

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: Lord God Almighty, together with your Son and the Holy Spirit, we see the truest example of unity there is. You long for us to have the joy which you know in such a union of purpose and love. But we are so often in division. We argue and debate. We disagree over things that matter very little. Our divisions grieve you and we repent of our inability and unwillingness to truly change. Make us one, Lord, even as you are one. Give us your mind and purpose and will, so that setting aside our desires, we can accomplish your goals in this world -- to the glory of your name and the joy of your people. Amen.

Scripture Readings

November 9, 2008

Psalm 133

How good and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard,
down upon the collar of his robes.
It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

Ephesians 2:14-22

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Outline ~ November 9, 2008
Conditions for Growth ~ Part 6
"Holistic Small Groups"

Introduction: "Band of brothers..."

Psalm 133

A song of ascents. Of David.

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

• The marks of true community:

- _____.
- _____.
- _____.
- _____ ministry.
- Meeting _____.
- _____.
- Open -- _____.

Answers to Sermon Outline:

common purpose, safe, relevant, shared, needs, refreshing, in many ways

THE BENEDICTION

Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

People: **And the people took the blessing and held it in their hearts.**

Leader: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**