

# Psalms Chapter 15 the Pearl Psalm -- Psalm 133

by A.B. Simpson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of Christian unity, its source in Jesus Christ, and the blessings that follow when we dwell in love and walk in unity.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 13:45

**Topics:** "Love in the Church", "Christian Unity"

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## Description

A.B. Simpson emphasizes the beauty of Christian unity as depicted in Psalm 133, referring to it as the 'Pearl Psalm.' He explains that the Church, as the Body of Christ, reflects God's purpose for unity, which is essential for spiritual growth and the fulfillment of Christ's command to love one another. Simpson highlights that true unity is not only good but also pleasant, bringing blessings such as answered prayers and the presence of the Holy Spirit. He encourages believers to pursue unity actively, reminding them that love is the key to overcoming divisions and fostering a community that attracts others to Christ. Ultimately, he calls for a reliance on the Holy Spirit to cultivate this love and unity among believers.

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## Transcript

We have called this the Pearl Psalm because it is the picture of the Church of Christ in unity, and this picture Christ has given to us in the New Testament in one of His most beautiful parables, under the image of the Pearl of Great Price. (Mat. 13: 45, 46.)

At first sight this may not seem to be a Messianic Psalm, for it tells of the Church rather than Christ. But what is the Church but the Body of Christ? He is only a Head without her; she constitutes His completeness; nor can we ever think of her unity apart from her living Head.

### I. THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

"How good . . . it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" It is good. It is God's great plan, not only for His Church, but for the universe. It is the end for which He has been working from the beginning. Far back in the past eternity He dwelt alone, the inaccessible and infinite Jehovah. Then from His hand there came this wondrous universe, these worlds of space that roll afar and cover yonder vast immensity.

But there was a void impassable between the Creator and the creature. The highest angel could not look across that mighty abyss. The distance was infinite.

But there was One who from the beginning was designed to be the Reconciler. It was the Son of God, and into this created universe He descended to gather together into one all things in Himself.

The Creator became the creature; the Invisible became incarnate. He took upon Himself the form of man, and then He came still nearer to dwell in the very hearts of men Himself. And now there is one Being who is the link that binds this mighty universe to its Creator, and upon yonder throne shall forever sit a Man who in His own person combines the infinite and transcendent glory of God with the form and face and spirit of one of Adam's race. He and His glorious Church are the uniting links of the whole universe, and in Him all things are already being made one.

He has designed His glorious Church, therefore, to be the special expression of all the diversity in this universe combined in perfect unity. She is the microcosm of the universe and the reflection of God Himself. It is, therefore, His purpose for her that she might be made perfect in oneness, both with Him her glorious Head, and in all her parts and members.

This was His last command respecting her as He went away, that her members should love one another as He had loved them. This was the burden of His parting prayer as He stood at the entrance of the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His agony, and prayed: "That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in me, and I in You, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that You have sent me."

## II. THE PLEASANTNESS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

It is not only "good," but it is "pleasant." Nothing is sweeter than the joy of love; nothing is more bitter than the sting of hate; nothing is more keen than the anguish of separation. God's own nature is love, and therefore it is blessedness; and if we would know His joy, we must rise to His love and live out of ourselves and for others. How happy the heart where love reigns supreme! How delightful the church where all the members love one another! How blessed the people that dwell in peace! How miserable the hearts that are ever indulging their bitterness, strife, jealousy, envy, and malignity! You may hurt others by the stings of passion, but you hurt yourselves much more. "How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

## III. THE BLESSING THAT FOLLOWS

The blessing that follows Christian unity is described in the words, "For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore."

God's special blessing attends His people when they dwell in love and walk in unity. He has promised to be with them as they walk in love.

1. He promises a blessing upon the soul that walks in love. You will be blessed yourself if you walk in unity, but
2. It will promote the blessing of others. It will create an atmosphere that will create spiritual growth. It is when the members are fitly framed together that they grow into an holy temple in the Lord. It is like the warm sunshine of May which brings out the fruits and flowers of the earth. The church which is bathed in the atmosphere of love will always be fragrant with the blossoms of Christian loveliness and usefulness.

3. It brings answers to our prayers. The prayer of unity has a peculiar promise. "If two of you shall agree [symphonize] on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

4. It will impress the unbelieving world. It is given by an infidel historian as the chief ground for the rapid progress of Christianity in the early centuries, that the Christians loved one another so tenderly and faithfully.

5. It will bring down the special gifts of the Holy Ghost. The heavenly Dove will only dwell in an atmosphere of love and peace. If the Church would only return to her primitive unity, she would soon be restored to her ancient power, and all the gifts of the Holy Ghost would crown the grace of love and bring the world to the feet of Jesus.

6. It will bring the blessing of salvation to sinners. The world is drawn to such an atmosphere, and lost men find it an attractive and congenial home. We must love them to Christ by the love we bear to one another and which overflows to them. Show me a church full of love, and I will show you a church which enjoys a perpetual revival.

#### IV. THE SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

"It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion."

These two beautiful figures represent very distinctly:

1. The person of Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest, under the image of Aaron, and,
2. The Holy Ghost under the double image of the ointment and the dew. The oil falls on Aaron's head and descends to the skirts of his garments. And so, the spirit of unity and love comes to us from Jesus Christ. He is the Head and the High Priest, and we, lying at His feet, receive the anointing and the Spirit that fell on Him. It is only as we are united to Christ and drink in His very own spirit that we can be filled with love. Our love is a poor, worthless thing. We must have His, and He is willing to give us the same anointing that fell on Him, and which reaches and rests on us.

We may have the very love that He had and the very Holy Ghost that baptized and filled Him.

It is our relation to Christ that fixes our relation to each other. It is when we are in Him that we can be one with others. It is a vain attempt to try to get into unity with men by touching them directly, and trying to arrange our creeds, plans, and human mechanisms. The true spirit is to be right with Him and near to Him, and then we shall touch all that are in Him as they touch Him.

But the figure also tells us of the Holy Ghost Himself. The sacred anointing that fell on Aaron's head reached to the fringes of his robe. He is the Spirit of unity and love. The same Spirit that dwelt in Christ makes us all one in Him. Oh, if we were all baptized with the Holy Ghost, we should all be one. It is easy to get on with men and women who are filled with the Spirit. People half-filled with the Holy Ghost are very difficult to get on with. They have just enough to make them spiritually conceited, willful, sensitive, and critical, but the heart filled with the Holy Ghost is always simple, adjustable, free from self-will and angularities of every kind. You cannot hurt such a man because he is not there to hurt. The cloud has come in, and Moses has moved out. We may have this blessed Holy Ghost in all His fullness, as fully as

He fell on the head of Jesus. All that is necessary is that we get down to the skirts of His garment; keep low enough, empty enough, open enough, and we shall be filled.

The figure of the dew is still more beautiful. The same dew that fell on lofty Hermon descended also on the little mountains of Zion. It tells us that the lowliest child of God can have the same grace that was given to the loftiest; that the humblest Christian may have the same spirit that made John the beloved and enabled Mary to pour the fragrant anointing on the Master's head. This love is not our virtue, or the result of our struggles and endeavors, but it is the grace of Jesus and the very spirit of our Lord Himself shed abroad in us and enabling us to live in this world even as He.

## V. SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO ENABLE US TO WALK IN UNITY

1. Let us determine and endeavor to walk in unity. Every victory must be won and every grace attained and established through a fixed purpose and a definite committal of ourselves to this. You can have from Christ whatever you will determine to have. The very strongest terms are used in the New Testament to express the importance of this purpose. We are to "follow after charity." We are to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." As much as lies in us we are to "live peaceably with all men." These terms express the most intense determination and the most eager pursuit of an object. The same eagerness with which the hunter pursues his prey, and the worldling his fortune, we are to show in the pursuit of love.

Some earnest Christians have found it most helpful to pledge that they will stand in the spirit of love, and let nothing offend them or break their unity. It would be a good thing if all who read these lines would, on their knees before God and in His strength, solemnly determine and pledge their word that they will never again willingly allow themselves to sin against love, or to break their unity of spirit toward any of God's children.

2. It will help us to remember that we are always responsible for any breach of unity. Do not think of your brother's fault, or say what he has done, but think of your place, and remember that if you keep right, it is impossible for others to strive with you. There are some men with whom you cannot quarrel. They are so gentle and loving they will not take offense. The next time some one tries you or wrongs you, do not begin to think what he has done, but rather what you are going to do. Keep your eyes off their fault, and think only of your duty and responsibility to keep in sweetness and victory.

3. Remember that God permits every test to come into your life, and that He is watching to see what you will do. He is glorified and pleased if you triumph with all longsuffering, gentleness and love; grieved and shamed if you lose your victory and give way to passion and temptation. Your Heavenly Father is using all these situations in life which come to you, to educate you for something higher; and the way in which you meet them is determining your own future position in His glorious kingdom. He wants a race of men and women who can walk in perfect love and triumph under all circumstances.

After all, the test of everything is love. The characters that will stand prominent in the ages to come are those who have overcome in this arena. Those who are offended with every trifling trouble now are not going to stand in the places of high honor and service in the ages of glory.

O beloved, remember, the next time some little trial meets you, that your heavenly Father is waiting to see what you will do, and whether you will be worthy of the crown and the place of glorious trust when He comes to reign with His saints. The Scotch housekeepers in the old times used to leave a broomstick

across the hall when a new girl came to apply for a place in the family. They wished to see if she would pick it up or stumble over it, and her fate was decided by the way she met it. Beloved, do not be so foolish as to fall over a broomstick and miss a kingdom.

4. Remember also that the devil is waiting to see you slip and fall. These spaces above us are not empty. Myriads of eyes are gazing down; myriads are thronging yonder galleries, and many of them laugh with a fiendish joy when you are provoked to some thought or act of unkindness or bitterness. And if you could see the faces of yonder heavenly beings, you might behold a blush of shame as they hang their heads; and the Master turns away that He may not see the dishonor of His child. Yes, we are made a gazing stock to angels and principalities. Let us not please our foes by yielding to their wiles, but let us keep our victory and triumph in our love.

5. Think of others, not in the light of their faults and failures, but in the light of God's promises for them, and as they will be some day when the grace of Christ has completed their sanctification, and they shine in all the glory of the ransomed. Anticipate their future as you do your own. Think of them with a love that "believes all things," that "hopes all things," and that clothes them with the qualities which they shall some day possess even if they do not now. To God this is everything. Time is nothing in His eye, which sweeps eternity, and sees you each moment as you will be when you shine like the sun in the kingdom of your Father. See your brother in the same light, and you will be able to walk in love.

6. Look at people as Christ looks at them; see them in the light of His love. They are dear to Him. He does not condemn them for every failure and reject them even for their most glaring faults; and if you have His heart toward them, you will be patient and gentle. Think how He looked on Peter; forgave the woman taken in her sin; spoke to Judas even in tenderness and love; and for His enemies prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Think how long He overlooked your faults before you were even saved; always loving you for what you should be. Treat your brother with the heart of Christ and look upon him with the eyes of Jesus.

7. Ask God to sanctify your natural affections. Most of them are full of selfishness and constant provocations of envy, jealousy, and strife. You have inordinate and passionate loves that are purely earthly even if not immoral; and if you walk in heavenly love, you must have them crucified and purified, and exchanged for holy affections which are raised above all bitterness and strife, and characterized by peace, unselfishness, gentleness, forbearance, and all the fruits of the Spirit.

8. Above all else, if you would walk in unity, ask Christ to crucify you. The greatest enemy to love is self. Learn to look not on your own things, but on the things of others, and consider every moment not how this is going to affect you, but how it is going to affect your brother, and you will be kept in love and sweetness.

9. Keep the joy and sweetness of the Lord. A happy heart, full of Christ's gladness, wants to make everybody else happy. It is when you are morose and gloomy that you feel like scowling at others and getting offended at everybody you meet. Ask God to give you His joy and to keep it full, and you will find it easy to love.

10. Take Christ's love. He will put His own heart in you; He will enable you to love even as He loves. He who commanded it will make the command possible and enable you to realize it.

The torch of Christian love must be lighted at the flame of Christ's own love. They tell us that on Easter morning, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, it is very beautiful, in the deep gloom, to see, suddenly, one flash of light appear in the tomb of Jesus. Instantly the song rings through the aisles and galleries, "The Lord is risen indeed!" And then that flash of light touches the torches in the hands of the priests, and, suddenly, all along the line of hundreds of white-robed men, the light shines in a great circle of glory, while the song echoes again and again, "The Lord is risen indeed!"

That single light from the open grave of Jesus lights all the torches. So from His heart must come the flame that will kindle our hearts to love Him. And so the oil that fell on His blessed head shall flow down to us as we lie at His feet covered by the skirts of His garments.

"Spirit of Love, upon us shed

The oil that fell on Aaron's head

And bathed his holy feet.

Oh, let our hearts like censers glow!

Oh, let our love like incense flow

In fragrant odors sweet!"

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ab-simpson/psalms-chapter-15-the-pearl-psalm-psalm-133/>

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