

# faithbook

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*Ps 133*

## INTRODUCTION

- A. On October 28, 2003, a Harvard student by the name of Mark Zuckerberg was bored.
1. He was blogging & trying to find something to get a girl off his mind.
  2. He hacked into the Harvard server, downloaded private dormitory ID photos, & posted them on his blog.
  3. He then forwarded these photos to several university e-mail lists.
  4. While his site was shut down within a few days by the Harvard administration, the idea was born.
    - a. The following semester--on February 4, 2004--Zuckerberg founded thefacebook.com.
    - b. At first, the site was only opened to Harvard College, but it soon expanded to most universities in the United States and Canada.
    - c. In September 2005, facebook expanded to high school students & then to several companies, including Microsoft & Apple.
    - d. Beginning on September 26, 2006, anyone 13 or older with a valid e-mail address could join facebook.
    - e. In 2008, the estimated revenues of facebook were \$300 million.
- B. Facebook says that its purpose is to help "you connect and share with the people in your life."
1. That is the great thing about facebook.
    - a. Through facebook, I've been able to find old friends with whom I went to high school or college.
    - b. I'm able to see pictures of their kids & vice-versa. I'm able to know what's going on in their lives & they in my life; my college friends & I often share important things and pray for one another.
    - c. Without facebook, it would be much more difficult, because some of my college friends have moved around a bit preaching & it's very difficult to keep addresses straight.
  2. But, we don't need facebook to connect with our friends.
    - a. Tonight's text is about connecting with friends.
    - b. READ TEXT.
    - c. We want to see what this text teaches about connecting with friends.

## IT IS GOOD FOR BROTHERS TO CONNECT, v 1

- A. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!"
- B. We often take this Psalm & jump immediately to speaking of the unity in the church; we'll get to that point, but we first need to understand this Psalm in its original context.
- C. The psalmist does not attempt to describe how good & pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity.
1. He simply says, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is."
  2. It's not something one can describe--it's something one needs to behold--see--for himself.
  3. The beauty of brethren living in unity is not something one can really describe.
    - a. The psalmist doesn't try. In fact, he uses two similes to describe it.

- b. Some things are far too beautiful to merit any description.
  - 1) Can you imagine a departed saint of God coming back to describe what Paradise is like?
  - 2) Can you imagine trying to describe holding your newborn child to someone who has never had children?
- c. The unity of brethren is like that--words simply cannot adequately explain the beauty.
- D. The phrase "dwell together" as the KJV translates this verse occurs twice in Genesis.
  - 1. "Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together" (Gn 13:5-6).
  - 2. "Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, all his beasts, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He went into a land away from his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together. The land of their sojournings could not support them because of their livestock" (Gn 36:6-7).
- E. The original background of this Psalm, therefore, seems to be the idea of the Israelites living peacefully together in Canaan.
  - 1. In both passages from Genesis, there was great strife.
    - a. The first text deals with Abram & Lot.
      - 1) Abram had disobeyed the Lord's instruction to leave his father's house & took Lot with him on his sojourn.
      - 2) When their flocks became so large that they could not dwell together, we read: "There was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock" (Gn 13:7).
    - b. The second passage deals with Jacob & Esau--you recall that Jacob fled from Esau & was estranged from him for many years before their reunion in Genesis 36.
  - 2. However, the promise of Canaan was that there would be plenty of goods to support God's people.
    - a. E.g.: "I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:8).
    - b. Thus, Canaan would be a place where all the people of God could dwell together in unity.

## TWO SIMILES, vv 2-3

- A. "It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!" v 2.
  - 1. This image is foreign to our experience, but it wasn't to the Israelites.
    - a. This oil was quite aromatic: "The LORD said to Moses, 'Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh 500 shekels, and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, 250, and 250 of aromatic cane, and 500 of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. And you shall make of these a sacred anointing oil blended as by the perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil'" (Ex 30:22-25).
    - b. This oil was for the consecration of worship utensils & priests for the service of God: "You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. And you shall say to the people of Israel, 'This shall be my holy anointing oil throughout your generations. It shall not be poured on the body of an ordinary person, and you shall make no other like it in composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you'" (Ex 30:30-

- 32).
2. Therefore, the description of Aaron's anointing here:
    - a. Would have filled the senses of the priest.
      - 1) Those standing around him would also have smelled this sweet oil, but not as strongly as he.
      - 2) Furthermore, the priest would have had the added benefit of feeling it as it ran down his face, seeing it as it dripped around his eyes, perhaps even tasting it as it ran in his mouth.
      - 3) The priest's senses would have been greatly involved in this holy experience.
    - b. Would have been abundant.
      - 1) Moses was to pour the oil on Aaron's head (Ex 29:7).
      - 2) Thus, the image of its running down his beard to the collar of his robes would have suggested plenty. A dab of oil isn't going to run that far, but this oil is plentiful.
  - B. "It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion!" v 3.
    1. Hermon is a snow-capped mountain on the northern end of Canaan, far from Zion.
    2. The image is likely that the clouds take the moisture that falls freely on Hermon & dropped it in Jerusalem.
      - a. We know that dew is quite important during Palestine's dry season: "So Israel lived in safety, Jacob lived alone, in a land of grain and wine, whose heavens drop down dew" (Deut 33:28).
      - b. Thus, the image here seems to be that the blessings of God fall upon brothers who dwell in unity.

## HOW DOES THIS IMPACT US?

- A. It continues to be beautiful when the people of God dwell together in unity.
  1. The night before Jesus died, he prayed for the unity of his people.
    - a. "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (Jn 17:20-21).
    - b. Jesus prayed these words prior to going into Gethsemane (Jn 18:1).
      - 1) Before Jesus prayed that the Father might somehow remove the cup of the cross, the Lord prayed that his disciples might be one.
      - 2) This illustrates just how importantly the Lord takes unity among believers—**before** he poured out his heart concerning the agony of the cross, Jesus prayed that we might be one.
      - 3) If Jesus had the unity of believers on his heart—as his soul was weighed down by the impending crucifixion—shouldn't the unity of believers weight heavily on our hearts, too?
  2. What can keep brethren from dwelling in unity?
    - a. In a nutshell, sin keeps brethren from living in harmony.
      - 1) Why was it that the herdsmen of Lot & Abram had such conflict? Simply because Abram took Lot with him when the Lord had told him to separate from his father's house.
      - 2) Why was it that Jacob & Esau were estranged from one another for so long? Simply because Jacob & Rebekah came up with a deceitful scheme to get Isaac to bless Jacob.
    - b. In the church's history, much sin has prevented brethren from dwelling together in unity.
      - 1) Diotrefes' pride kept those who wished to support missionaries from being a part of

the local congregation (3 Jn 9-10).

- 2) Grievances of one kind or another were causing the brethren in Corinth to sue one another: "When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?" (1 Cor 6:1).
  - 3) When some brethren came from Judea to Antioch saying that one cannot be saved apart from circumcision, we read, "Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them" (Acts 15:2). The false teaching of those brethren prevented unity among brethren.
3. Sin can certainly prohibit brethren from dwelling in unity in the modern church.
- a. Maybe it's error, like it was with the brethren who came from Judea to Antioch. How much error has sprung up in congregations across the land, causing those wishing to be faithful to leave?
  - b. Maybe its grievances, personal wrongs, committed by one member against another.
    - 1) It may very well be that the offending party meant no harm whatsoever, yet the offended party talks to everyone else in the congregation and disunity results.
    - 2) Perhaps the offending party did mean harm, but his pride keeps him from apologizing for the wrong.
  - c. Much disunity, I'm confident, boils down simply to pride, just as it did with Diotrephes.
    - 1) Perhaps someone wants to a position of leadership in the church, but the church can't give it for a myriad of reasons, and the offended party puffs up & leaves.
    - 2) Perhaps someone is offended, and pride keeps the situation from being resolved.
    - 3) Perhaps someone inadvertently teaches error, but his pride keeps him from a serious study of Scripture.
- B. How can we have the unity spoken of in this Psalm?
1. The basis of such unity must be love.
    - a. We are to love one another deeply.
      - 1) "Love one another earnestly from a pure heart" (1 Pt 1:22).
      - 2) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (Jn 13:34).
    - b. Love overlooks the quirks we all have.
      - 1) "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor 13:7).
      - 2) "Keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pt 4:8).
    - c. If I love you,
      - 1) I can overlook an offense more easily.
      - 2) I can correct your error out of love, not pride.
      - 3) I'm not concerned about having more power than you have.
  2. The Word of God must also serve as the foundation of our unity.
    - a. When brethren came to Antioch teaching error about circumcision, Paul & Barnabas went to Jerusalem.
      - 1) Once the elders, apostles, & the Jerusalem church came together, there was a great deal of debate.
      - 2) Yet, it was the Will of God that forever settled the question.
        - a) The church sent a letter to Gentile churches outlining what was to be done concerning the issue.
        - b) Part of that letter reads like this: "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements" (Acts 15:28).
        - c) It wasn't the will of the church that prevailed, but it was what "seemed good to the Holy Spirit."

- b. If we desire unity, it must be based on the Word of God.
  - 1) That is how the earliest disciples had unity.
    - a) “They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).
    - b) Notice the correlation between the teaching of the apostles & fellowship.
  - 2) “Whoever speaks” should speak “as one who speaks oracles of God” (1 Pt 4:11). If we would all speak “as one who speaks oracles of God,” there would not be division among us.

## CONCLUSION

- A. One of the purposes for which Jesus died was to bring unity to the people of God.
  - 1. “For he himself is our peace, who has made us [Jew & Gentile] both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility” (Eph 2:14-16).
  - 2. If Jesus came to die in order to make one man, shouldn't we strive to be that one man?
- B. None of the barriers man has often erected matter—it doesn't matter what gender or race or political persuasion or economic status or education level we are, we can come to Jesus & be one.
  - 1. Are you united with the people of God?
  - 2. Do you need to come & unity with God's people while we stand & sing?