

Text: Psalm 133:1-3

Title: We are all One

1.

May the grace and peace of God the Father be with all of the members of Dahana Church. I came here in the second week of June to say hello and now I stand in front of you after almost 3 months. I believe that God's plan for me, my family, and Dahana Church is amazing and detailed. My family and I moved over here looking forward to beautiful stories of the church that we will create together in the future. We crossed over the mountains and waters to get here. There was an anticipation of what awaited in the new place, but it also made me nervous.

It may seem a little unfamiliar and awkward for all of you too as you had to send away the pastor you were accustomed to and be with a new pastor you have little to no experience with. It feels like you and I are at the starting line of a journey, simultaneously feeling the tension and excitement like travelers traveling to a place they have never been to. With excitement, I want to ask you, what kind of stories will unfold before us? and what kind of church will we move progress to?

Through today's message of Psalm 133, I believe we can get a hint of what God's guidance may be for us.

2.

If you look into your Bible, there is a title at the beginning of Psalm 133 which is "A psalm of David, Songs of Ascents."

There are a total of 15 Psalms, from Psalms 120 to 134, entitled "Songs of Ascents." During the great festival, the Jews gathered from their scattered places in Jerusalem, where the temple was located. The pilgrims heading for the temple go uphill as they get closer to Jerusalem. Jerusalem, located around the Judean wilderness, was located in a high mountain area. As they climbed toward the distant Jerusalem,

looking at the looming temple, the Jews sang these Psalms and continued their arduous pilgrimage. These songs comforted them on their arduous pilgrimage and also reminded them of the purpose of their journey.

Psalm 133 was one of those songs. So, 'Songs of Ascents' were songs that united the Jewish community as they should be surrounding the temple. In other words, they sang these songs to confirm the will and calling of God who called them as a community and did not lose their identity.

Let's take a closer look at the text. The text is a short poem in three verses. It begins with a short exclamation of "Behold". In our language, it's like interjections that instigate high spirits which are called, "Chuimsae" in Korea.

Verse 1 - "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity. Here, brothers do not mean just men, think of it as a community. It expresses how beautiful and happy it is to see a community living together as one.

Unity is a good and beautiful thing. The Hebrew word translated as 'good' is 'Tov' and 'Naim' is 'Pleasant'. Tov appears a lot in Genesis 1, and the word Tov is used when God created the world and said: "it was good". The word Naim is an expression of joy and happiness. Verse 1 makes it clear that it is a very happy life for brothers to live together and live as a community.

Verses 2 and 3 express the result of unity. Two direct analogies make you imagine how amazing the fruits of unity and solidarity can be.

Verse 2 imagines the time when the descendants of Aaron received the ordination ceremony as priests. Oil is anointed on the head when delegating priests. It makes you imagine the oil flowing from the hair to the beard and down the collar.

At the beginning of verse 3, a name of place appears, Hermon, which is a high mountain located in the northern part of Israel. From Hermon the snow melts and becomes water, flowing southward into the Sea of Galilee and watering the parched land. When I went directly to the valley below Mount Hermon, the water was flowing down strong. It was not flowing like a gentle river, but more like a powerful waterfall. Likewise, coming together in unity has power.

We can see that verses 2 and 3 both portray the image of good things flowing down from above to below. It means that good things come from above so that those below also enjoy abundantly good things.

The second half of verse 3 tells us that the essence of the blessing the people enjoy in unity is eternal life. Eternal life literally signifies eternal life. A life with abundant blessings eternally is a fruit of Unity. In other words, the ultimate form of salvation and blessing that God wants to give is coming together in unity. It should be noted that the unity of brothers and sisters is not just good and joyful, but also represent the ultimate purpose and vision of the kingdom of God. The way of living together in unity is none other than the way of life of the people of God.

3.

Psalm 133 is a message we must remember every week when we gather here in the temple. We remember that we are pilgrims as we gather here once a week from our respective places of life. We come together for a special purpose, and we come together for a special calling. The Israelites must have remembered their calling over and over again, singing this song on their pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem every year on the feast day. We are a kingdom of priests. Through our Unity, the blessing of eternal life will flow to all peoples of the world. The members of the Dahana Church must also remember this calling whenever they gather in this temple.

I find the essence of the church at this point. What distinguishes the church from other organizations in the world? What is the unique calling that exists only in the Church, which is not found in any other organization in the world? It is unity. In other words, it is love. The church is a really strange place. After working to "death" all week, people gather to church despite fatigue and tiredness. And people become high-spirited when they come to church. Even those who experienced the "taste of death", get a "taste of life" when they come here. Why? Because you taste the love. When you taste God's love as well as the love of your brothers and sisters, your life will change for the better.

After creating the heavens and the earth, God finally created man and said that it was very good to see. A human being created in his image could not have looked any better. However, the expression "very good in his eyes" is repeated in verse 1 of the text. "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" The original form of creation that God wants to restore is a community where brothers are united in love as one. The ultimate call the Church must pursue is the call to love one another. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)"

4.

Now someone may think, "Pastor!! Can't we just live a quiet life of faith alone? After all, in life don't I come and go alone? At church, I worry about other people approaching, and sometimes it annoys me." So then, why do we need to connect and unite with others? This is because human beings are made to be dependent on each other by nature. Humans cannot stand alone. It was not good in God's sight for Adam to be alone, so he made Eve, a woman as a companion. As you all know, the Chinese character 人 is a figure of two people leaning against each other. God created people to lean on each other. The way we are restored to the image of God is to restore our original form of humanity, which is interconnectedness.

Can any of you see the back of your head? Is there anyone who can see what their back looks like with their own eyes? There's an ophthalmologist here too, but do you know why the human eyes only rest in front? A creature with front and back eyes is called Janus in Greek mythology. The reason people are not Janus is that they need other people. It is a very philosophical agenda that a person cannot see behind himself. I think I know myself perfectly, but no one knows him or herself perfectly. Others see what I cannot see. When I listen to someone, I confirm my existence. So, our existence is complete when we listen to others and when they call our names and hold hands with them. God made all humans that way. People enjoy full happiness when they are connected and united with others. It is to confirm my humanity through others and to be completed as a true human being.

In that sense, the church is the arena of unity of brothers and sisters. It is a place where we restore our true humanity. Through unity, we can create the image of the kingdom of God that God wants to achieve on this earth. The church is distinguished from other institutions of the world in the way that it is a community that provides a foretaste of the coming kingdom of God here on earth. The church must show the appearance of the kingdom of heaven. The aspect of the kingdom of God that David speaks of through today's text is that brothers and sisters love each other and unite to become one.

I don't know who came up with the name 'one heart', but it really is a well-made name. Heaven is melted in the name of 'one heart'. We, Dahana Church, should be able to show the image of heaven, at least to the Koreans living here in Rochester. To do that, we must become one, and create unity and love. Only then will many people enjoy the blessing of eternal life through us. The results of the love created through us will flow like a waterfall to our neighbors.

Since the old times, the elderly have spoken a lot about 'downward love'. The characteristic of love is that it goes down. Just as electricity flows from high to low, and water flows from high to low, love flows from many places to less. Just as oil

poured on a priest flow down his head, down his beard, and down his collars, love flows from the rich to the poor. Just as the snow on Mount Hermon melts in the spring sunlight and flows down to wet the parched land, our love will flow to fill the broken hearts of those who are dry and wounded. There is no other secret to being 'one-hearted'. The only way to unity is love. Love is natural, not forced.

There is a saying in Lao-tzu's Tao Te Ching (Book of morals), 'Sangseonyaksu (上善若水)'. It means, "the highest good is like water". In other words, the truth, which can be called the best good in the world, has the same characteristics as water. What is water like? Water flows from high places to low places. If there is an obstacle in the way, the water will smoothly flow and wrap around it instead of breaking through it. Water fills holes and cracks as it flows down. The characteristic of God's love is like this water. God's love, the greatest good in the world, is like water and synonymous with 'downward love'.

The church is full of people who come with torn and broken hearts like David's community gathered in the cave of Adullam. It is not easy for "perfect" people to come to church. Many people come to church with a lot of regrets. By coming to church, you not only taste God's love for you, but also the loving care of brothers and sisters. When we love each other, love flows like water, watering each other's broken hearts and filling the cracks in them. And it does not stop there. The love proceeds to flow to surrounding people, the community, and society, and the virtuous cycle of love continues.

What do you think can change a person? Can learning and knowledge change us? Not at all. Love changes us. 1 Corinthians 8 verse 1. "But knowledge puffs up while love builds up." 1 Corinthians 13:2. "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing."

By going to bible studies with the new pastor and increasing my knowledge, will my faith grow and change? Not at all. If people change through Bible studies, the current Korean society would have undergone tremendous changes because of the church. Love changes people. Love builds people. Love makes us perfect.

6.

Have you seen the movie, Jerry Maguire? The final scene of the movie is always touching. Sports agent Jerry wins a jackpot contract after many twists and turns. He had achieved the success he had hoped for and dreamed of, but he felt a void in his heart. He immediately runs to his girlfriend, who has already become distant from him. And this is Jerry's line for his girlfriend, who is mourning at the widow's meeting. "Our company made a huge deal today and it was a hit. But it wasn't complete... we live in cynical world, cynical world. ... I love you. You complete me."

Dear Dahana Church, when you think about the future of our church, what do you think of it? Achieving and accomplishing great goals for church? Learning in the depth of biblical knowledge? Being filled with people and expanding the size of the church? Like Jerry's confession, even if we achieve all those things, our hearts will still be empty. This is because God has created a space in our hearts that will be filled only with love. The love of God that flows like water and the love between the members of the congregation, which is small but steady like the drizzle, will fill us and change us. If we can find the direction of Dahana Church in today's Word, it is a community in unity. Our church brings together people from different backgrounds, different personalities, and different talents. Some of you have just come to this place from Korea, while others have lived in the US for over 20 or 30 years. Some people have studied a lot and some have not. There are Republicans and there are Democrats. We are so different from each other, but we all need each other. My existence cannot be complete without that person around me. Our church should be a community of true God that values each other, holds each other's hands, and comforts each other. When we all become one, the kingdom of God will be more firmly established on this earth. When we become one, the good and rich things

made through us flow into our neighbors. May God bless you and remind you that we are here because of those next to us. Don't be hesitant to walk together in love, holding the hand of the brother next to you. God bless you.

- Translated by Myungha Kim -