

Apr 10 - Psalm 133 "Purpose and Blessing of Community"

1. The experience of the last two years has brought many to conclude that relationships are what matter most in life. Does this resonate with your own thinking and reflecting?

Read Psalm 133

2. David opens this psalm with a glorious affirmation. "How good, how pleasant it is when people dwell in unity." For some this will resonate with their experience, for others it will stir up the agony of its absence, for still others it will be aspirational. What does this affirmation stir up in you?

David's affirmation is related primarily to the relationships that are present within a worshipping community. The unity that he is pointing to is the unity of purpose. In vs. 3 David uses a vivid image to point to the reality that just as oil is used to set apart one for the task of King, or the task of priest, the worshipping community is set apart by God to be a royal priesthood. This may sound incredibly obscure, far removed from your life and reality, but in fact it points to the core of who you were created to be, who we as a church are called to be.

In the sermon Tim referenced that when we were created we were given a royal task. As God's vice-regents we were set apart to steward the earth for the good of all. We were also set apart as priests, to carry the praises of creation before the living God.

3. In what ways has humanity let go of both the kingly and priestly tasks for which we were created? What is the impact on our world?
4. N.T. Wright in *The Day the Revolution Began* speaks of how the work of Jesus on the cross restores us to true humanity, that of a royal priesthood. He writes:

"The biblical vision of what it means to be human, the royal priesthood, means standing between heaven and earth, even in the present time, adoring the creator and bringing his purposes into reality on earth, ahead of the time when God completes the task and makes all things new. The royal priesthood is the company of rescued humans who, being part of earth worship the God of heaven and are thereby equipped, with the breath of heaven in their renewed lungs, to work for his kingdom on earth. The cross sets us free to be in-between people, caught up in the rhythm of worship and mission.

Discuss.

5. (vs.3) David closes the psalm by inviting us to reflect on the impact of a worshipping community on the people, the communities, the structures around them. What kind of impact does this image point to?
6. What does this psalm invite from us as a worshipping community? In what ways are we formed for those ends?