

"THE TASTE TEST"

Psalm 34

INTRODUCTION:

Our sermon today is taken from a Psalm with a great background in David's experience, and especially where he says in V. 34:8 - "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. What an invitation!

In the book of Joh 6:6, you read a little text - can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? "He was talking about something that the taste was flat - where the salt had been left out. He also asked the question, "is there any taste in the white of an egg." Have you ever ^{tasted} ~~cooked~~ an uncooked, and undoctored white of an egg. Now I don't know - but they say it is flavorless. But millions of people would never eat an egg for breakfast without a dash of salt.

The same thing in Christianity -- for it to taste good, it has to be the right kind of sample so people will say, I want some more of that. I like the taste of your Christianity. And people will ask you what is your recipe for life.

Manning - 58 yrs - Zelo - Lela -

You know how (important) taste is - you go and buy some of this (brilliant colored) lime, grape, or strawberry and it is labeled with the contents. And you add the proper amount of water. And then you are supposed to have a refreshing drink and get a real bargain.

Nutritious Food - does not have any taste!

Now it looks like genuine (orange-ade). (But) have you ever tasted it? The moment you taste it you say well now, this is synthetic. It tastes like deluded (turpentine).

And it is just a faint artificial orange taste.

9 yr. Boy - to camp wrote "Dear Mom & Pop The food here is wonderful & they don't make you eat it" - love, Mike

When you submit things to the taste test, you get the flavor and you get the real value of the thing. People advertize (eating places) And they have different

Old fashioned housewife's menus were carefully thought out -
Modern housewife's menus are carefully thawed out!

slogans. And people fix food that tastes real appetizing.

If you go and you say spinach is a good food for you. But you heap it up on a large platter and you have to untangle that (spinach) before you can eat it. It is just like (pineapple), you pour it out in a large bowl, and you have to spear it as the bowl passes by. You take that spinach and you put a little serving on a small dish, with some chipped hard boiled eggs on top of it - and you have something that really tastes. Or you take a slice of pineapple and make a salad out of it, and you grate a little cheese on top of it. And you have an attractive serving and the taste is everything.

Someone said the writer of Ps. 91 must have been speaking at a luncheon club when he wrote "Instruction That Waiteth at Noon Day".

This is what the Psalmist is interested in - bringing to people the matter of Christianity or the Gospel. Or his religion. (And he wants him to taste and see that the Lord is good.) I want to give you first of all the setting of this Psalm - and then I am going to talk about the Thanksgiving - V. 1-3. And then testifying in V. 4-10. And third, teaching - V. 11-22.

Remember that the setting of this Psalm is an alphabetical Psalm. In which he uses the alphabet, in which it must have been carefully composed. And it refers back to the experience which he had in I Samuel 21:11-15. At this point, David's life was at a turning point. He is on the run - but he now is finding that he was with the wrong company, and we discovered in the last Psalm which we used. And we come to discover that he is now back in the territory of Judea. He is in the cave Adullam.

Before (Achish) he had changed his behavior, and had (faked) himself as a mad man. Scrambling at the door of the gate, and the spittal falling down his beard. And the king said, do I need a mad man. Why have they sent this fellow to my house. So from this experience David went on and went to the cave. And it was from this point that he begins to write Psalm 34. It is significant, that during his life of exile, he is a king anointed of God - but he is hiding in a cave waiting for God's time

until he should come to the throne. So news of David's return to the country had spread. And soon all sorts of people and individuals were gathering around David. Now some of them were in distress, some were in debt, some were dissatisfied, and discontented. But this group formed the great army of Israel -- the greatest that they ever had. And they were destined really to win victory.

If you could just picture David at this time, waiting for God's moment. And this common group gathered around and the campfire. And David begins speaking to them in V. 11 - come ye children, harken unto me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Now they are going to understand what I believe God would say here to us. Come. We must see the type here in the Old Testament which illustrates to us something that I believe is very Scriptural. The Holy Spirit wants to use this great Psalm to let you know about God's great plan of deliverance for you.

There was a ^{king} king on the throne of Israel who had been disowned by God. And judgement had been pronounced upon him. Saul had been rejected because of his disobedience. David is king but now he is in exile. He is recognized of God. And is willing to be buried alive in a cave and wait for God's time and suffer whatever is his lot.

I wonder if we can see from these circumstances the situation that you live in today. About the world events. What does the Bible say is behind the sin and suffering of this world. It tells us that there is a king who has been rejected, disowned by God. Jesus Christ spoke of him as the prince of this world. Satan, the Devil - the old serpent. The whole world in which we live today is held in the grip of this evil doing.

It is the purpose of God from the foundation of the world, that Satan, a member

The Lord Jehovah.

This is the only name of God in the Psalm - the (self-existent creator).
 The one who delights in blessing him, and in whom he delights, and it is not a burden
 for him to worship. The God who changes not. Whether it is a dark hour, continually
 the lamps, the show bread, the daily sacrifice, the priest ministering in the tabernacle
 continually, were witnessing the carrying on of spiritual worship. And this is what
 will be in mind with David. He was undertaking to help us. To praise God. To give
 forth (thanks). To make it a habit. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise
 will continually be in my mouth.

Why is this man so full of gratitude. Why is it that he just comes to spontaneous
 praise. It is not because of the circumstances that they are perfect. He is in hiding
 when he wrote these words. He had many afflictions. He had suffered much.

And it is not that David is grateful for any goodness that he sees within himself.

V. (2) - He is (not) boasting of his own achievements. We do not like to boast of our
 own self-importance. That is a mark of conceit. But he says, my soul will make her
(boast in the Lord.)

I wish that we had a (whole congregation) of people that would become such boasters.
 That this city might be full of them. I could wish that we might have this whole city
 full. That they would delight to boast in the Lord. Certainly do this with a humble
 spirit. Here is a beloved object, that his glory is going to be in the Lord. Well, how
 could a man make such a promise and how could he keep it.

Nothing will stop him he says of telling of the marvelous things that the Lord has done. He has just been delivered out of danger. And now he is surrounded by a gang of outlaws. And of just common ordinary people. But he is praising God and is thanking God.

It appears that one is at his best when he is praising God. And his work renders in our spirits -when we give praise unto God.

V. (3) - He invites others to join him. Oh magnify the Lord and exalt his name. He hopes that those who have gathered around him - that his neighbors and friends will have hearts that will praise and add to his voice. That they may help him.

It is always thrilling in a worship service to begin a worship service sometimes with a hymn--All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name. Let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all.)

Now to get your neighbors and strangers and all to move in in such a worship experience is certainly marvelous. Let us exalt his name together, David says.

II. TESTIFYING - V. 4-10

Now at this point, David begins to testify of his personal experience. I believe it was his own experience that he was talking about.

V. (4) - An (answer to prayer.) God answered his prayer. Here is the secret of his gratitude. I sought the Lord, he tells us, he had investigated. And then he tells us what he has found. We are concerned in this great fact. So he seeks after God. And then he reports his findings. I think we ought to listen in confidence to this. Have you ever tested by experience, as David. He had a right to speak. And here was a man with knowledge. And he said, I sought the Lord, and then what came of it. He heard me and delivered me from all of my fears. What a declaration. There is no doubt the reason he began to seek. He was beset by all kinds of terrors. He does not tell us of that which he was afraid. He may have been afraid of the loss of his wealth or his health, or even his loved ones. We do not know, why he was afraid. He may have been afraid of death. Or what lies beyond death. As far as we can see, he had no promise of health. But at last in desperation, he put out his hand in prayer. He realized that he could not go it alone. And he gives this testimony. He delivered me from all of my fears.

He was grateful for what God had done for others as well as what he had done for him. Because he is going to tell us about this.

V. (5-6) - He talked about others. About this (poor man cried) and how the Lord heard him and saved him from all of his troubles. He said, that he would never be disappointed if we'd turn to God in prayer. You know today the church is the trustee of the only Gospel of joy in the world today.

And he looks and he beams with joy he says. That even his friends found the same experience. One disaster after another came upon this poor fellow. In fact, he was beaten down. And he could even no longer make his way. But he cried unto the Lord, the Lord saved him out of all of his troubles.

So his gratitude as he testifies what God has done for him. And what God has done for others.

V. 7 - He testifies that angels are sent. This is a remarkable phrase and it occurs only twice in the Psalms, here and in the next Psalm. It notes one who is at the same time the angel of Jehovah, and Jehovah himself. Gen. 16:7, Ex. 23:20. He is God manifested to man. He encampeth. This may be some reference that the Psalmist has. What Jacob had experienced with the angels. Gen. 32:1-2. This is God - to come and take charge. These are under the headship of Christ. V. 7. So the Psalmist, in his life of deliverance, is interested in giving this account of this experience.

Now experience meetings have been used in past history to a good use. Many people have given a personal testimony of the power of God's goodness upon their lives. And in these verses, this is what the Psalmist is doing. David had been content not to enjoy the blessings alone - but in V. 5-6, he had shared the secret with his friends, which had come to experience the same thing that he had. They were bowed down under trouble and God had saved them. What a transformation. What a glorious light - that the angels had come. No wonder in V. 8 - he gives an invitation. Turn yours eyes upon Jesus. Look into his wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim. In the light of his glory and grace.

Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 3:18 - how looking upon him will not only bring radiance but we shall be gradually changed, into the same image. What a truly great thought. What a wonderful experience.

In David's danger and (darkness in the wilderness) what a defense he has night after

night. He feels that here are God's angels, the angel of the Lord is his presence. So David feels that this is his defense. Joshua 5:14. Now this is a wonderful testimony - as he testifies and gives an invitation, in that 8th verse. He suggests the final test, that you are going to know for sure if you are honestly submitted -- taste and see. To be happy and radiant in your life. Are you asking how, he says. He says merely, take what God has to offer.

Put him to the test. Let him demonstrate his saving and keeping power.

Does he hear and answer prayer? Then try him! Will he help you get the victory. The victory over some pressing problem? Then try him and see. Will he help you in this hour when your heart may be breaking. Over sorrow or some disturbance. Taste and see. Let him prove it.

Paul says, my God supplies every need of yours according to the riches of glory by Christ Jesus.

Now we agree that David was a happy man in this refuge which he said, he found - and he asked men to taste and to see that God was good.

I read a story of Dr. Chappell that he served for some time first as a country school teacher in the back woods. He said I boarded in the home of a woman who was a choice saint. He said, I had known her in the years when she was the most common place, halting church member. I knew her also after she had passed a wonderful religious experience. Every morning when the duties of her household and housekeeping had been

finished, she would take her Bible and retire into a little room, that was all her own. Sometimes she would be gone only a few minutes. Sometimes for more than an hour. But when she came forth, there always looked out from her eyes the peace of a great discovery. My own faith, which was none too strong, was greatly strengthened by the fact that she looked until him and was radiant. The radiant and abiding benediction he says of her life has blessed me through the years. No wonder the Psalmist knew what he was talking about. Taste and see.

Now this was not something of a ritual with the Psalmist. But this was a personal thing between a soul and God.

Now if this is going to be your experience, it has to be more than proxy. That is, you must experience it yourself. Not let somebody else do it for you. It is a sacred bond in your own life.

III. TEACHING

V. 11 Now it admonishes them to come - V. 11 And I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

V. 10 - The young lions were lack and suffered hunger. Here is the practical power of religion which he unfolds. Even the young lions will be lean and hungry, and unsatisfied. What he is teaching is that God's children will find a marvelous satisfaction in him. That transends any spoken desire. Even the illustration which he uses of a lion here. That the young lion represented glory, strength, and resources.

He will be reduced to want. But God's person will be abundantly and constantly provided for, Mah. 2:12-14, Job. 4:10. They shall not want any goods.

Now at this point, David is in the cave of Adullam. And it might have been a Sabbath day when he was giving this sermon to this congregation. And there were with him about 400 men - and what a strange gathering of people that he had there.

He's in V. 14 - he commands them that they will depart from evil. And what they will do in a positive way. And what they will seek. That their whole drive should be towards peace.

V. 15 - He reminds them that the calamities that are falling upon them 16:18 that no one is spared these calamities. But God is near to the broken and the contrite.

V. 18.

And in these teachings, he is speaking of his (own knowledge) of God. He could say this that (God is good) And to many today that seems trifling. But yet, if you have discovered it - it makes a different. It will revolutionize your life. Now if you will just think of all the misconceptions of God about you, in Israel that day. Here was a man in spite of his environment, in spite of his heartaches. He was sure that God was still on his throne. He had discovered that God was here. And that was a marvelous thing. Man realized that God is always here. Which is true that the Lord is near those with a broken heart.

It is a marvelous thing that he found out that God was all sufficient. He found

God sufficient, God had never failed him or let him down. And inspite of this, he says the young lions - they are going to lack and suffer hunger. But those that seek God, they will not want any good thing.

And this is what God says. It is good in the summertime. It is good in the bleak winter time when the chills of November come - that here is a God that is sufficient. And that God will supply all of your needs.

You might say well, God does not know about my situation. He has not lived in this bewildering age. Which we live in.

And you begin to ask yourself - who has been putting me on the road to my desired goal. And I think the Psalmist is equal to the task - because he says taste and see. Give God a chance. And you too will know that God is near and sufficient.

The cross - V. 20. The marvelous thing about this Psalm is that David ends up with a (cross) in V. 20.

David is in this cave - and look at that crowd that came to him. First there were those that were (distressed) It must have been one thing to hear about David, but it must have been certainly something else to hear him utter this. Whatever the distress may have been, the record does not tell us. But the distress under the reign of Saul was desperate. And it was a blessed thing that drove this little group of men from the authority of one kingdom into the authority of another.

No self-satisfied man will ever come to Christ either. There is a church of which we read in Rev. 3. But the door of that church stood - the risen Christ saying behold, I stand at the door and knock. He was outside. He was outside that place. And no man who is in that condition will ever come to the Lord Jesus.

It was distress that drove the prodigal son out of the far country. I will arise and go to my father and say that I have sinned.

Now this was the cry of these men that came to David in the time of trouble. Notice repeatedly in this Psalm - his concern about the Lord hearing and the Lord seeing their troubles.

When a man recognizes that he is in rebellion against the King of Kings - then he will come to God in distress. There was another group of men that had gathered around ² David, and they were men in (debt) They were bankrupt. They were wretched people. And they had a way that they were trying to get away from the liability that they were under. Under the rule of a king that God had rejected.

And so long as you remain an enemy and reject the ruler of The Ten Commandments, and the Gospel, he that believeth on him is not condemned. But he that believeth not is condemned already.

I notice that these men who came to David were also some ³ (discontented men.
Disappointed. Restless.) How many people today have the same, and yet seek

not refuge in the Lord. So often multitudes of people gather around the broken cisterns of this world. They complain, and if any man thirst - let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture has said, out of him shall flow rivers of living water.

These were the kind of people that David had around in that day. Distressed, bankrupt, dissatisfied. Now these are the kind of people that came to Christ. And they are the only people that come to Christ. For they recognize their distress. Their utter discontentment. Their frustration.

Why did these people come to David? I want to suggest that I think they came because they thought David was God's (anointed king) It was going to be the right ruler over them. And they believed that Saul was not the proper ruler. And they had been converted from Saul to David.

Have you believed that the Lord Jesus Christ was God's anointed king. Does Satan still hold you? Has he proved you. I think coming to David, not only because they believed his call, but they decided for him. They took action. They obeyed. Now it is one thing to believe about the kingdom of Christ. It is another thing to identify yourself with it. Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them. I will liken him unto a wise man which builds his house upon a rock. And the rains descended and the floods came and the winds blew - and beat upon that house. And it fell not for it was founded upon the rock. John 9, we find a blind man whose eyes were opened. And he declared that whether I was a sinner - I know not. But I do know one thing - I was blind and now I see.

Therefore, a decision for Christ means separation from the world and from the things of the world. And when these men decided to believe in David, they submitted to David's leadership.

Even in exile they said they would suffer with him.

The final thing they said, we are going to let David be our master. As soon as they took their place, he became their rightful leader. I wonder if this dawns upon your heart today. The moment they took David for everything, you will discover that they begin to have victory. Once they were discontent and in distress, but now we see they are mighty and the men of that cave became the protectors of the country. And in the same way, the moment that you identify your life with Jesus Christ, the anger of the enemy is stirred up with the darkness of this world. But from that moment, you look on the King of Kings, and he is going to protect you. Now the followers in the cave looked to David for reward, and were blessed.

There is a day that our Lord Jesus, you remember, will be crowned Lord of all. And those who follow him will be abundantly rewarded.

Perhaps, I should ask you a question - in which kingdom are you living? Which king are you serving?

V. 20 David ended with the cross. He said in that verse, he keepeth all his bones and not one of them is broken. He is pointing to the cross. You remember in John 19:36, 32, the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and the others that

were crucified with Jesus. But Jesus was dead, and they broke not his legs. V. 43. This is a reference to Jesus. For these things were done - the Scripture should be fulfilled. (A bone of his body shall not be broken.) And David was pointing his crowd to the true master. The one who was going to lead them.

Naturally, V. 22 he winds it up. He is going to be the redeemer. The one that redeemeth. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants. Those that trust in him. Now this is easy to apply to the saint, about to depart. To whom eternal good shall never be wanting or lacking.

I wonder today, are you ready to face and try him. He is able to get your strength from temptation. (Taste him, try him) He can give you victory over sin. He can really comfort you in sorrow. Taste him, try him. Does he indeed make all things new. Those who have tried him have found him sufficient.

Dr. Jowett on his death bed wrote to a fellow minister who was also suffering. He wrote out of his experience. (He had tasted the sufficiency of Jesus in the hours of distress. He said, "we have preached the great Gospel. But remember that Jesus Christ is greater, than anything we have ever said about him."

See how Dr. Bancroft talks - Peace - Strength - Victory - Temptation - Taste Beautiful - Temple Praising God
The "Taste" is Proof of Feeling -

The great preach-^{er} spoke mightily of Jesus. And he found that he had not said half of it. He was never able to put it all in words. There is only one way to know it. And that is by experience. So I think it is very fitting that we come today and ask - what about your desires, your thoughts, your ambitions. The real you. The issue is very plain. Oh taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

of God's Heavenly hosts was to govern this planet. However, he rebelled against the authority of the one who created it. Isa. 14:12. We are told that he exalted himself and sought to be as God, to sit upon the throne of the whole universe. He rejected, and he was cast out of Heaven. And God made a man in his own likeness and his own image. As the Psalmist says in Psalm 8:4-6 - what is man that thou art mindful of him. Now the prince of this world has persuaded man to rebel and revolt the authority of God.

Now God has brought about a counter attack in the person of Jesus Christ. He invaded this world with Jesus Christ. He lived a perfect life, he died, and he rose again. And he is the captain of our salvation. Crucified, but God lifted him up. And God has, through Jesus, launched an attack against this invisible power in our world.

Now this helps us to see the Old Testament story in a picture form. Just as in David's day, there was a king in exile. And there were people who were gathering around him who were distressed, who were discontented. And he was teaching and training them for the day when they should reign. Now this is a vital issue for us to understand - the spiritual significance of our day. Whose kingdom we are to live in and reign. We are to reign with king Jesus. And the question is - which master are you going to follow. So this question in mind here, is one we have to settle.

Now let's go on to the first point.

I. THANKSGIVING - V. 1-3

I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise will continue to be in my mind. As far as David was concerned, he deliberately now says, I am going to bless the Lord.