulders of the other—and when I see that I know that my brother, my sister, is my priest. When we see the other as God’s anointed, our relationships are profoundly affected.” How do those images help you remember the people in your church community in a new way today? Who do you need to remember and share unity with in your church?

Psalm 133

Passage Summary - (From The ESV Transformation Bible)

The unity of God’s people has been, and continues to be, a sign of God’s rich blessing. Here the psalmist reflects on those who are bound together in the worship of Yahweh at the temple, and he revels in their union in faith and practice as the true people of God.

He likens this unity to two different but equally important parts of their lives: unity in their holiness, as they submit to the practices of the priesthood by which their sins are forgiven and they are represented to God (v. 2); and unity in their dependence on God for his physical blessing, bringing moisture from the higher mountains in the north to water the needy land of Palestine (v. 3). Both the priestly and the natural images also depict things distant from one another being joined by another element flowing down (the oil uniting Aaron’s head and collar; and dew uniting a northern, high mountain with southern, lower hills). Spiritual and physical blessings are both good gifts from God above, and those who see God’s hand at work in both ways unite in their common praise of their gracious God.

As believers on this side of the cross, our minds are naturally brought to the unity we have in Christ (e.g., John 17:21–23). The basis for our unity is even greater now that the fulfillment of those priestly laws has come, and the true Mediator of God’s people with their heavenly Father intercedes for us. If there was beauty in the unity of God’s people at the temple, how much more is the glory of our union shown as we, in Christ, display our devotion and love for him.

Key Takeaway:

As you read today’s passage, what are 1 or 2 main takeaways that you wrote down that you want to take with you? How would you briefly summarize your observations and meditations for today?

Close in Prayer:

Close in prayer today by praying specifically for the unity of King’s Chapel and our local fellowship. If there are people who you feel you need to re-establish a sense of unity with, bring that before the Lord. Ask for his anointing presence and power to be with us as we seek to stay strong in the midst of the various circumstances that would threaten to divide or produce misunderstanding.