

Taste and See

Sermon 2018-08-12 - Year B - Pentecost 8-7 - The Rev. Christopher Klukas
Deuteronomy 8:1–10; Psalm 34; Ephesians 4:25–5:2; John 6:37–51

- As David continued to flee from Saul, he went to a town of the Philistines called Gath.
- The servants of the king of Gath recognized him and he became scared.
- So David changed his disposition, acting like a madman, making marks on the doors, and letting spit run down his beard.
- The King quickly got fed up with him and let him go. (1 Samuel 21:10-15).
- Most of the psalms have titles which come before the first verse. The title of Psalm 34 lets us know that it was written to mark this occasion of David's escape.
- Commentators often divide this Psalm into two halves, but today we are going to treat it as three parts: Testimony, Invitation, and Warning.

Testimony - 1-7

- Characterized by praise. "I will bless the Lord at all times..." (v. 1, 3).
 - Praise is a way of saying thank you to God, which is important in its own right, but it is also a testimony to others of God's greatness.
 - What has the Lord done in your life?
 - It is important to be reflective about this. Our ability to bear witness as Christians is dependent upon having a life that is changed by God.
 - Your story doesn't have to be dramatic to be used by God. It just need to be the honest truth of what God has done for you.
 - I used to feel embarrassed that my testimony wasn't more dramatic. No prison or drug addiction. But God has given me peace, assurance, and he is making me more holy.
 - When you bear witness, your testimony can be about how God saved you in the big sense, but it can also be a testimony of God's healing, provision, deliverance, or any other way God has worked in your life.
 - Preschool students and staffing
 - In this psalm, David's testimony is about God's provision (bread from the temple in the previous story) and deliverance (from king Achish). (v. 4).
 - If the person hearing you is receptive, you can move on to the second phase of witness.

Invitation - 8-15

- Verse 8 Invites the hearer to "taste and see that the Lord is Good."
 - Samples at Costco! They could employ people to stand in the aisles bearing witness to how good the various products are, but it is more effective to let the customers taste it for themselves.
 - Expresses to the hearer that the testimony of the psalmist is not just "his experience" but is his experience of something which is generally true for all.
 - Provision: V. 10 "Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing"

- We will talk more about deliverance in the next section.
 - In witnessing, this is where we can show that the things we have experienced in our walk with God can be found in the scriptures as well.
 - "One person's testimony is only valuable to others if it rests on a changeless truth about God."¹
 - But David doesn't just let the hearer *know* that it is available, he invites the hearer to *experience* these blessings for him or herself.
 - The Pittsburgh Experiment.
- Also invites them into discipleship (v. 11)
 - Once someone has tasted and seen that the Lord is good, they need to be invited further to accept what Jesus has done for them, to be baptized, and to be disciplined, "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). They won't know what next step to take unless someone shows them.
 - Every acceptance of an invitation leads to a further invitation to experience more of what God has for them.
 - Even now, God is giving each of you invitations to further growth in him.

Warning - 16-22 - Contrasts the righteous with the wicked.

- As we move into the third section, we see a contrast between the "righteous" and the "wicked"
 - In some ways, this is a continuation of the second part, because it is speaking of the way God delivers the righteous from their afflictions.
 - In doing this, it also contrasts this deliverance with the experience of the wicked who will be cut off (vv. 16, 21)
 - Some people need to be encouraged, other people need to be warned. It is a matter of discernment to know what the person standing in front of you needs.
- The righteous will still experience affliction, but the Lord will deliver them (v. 19)
 - 2 Corinthians 1 - Afflictions teach us to rely upon God.
 - "The onset of trouble must be matched by the onset of prayer and the prayer of the righteous summons the God of deliverance to our aid (17)."²
 - When we experience affliction, we can take comfort in v. 18, "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted." He is always with us and we can trust in his power to save.
 - When he does, we can start the cycle over again, praising and magnifying God for what he has done and inviting others to "taste and see that the Lord is good."

¹ J. A. Motyer, "The Psalms," in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (ed. D. A. Carson et al.; 4th ed.; Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 506–507.

² J. A. Motyer, "The Psalms," in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (ed. D. A. Carson et al.; 4th ed.; Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 507.