

GOD'S FORMULA FOR YOUR SATISFACTION

I am sure that you can name our five senses. Try it: there is sight, there is hearing, there is smell, and there is touch and, of course, there is taste. But have you ever noticed that the Bible writers employ all five senses to encourage us to receive and relish God's salvation? Now can you match one text from the Bible with each of the five?

- Sight—"Look to Me and be saved"—Isa. 45:22.
- Hearing—"Hear the word of the Lord"—Hos. 4:1.
- Smell—"God diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place"—2 Cor. 2:14.
- Touch—"She touched the hem of Jesus' garment...and she was healed"—Matt. 9:20.
- And as our text tells us, taste. "O taste and see that the Lord is good"—Ps. 34:3.

Now you will notice that our text comes in two parts, and it reflects Hebrew poetic form. Hebrew poetry is not like English poetry or like Japanese poetry. The key to Hebrew poetry is what is called parallelism—in our text the two parts are saying the same thing. So tasting is trusting, and trusting is tasting.

So what is this verse saying to us this morning? It is telling us that God has a formula that guarantees complete spiritual satisfaction. Let's look at the parts of this wonderful formula.

First, God's formula contains AN URGENT INVITATION: "O taste and see that the Lord is good." This invitation is addressed to all of us; you are included.

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Now the psalmist exhorts us to taste and discover that the Lord is good. But what does he mean?

- A. Think about tasting God's Word. Let me give you a great text for that: Ps. 119:103. This is a personal testimony, in fact, the whole psalm is about God's Word. In v. 103 he declares: "How sweet are Your words to my taste! Indeed, sweeter than honey to my mouth."

Now let me ask you: Do you find God's Word sweet to your taste, or is it tasteless? Ezekiel the prophet tells us that he "ate God's Word, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness" (Ezek. 3:3). Do you ask, What benefit to me is tasting God's Word? In 1 Samuel 14 there is a most interesting story about Jonathan, son of King Saul. He had been in a conflict with the Philistines and he was exhausted. He came to a place in a forest where honey had been dripping on to the ground, and he dipped his rod into the honey and tasted it, and this is what we read: "His countenance brightened." He felt strengthened, and his eyes sparkled with new life. That is what God's honey will do for you: It will empower you and enlighten you.

Listen to Prov. 24:13, 14—"My son, eat honey because it is good, and the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste. So shall the knowledge of wisdom be to your soul. If you have found it, there is a prospect, and your hope will not be cut off."

Now it is absolutely important that you taste God's Word. I cannot do it for you. If I had a jar of honey here and I described it for you in words like these: This is the best honey in the world! You will find it very

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sweet. It is highly recommended by all who taste it. None of that description would help you to enjoy the honey until you personally tasted it.

A boy was sent by his mother to get a pail {container} of honey from the nearby store. As he returned home, a stranger who was walking beside him saw him slip one finger down into the pail. Then he would put his finger into his mouth. After the boy had done this a number of times, the man asked him, "What's in your pail?"

"Honey, sir."

"Yes, sir."

"Well," said the man, "I do not understand. I asked you how sweet your honey is, and you have not told me. How sweet is your honey?"

"Very sweet, sir."

"Well, you are a funny little fellow. I asked you how sweet your honey is, and you just tell me it's very, very sweet. Now can you tell me really how sweet your honey is?"

The boy was getting impatient by this time, so he stuck his finger down into the honey, and holding his honey-coated finger up, he said, "Taste it for yourself, mister."

That's what you must do with God's honey—taste it for yourself. The Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:3 says if you want to grow as a Christian you must have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

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Taste God's Word, the Written Word of God. But there is something greater than that. Taste the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the whole point of tasting. Our text says, "O taste and see"—see what?—"that the Lord is good." When Peter quotes that part of our text he stresses that the Lord is gracious. Oh, my friend, have you found Jesus to be good and gracious? I saw an ad for a product that claimed and I quote: "If you don't love it, it's because you haven't tasted it."

In the Song of Solomon in a passage that describes the courtship of the king and his beloved, the woman compares the king to a beautiful tree and says, "I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." There's a pattern for the Christian. With your Bible choose the place: "I saw down in his shade." Enter into the pleasure: "with great delight." Partake of the fruit: "His fruit was sweet to my taste." We call that having a quiet time!

Let me suggest one way you can enjoy the fruit. John Newton, the former slave trader, was converted and became a preacher. He wrote many hymns, the best known being, "Amazing Grace." But he wrote another one which begins, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds." Now you could study the names of Jesus, and if that seems too big a subject narrow it down to the names of Jesus in John's Gospel. Take the statements where Jesus begins, "I am." Search for them all and taste the sweetness of each one.

II.. Now our text concerning God's formula for full satisfaction is in two parts, parallel to each other. We have looked at the invitation to

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taste and discovered that the Lord is good. The second part announces a blessing: "Blessed is the man [or woman] who trusts in the Lord." This is the simple interpretation of what it means to taste.

Now catch the connection: Tasting involves what? Trusting! And trusting—what does that involve? Tasting! The two aspects are like the two sides of one coin, a golden one! If you want to experience that the Lord is good, you must taste what He offers, and if you want to enter into blessing, you must trust Him.

I call these two aspects God's formula for full satisfaction. Now we live in a world where there are many formulas offered to us that promise to give us satisfaction. Think of pleasure or wealth or power or even education, but there is nothing in all these things that can provide us with full satisfaction. I once saw an ad for a particular drink that said, "Come, taste the difference." If you have been looking to what the world offers you, I invite you this morning to come and taste the difference. Come and taste, come and trust.

I wonder if you remember the account of the giving of the manna to the people of Israel. They have been redeemed from Egypt, but are now in the wilderness and on their way to the Land of Promise. But they soon discovered that there were no resources for them in the wilderness and so they complained to Moses, but God heard the complaints of His people, and without looking at the whole chapter, Ex. 16, we learn two things about God's provision, which the people called, "Manna," which means, "What is this?"

First, the description of the Manna. Ex. 16:31 tells us that "the taste of

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It was like wafers made with honey.” That sounds delicious. The people should have said, “O taste and see that the Lord is good,” good to give them the manna and make it so attractive.

Now that provision was miraculous. In Ps. 78:24 we read: “The Lord rained down manna on them to eat, and gave them of the bread of heaven. Men at angels’ food; He sent them food to the full.” And that supply was miraculous in another way, for we read in Ex. 16:35 that the people of Israel ate manna forty years. That means all the years the people wandered in the wilderness God supplied what they needed. Blessed is the person who trusts in the Lord.

Let me emphasize two things about this trust. You must be clear about the object of your trust—the text speaks about trusting in the Lord, not in your good works, not in your church membership, not in your tithing and not in your prayers, but IN THE LORD. And you must be clear about the outcome of that trust—Blessed is the person who trusts in the Lord, and that means satisfied, joyful, resting in God’s promises and presence, all that the world never gives.

This is God’s formula for full satisfaction: tasting, testing and trusting!