

Scripture: Psalm 133:1-3

Sermon: A Community of the Eternal Life / translated by: Melody Ouk

1. Homework Check

I was appointed to One Heart Church in the first week of September 2022, so today marks the second anniversary of my journey with you. Two years ago, my first sermon scripture was Psalm 133. The reason I am sharing this scripture with you again today is because this scripture is a very important and eternal homework given to us who gather in church. In a way, could it be said that it is a homework check by our homeroom teacher? Of course, our homeroom teacher is our God. It would be good to imagine a kind homeroom teacher who approaches us in a friendly manner and asks, "Are you doing well? How are you doing?" This scripture contains the ultimate reason why God called Abraham and chose his descendants, the Israelites. It is a precious scripture that tells us what kind of world He wanted to create through the Israelites. Through this scripture, I hope we can reflect on the reason why God calls us to community and check our homework.

The first verse of the scripture begins with a question. What does it mean by stating, "How good and pleasant it is"? It is a 'rhetorical question'. It is an interrogative sentence used not to ask a question but to express a strong affirmation. "Isn't it good? Is it not pleasant?" In Korean there is a saying, "Do you think I cannot afford to buy you this?" What does it mean? It strongly expresses that I can afford to buy this for you. In Hebrew, it is *Hine, ma tov wu ma naim! Hine* means "Look here. Behold." When we express that what I am going to say later is really great, we use *hine*. Immediately after this, the interrogative word *ma*, which means "how", is attached to each adjective. The interrogative word *ma* is attached before *tov*, which means "good", and *naim*, which means "pleasant". "Look here. Look how good and pleasant this is." This short sentence contains a nuance of admiration and emotion. What on earth is the writer of this psalm saying that is so good and so delightful? *Shebet Akhim gam yakhad*. *Shebet* means "dwell", *akhim* means "brothers", *gam* means "also, like", *yakhad* means "together". "How good and delightful it is for brothers to dwell together in unity." The reason I'm going to explain this first verse to you in Hebrew is because it's a Hebrew poem, and I want you to feel its rhythm and nuance. Would you like to follow along with me? "*Hine, ma tov wu ma naim, shebet akhim gam yakhad*." It's not our language, so it's hard to feel it deeply, but the Israelites put their tune to this poem and sang about this beautiful life.

2. Harmonious life, beautiful life

It's such a romantic poem, but living together is never romantic. That's because we are so different from each other. There's a saying, "100 people, 100 colors." It means that if there are a hundred people, there are a hundred colors. It means that people pursue different things, so it's hard to avoid conflict. Marriage is when two different people form a relationship and live together. It's hard for two people to live together as one, so how hard would it be for a hundred people to form a relationship and become one? Think about the word "human." Human means "between people." People are beings who are in relationships with others. We mature when we learn and practice living with people who have different thoughts and ways of living. What are the characteristics of young children? They think that only I am right and that I am the best. However, when we say that someone is an adult, it means that he or she has the generosity to embrace and accept others.

Other things are not wrong. Respecting and tolerating others is a characteristic of adults. Imagine if everyone sitting here were just like me. How boring would that be? The world is

interesting because there are many people who are different from me. It is beautiful to live together with brothers and sisters who are different from me. In the old version, 'living together' was translated as 'living together in unity.' To unite means to achieve 'harmony.' It is a poem that says that it is good and beautiful for people to live in harmony with others who are different from them. To see how mature a person is, you can see how well he or she is able to live in harmony with others. In Matthew 5:9, Jesus expressed it this way: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." The greatest characteristic of God's children is to achieve peace and create harmony.

How can a hundred people with a hundred colors be beautiful? Artists are people who create beauty by harmoniously mixing a hundred colors. Although they are different colors, they look beautiful because of the colors next to them. I learned about 'color contrast' in middle school art class. It is a phenomenon in which a certain color looks different because of the colors next to it. Red looks more vivid and stands out when it is in the middle of green. Yellow stands out more when it is in the middle of black. It is a mysterious phenomenon in which I do not stand out that much on my own, but when someone else is next to me, I stand out more and they shine more. Artists create beauty by using this unique harmony of colors. By being in harmony with others, we can create emotions and beauty that cannot be created alone. The scripture says that there is nothing more beautiful and joyful than the children of God becoming one in harmony.

3. Oil and Dew

This poem expresses the beautiful and harmonious life of a community through two metaphors: oil poured on the head and dew coming down from Mount Hermon. What kind of harmonious community do the oil and dew symbolize?

First, let's look at the poem to see how the oil is described. It says, "It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe." The precious oil on the head refers to the oil used to consecrate priests. In the Old Testament, there was a ceremony to pour oil on those who were appointed as priests. What does it mean that the oil overflows? It means that those who are called and set apart for God's work are overflowing. It means that the community of faith is beautiful when there are many people who are aware of their calling. In 1 Peter 2:9, it says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light," confirming our calling. God did not call us to be holy priests without any reason. The reason for appointing priests is to fulfill the duties of priests. The oil flowing down the priest's head and into the collar of his garments symbolizes his calling. Why did God call you out of darkness? Why did God forgive your sins and make you holy, even at the cost of crucifying and killing His Son? It is to live in the world, revealing God's light. When the church, the community of God's children, becomes beautiful, it is when each person knows his or her calling and shows his or her own color in his or her own place. We all have different gifts and talents. Our callings and gifts are diverse, such as those who praise, teach, serve, minister, and proclaim the word. Paul asks us to build the community beautifully through the gifts He has given us. "To equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Ephesians 4:12)." God has given you unique gifts and colors. Do not hide them, but use them for the community. When each person serves and ministers with his or her own gifts, the community becomes beautiful.

The second beautiful image of the community is likened to the dew from Mount Hermon. "It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion" When you think of dew, some people may think of the famous Korean soju brand, but dew symbolizes freshness. If someone tells you that

you are like dew, it is a compliment. The morning dew that fell on the land of Palestine, where there was little rainfall, was like life. The manna in the wilderness always came down with dew. In the Bible, dew symbolizes God's grace and provision. It means that a community that is in harmony with the Lord conveys freshness and life like dew to the world.

4. The result of harmony, eternal life

What is the result of this harmony? "The Lord promised a blessing there, and that blessing is eternal life." The result of a community of people of all colors beautifully functioning is eternal life. As I have said many times, eternal life does not simply mean that time lasts forever. It does not simply mean life after death. I have said that 'a life worth continuing forever' is eternal life. In other words, eternal life can be said to be 'a life accepted by God.' Being saved means accepting that I have been accepted. Accepting that I have been accepted is salvation. When the prodigal son who left his father felt the emotion of salvation, it was when he felt that he was accepted by his father. When he was held in his father's arms, that was the moment when the life of eternal life opened up for the prodigal son. For those who have been accepted and accepted by God, the life of eternal life has already begun. Those who believe that they have been accepted by God will accept and embrace others in the same way. They will escape the vicious cycle of sin and death. Because the sin that the Bible speaks of is a mind that is completely turned toward me. When we know that our life is already accepted, we can accept and love others.

1 John 3:14 says this: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death." This means that only those who love will live eternally. The life that the saved people enjoy by loving each other can be called eternal life. This is why God called us out of darkness. He wants us to create an eternal community on this earth. He wants us to start a valuable life here that will last until heaven. A life where brothers and sisters live together is the life of eternal life. The Old Testament sings of salvation in this world, not salvation in the afterlife. Salvation is not about going to Andromeda after death. Salvation already begins on this earth. The reason the church is called a salvation community is because it is to show us the image of salvation in advance. The homework of the church, the eternal community, is to show us the life of heaven where brothers and sisters love each other here.

5. Living in Community

I suggested to you two years ago in my first sermon that we complete this homework assignment together. Are you doing your homework well? One of the proofs that you are doing your homework well is that you are living a more beautiful life here. Because you have become my foundation, I was able to establish a new foundation here. I will never forget the Hesus you have shown me. Thank you. I believe that not only me but many people have experienced the beauty of eternal life through you as they come and go here. Sometimes I see people who have never been to church before adjusting to our church. I wonder how they can stay and not leave the church when the Christian terms and religious atmosphere of salvation and eternal life are so unfamiliar to them. The reason is that you have done your homework well. Since you have shown them the vague concept of eternal life through your lives, they understand and accept salvation and eternal life with their bodies.

Dear congregation, we become more beautiful when we live together with others. Harmony is created when I produce my own sound accurately. The beautiful sound of harmony is created when someone with a different sound comes together with me while I produce my own sound without losing my individuality and color. That is what it means to love my neighbor as myself. It

is a life of maintaining my gifts, my characteristics, or my identity while achieving harmony with others. It is difficult if I lose my identity because I am in harmony. The church is a community that practices harmony and peace. A harmonious world created by people of peace is the life of heaven. The small groups within the church are a place to practice living in harmony. Those who have not actively participated in the small group, please practice a beautiful life there now. Practice the life of eternal life there. Your life can shine more and become more beautiful when you are with others. Have frequent meal gatherings at the small group. The table is a place of hospitality and coexistence. There is no picture more beautiful than a family gathered around a round table and eating together from the same pot. In Psalm 23, David sang that God prepared a table for him in front of his enemies. It is a song about reconciling with his enemies and eating together from the same pot. David had already created a community of peace and eternal life before he became king. When he was living as a fugitive in the wilderness, the people who gathered in the cave of Adullam were vagabonds and rough people. However, David made them into one community. He experimented with the life of eternal life from the wilderness. The word 'One Heart' implies many people coming together, and it contains the hope that everyone will become one in one dream.

We have resolved to eliminate positions such as deacon, elder, and evangelist for this unity and call everyone brothers and sisters. We will not be called pastor so-and-so or deacon so-and-so in heaven. What title would be appropriate for life in heaven if not brother and sister? Since calling someone by their title is a courtesy to them in Korean culture, it may be unfamiliar. And we are also asked why we are eliminating the position of deacon in the Bible. The positions of priest, apostle, and bishop in the Bible are not used today. I think that culture is something we create ourselves. There were definitely deacons in Paul's time, but Paul liked to call everyone brothers and sisters. Even if it is unfamiliar, I hope that we can capture our values from a single title. Among immigrant churches in the United States that dream of a healthy church, there are churches that are eliminating positions and practicing calling everyone brothers and sisters. Although they are not the majority, there are churches that are making efforts like our church. I met two churches in New Jersey during my vacation, and one of them was a Presbyterian church like ours. In D.C., there is a Methodist church with over 300 members, and it has been practiced for over 7 years. The eternal community that brothers and sisters become one is our Lord's dream and our mission that we must create on this earth. Our Lord earnestly desires that through you, an eternal community overflowing with anointment and full of vitality like dew will be created on this earth.