

Psalm 133

Prayer during the Day Friday Week 4

This is the second last of a group of psalms (120-134) that have the title 'A Song of Ascents.' It is a celebration of family, of nation, of cultic community. As Christians we pray it thinking of the Church of the Risen Christ.

'How good and pleasant it is when a family lives together in unity!

Is the psalmist expressing longing for the reunification of northern and southern kingdoms?

The jealousy of Ephraim shall depart, the hostility of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not be hostile towards Ephraim.

– Isaiah 11:13

I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms. They shall never again defile themselves with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. I will save them from all the apostasies into which they have fallen, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

– Ezekiel 37:22-23

He is expressing the importance and joy of unity in the community. Isaiah describes the situation when this unity is absent:

The people will be oppressed, everyone by another and everyone by a neighbour; the youth will be insolent to the elder, and the base to the honourable. Someone will even seize a relative, a member of the clan, saying, 'You have a cloak; you shall be our leader, and this heap of ruins shall be under your rule.' But the other will cry out on that day, saying, 'I will not be a healer; in my house there is neither bread nor cloak; you shall not make me leader of the people.' For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against YHWH, defying his glorious presence.

– Isaiah 3:5-8

Listen to Paul:

As long as there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?

– 1Corinthians 3:3

You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, in order that they may serve me as priests. You shall say to the Israelites, ‘This shall be my holy anointing oil throughout your generations. It shall not be used in any ordinary anointing of the body, and you shall make no other like it in composition; it is holy, and it shall be holy to you.’

– Exodus 30:30-32

The unction passes from the priestly mediator right through to the assembly. The collar of the priest’s robe is embroidered with twelve precious stones for the tribes of Israel. As Christians we think of the anointing of Jesus recorded in John 12. Also the following from Paul:

Through us Christ spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

– 2Corinthians 2:14-15

Mount Hermon is the snow-capped mountain that stands guard over the northern border of Israel.

Our thoughts as we pray this verse are on the Church, the Body of Christ

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.

– 1Corinthians 1:10

Love never stops caring. Love always acts in a kind way. Love does not act out of jealousy or envy. Love does not boast, or behave in an arrogant way. Love does not act indecently, or insist on its own way. Love does not give way to irritation or brood over wrongs. Love takes no pleasure in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. Love has space enough to hold and to bear everything and everyone. Love believes all things, hopes all things, and endures whatever comes. Love does not come to an end

– 1Corinthians 13:4-7

²It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

³It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there YHWH ordained his blessing*, life forever more.