

Unity among Brethren
(Psalm 133:1)

Introduction:

1. On this first Lord's Day of 2013 we are focusing our attention on the subject that David addressed in Psalm 133:1 -- "unity among brethren."
2. According to the Bible, unity among brethren is so important that we must strive to maintain it throughout the entire year.
3. As we search the Scriptures to know God's will on this subject, let us first determine . . .

Discussion:

- I. HOW THE LORD FEELS ABOUT UNITY AMONG BRETHREN
 - A. Psalm 133 is a good place to begin.
 1. According to vs.1, it is "*good*" and "*pleasant*" for brethren to dwell together in unity.
 2. We learn from vs.2 that unity among brethren is "*precious*" [compared to the ointment placed on Aaron -- Exodus 30].
 3. Vs.3 indicates that unity among brethren is a blessing from God [compared to the dew that comes from above].
 - B. Let us examine the prayer that Jesus prayed shortly before He was crucified (John 17).
 1. (vs.11) Jesus prayed that His apostles would be one.
 2. (vs.20-21) He prayed that all of His followers would be one.
 3. (vs.21b) This kind of unity will have a positive impact upon others.
 - C. The Lord's followers are also taught in the epistles to be united.
 1. Romans 15:5-6
 2. Philippians 2:2
 - D. The Lord feels very strongly about unity among brethren, but He also feels very strongly toward those who sow discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:19).
 - E. Let us turn our attention to several . . .
- II. AREAS IN WHICH THE LORD'S FOLLOWERS ARE TO BE UNITED
 - A. The Lord wants His followers to be united in doctrine.
 1. In Philippians 1:27 Christians are taught to "*stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*"
 2. One of the outstanding traits of the Jerusalem church was that its members "*continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine*" (Acts 2:42).
 3. To be united in doctrine we must:
 - a. "*continue*" [abide] in the Lord's Word (John 8:31-32)
 - b. "*rightly divide*" the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15).
 4. Even though the Lord wants His people to be united, we must never compromise doctrine for the sake of unity.
 - B. The Lord wants His followers to be united in other matters.
 1. This is clearly taught in 1 Corinthians 1:10.
 2. To accomplish this we must follow the instructions given in:
 - a. Romans 12:16, 18; 14:19
 - b. Ephesians 4:1-3.
- III. WE MUST AVOID THINGS THAT ADVERSELY AFFECT UNITY
 - A. Exalting people over Christ will have an adverse effect upon unity.
 1. This practice was found in the church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:11-12).
 2. The result was strife and division (1 Corinthians 3:3-4).
 3. 1 Corinthians 4:6 shows us how to avoid this problem.
 - B. Murmuring will have an adverse effect upon unity.
 1. The church in Jerusalem displayed a beautiful spirit of unity (Acts 2:44, 46).
 2. Later, murmuring threatened to destroy that church's unity (Acts 6:1).
 3. Philippians 2:14 shows us how to avoid this problem.
 - C. Loving to have preeminence will have an adverse effect upon unity.

1. This problem is mentioned in 3 John 9-10.
2. To avoid this problem, we must:
 - a. remember that Christ has all preeminence in the church (Colossians 1:18)
 - b. follow the instructions given in Philippians 2:3-4.

IV. WE MUST PURSUE THINGS THAT PROMOTE UNITY

A. Love promotes unity.

1. True Christian love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
2. (1 Corinthians 16:14) "*Let all your things be done with charity.*"
3. Colossians 3:14 teaches us to "*put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*"

B. Practicing the Golden Rule promotes unity (Matthew 7:12).

C. The right kind of speech promotes unity (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6; Proverbs 25:11).

Conclusion:

1. In Psalm 133 David declared and illustrated how special it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.
2. May God help us:
 - a. to avoid things that adversely affect unity
 - b. to pursue those things that promote and maintain unity.