

# still waters

home church studies

## Psalm 133

[Worship]

1 How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! 2 It 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. 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD ordained his blessing, life forevermore.

### Consider:

[Words]

At best, sharing common enemies provides people with a temporary bond and the false security of pseudo-intimacy. It depends on the self-righteousness of continually projecting our own dis-ease and hostility on the enemy. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

False teachers feed this self-deception, which is why the Johannine tradition sounds such an alarm. These Johannine letters promote the true unity that comes from the shared bonds of love and the core truths common to believers. This kind of bond is why, in Acts, "those who believed were of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32).

Remembering the itinerant groups that had followed Jesus, watch what this kind of unity brings to these earliest Christians in Jerusalem: "...no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common" (Acts 4:32). Authentic community brings that economic and emotional homeostasis we call justice.

Jesus breathes on the disciples (John 20:22), empowering them to forgive sins and bring balance to the community and society. Sharing lands and houses, the early church unifies their love for one another; there is "not a needy person among them" (Acts 4:34).

The land redistribution campaign of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez could lead to a situation that looks like that described in Acts, by granting the rural poor expanded loans, rights, and land once controlled by the rich. Caution: If it is merely ordered from the presidential office and does not emerge from the unity of the people, it will not be spiritually radical. Nor will it last. —Robert Roth



[Scripture]

## 1 John 1.1-2.2

1 We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—2 this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—3 we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. 5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; 7 but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.