

# THE FIRST 15

Thursday, August 15, 2024

Please be in continued prayer for our team currently in Tanzania serving alongside Zoe Ministry. Today we pray for food security, that no child will go hungry. To learn more, visit our website at [fmc.org/ZOE](http://fmc.org/ZOE), or for the prayer guide go to [fmc.org/ZOE-Tanzania](http://fmc.org/ZOE-Tanzania).

Today is Thursday, August 15 and we are studying what the Bible says about anointing with oil.

## OPENING PRAYER

*I come to this quiet space and seek the presence of God, my gracious host - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I still the rushing thoughts of my busy mind and focus on His presence. I calm my body and slow my breath. As I breathe deeply, I inhale God's gifts of healing, holiness, joy and peace and exhale any negative thoughts, worries or concerns. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***How good and pleasant it is when God's people 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 on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. Psalm 133:1-3***

## REFLECTION

Psalm 133 celebrates the goodness of life that comes from our relationships. When parents, children, siblings and entire families live together in harmony there is happiness and joy. When the community of faith (the church) lives together in harmony there is happiness and joy. Family can be a source of great love, joy and peace, yet these relationships can also cause great concern, strife and even do harm. Disunity, disloyalty, resentment, jealousy, hurt, pain and anger exist in every family. Harmony does not always prevail in our homes and in our extended families. Living in community with relatives and friends is difficult. Brothers and sisters fight. Parents and children disagree. Spouses argue. God wants to bless you and God is always at work building up the family - repairing, restoring, healing, uniting and blessing your relationships. God's blessings for families come from above.

The Hebrew verb "yarad" is used three times in this short Psalm. It means to run down or flow down. God's blessings are descending down upon us. The precious oil is "running down" the beard, "running down" on Aaron's beard, the dew is "falling down" on Mount Zion. True unity, like all good gifts, comes from above. In ancient times, oil was poured on the head to anoint kings and priests. Aaron was a priest. The oil intended for the head was not confined to it, but ran down on his beard and clothing. The fragrance could not be contained but filled the room. It was abundant! As God's blessings are abundant.

Mt. Hermon is one of the highest peaks in Northern Israel. It is well watered by rain, making it cool and lush. Mt. Zion is one of the highest peaks in Southern Israel. It is drier and receives little rain. Dew is delightful, moist, and life-giving. The dew of Mt. Hermon brought to Mt. Zion is

delightfully refreshing. The dew falling on the barren Judean countryside is the promise of new life and an anticipation of growth. Dew is God-given, mysteriously appearing in the early morning hours. Like God's blessings.

Oil and dew together symbolize the good life God wants for you. God's blessings come down from heaven to fall on you. No matter the state of things, God is always at work for your good. God is bringing the oil and the dew. God has the power to repair, heal, strengthen and bless all of your relationships. God has the power to bless your home, your marriage, your family and your friendships. God's blessings run down in abundance like precious oil and overwhelm you with its fragrance. God's blessings fall in abundance like fresh morning dew and overwhelm you with its life.

**Ask:** Where in my life do I need God's blessings of unity and peace? How can I look to God to work in my family and in my relationships with friends?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy and loving God, I invite You into my home, I invite You into my marriage, I invite You into my relationships. Come and pour out the oil of unity, let the dew of peace fall on the dry ground of discord, fill our family's hearts with love for one another, overwhelm us with the fragrance of gratitude for one another, overflow our hearts with forgiveness for one another, and give our minds a fresh perspective. Remind us how precious every person is and how vital every relationship is. Bind us together in Your love and fill our walls with peace. Amen.*