



OCTOBER 28, 2018

#### Reflections on Unity Kevin Rhodes

Unity remains so elusive in today's world and, sadly, in today's church. Most all call for it. But few truly long for it—at least not the type of unity God offers. In actuality, the very people who often speak of unity act in ways completely contrary to it. Somehow, even among those who recognize the beauty unity offers allow their selfish desires to demand unity their way instead of reaching for unity God's way. Therefore, we must devote ourselves to understanding godly unity in its beauty and purity rather than following a pattern that only offers a temporary truce where people agree to disagree instead of uniting in agreement with God. The beautiful imagery of Psalm 133, ascribed to David, pictures the possibilities of unity within the context of ancient Israel, but its principles resound even to the church today.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa. 133:1). The sentiment here expressed beckons to its hearers not only to accept its heart but to engage its spirit. Unity, fully appreciated and dearly loved, finds expression in the practical exercise of regular spiritual life—not the pretense typically presented citing general doctrinal agreement that belies the division apparent to all in practice.

102 FM 1431 East

Meeting Times

9:30am

10:30am

6:00pm

Sunday

Bible Class

Worship

Worship

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00pm

Ladies Bible Class

meets Tuesdays at

10am

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However, the words here reflect a society bound together by quality interaction (good), an enjoyable environment (pleasant), a family feel (brethren), enduring relationships (dwell), and close proximity rooted in thought that is expressed in behavior (together). Moreover, men did not bring about such harmony but God Himself, as the simile following demonstrates. "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" (Psa. 133:2). Harkening back to the anointing of Aaron as high priest (Lev. 9:12), the psalm evokes memories of how God sought a people who would please Him, belong to Him, serve Him, and be holy for Him, having been forgiven and consecrated by Him (Ex. 28:32; 29:7, 21; 30:23). As that original anointing oil, designed and purposed by God, ran down Aaron's beard to the collar of his ephod and upon the breastplate bearing the stones representative of all Israel, so God recognized His people as one coming before Him, even as the psalm considers the procession of Israel from all over the land coming together to worship as one and enjoy the blessings God promised. Indeed, the second simile builds upon this thought further. "It is like the dew of Hermon. Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing- Life forevermore" (Psa. 133:3). Mount Hermon in the north, known for its abundance of dew which, whether through rains or the Jordan, brought its benefits to Jerusalem, here adds a third "running down." And yet all of these picture the people themselves descending upon Jerusalem to worship as one, as God has requested and as God has designed. The combined figures of the high priest and the return for a feast provide the context for God's people as a whole gathering, most likely for the Day of Atonement, when the high priest would enter the holy place on their behalf to offer a sacrifice that would ensure their forgiveness, their relationship with God, and thereby life forevermore.

The beauty of this kind of unity depends upon embracing the sacrifice that makes unity possible, for Jesus has now entered the holiest place of all, as High Priest, to make atonement possible and eternal life obtainable (Heb. 7:26-27; 9:26-28). However, like the Jews of old, people today must make the journey to have unity. Too many wish to stand apart and stay in their own land, stand firm in their own opinions and doctrines, wallow still in their own problems, and defend their own sin rather than letting go of these barriers to unity so that they can approach God with all those who have abandoned self for their love of the Lord.

The beauty of unity has not changed. The blessings of unity have not been altered. But neither has its principle in practice. If we truly want unity, we will not only preach unity; we will also practice unity. We will not simply come together in person; we will come together in spirit. But these demand more of us than a temporary commitment to the emotion of the moment; they require a perpetual commitment to the truth in practice. To desire unity while practicing diversity is spiritual mockery. To proclaim unity depends upon our first practicing it—in worship, in doctrine, in salvation, in everything. If you really want unity, let go of selfish practices and embrace biblical practices. Properly done, this will lead only to one place-God's church doing God's things in God's way.

#### Order of Service

<b>Opening Remarks</b>		Clay Bond
Song Leader		Tom Barr
Song #289	I Love Thy Kingdom Lord	
Song #394	Leaning on the Everlasting Arr	ns
Prayer		Ray Parks
Song #916	Come Share the Lord	
Communion		Leonard Meredith
		Sam Tarbet
Song #732	We Praise Thee O God	
Song #499	I to be Like Thee	
Sermon		Clay Bond
Song #520	Only a Step	
Offering	5 1	
Closing Remarks		Clay Bond
Song #727	We Shall See the King Someday	/
Dismissal Prayer	0 0	Don Petrosky, Sr.

### **Upcoming Events:**

$\succ$	Oct. 31 <sup>s</sup>
$\triangleright$	Nov 4th

5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday Singing Night Potluck Fellowship

# Wednesday Devotional Oct. 31st Russell Haydon Shut-Ins: Robbi George Attendance: Sunday AM: 41 PM: 28 Wednesday: 27 Contribution: \$3260.88

## ...Praver List..

Gav Kyle, Eugene & Barbara Haydon, Don Walker, Garv Schneider, Kathy Ivanciw's mother Shirley, Butch Crownover, Chris' cousin Tyler, Melvin Wright

Remember our college students who are away at school: Jarrett & Luke Haydon, Emily & Courtney Meredith, and Dylan & Steven Petrosky