

October 25, 2015 – Sermon Notes, Pastor Alan Smith

“Taste and See”

- It's only 31 days until Thanksgiving, oh and 60 days until Christmas and it brings up memories of great food.
- Turkey, mashed potatoes, pizza, lasagna, bacon, apple pie, chocolate chip cookies, pancakes with sausage gravy. Yes, these things can make your mouth water.
- What about trying new things like squid or grasshoppers covered in chocolate or scorpions, octopus?
- I'm sure that these things may be good because in other cultures they eat them.
- We or I look at those and think yuck! I guess I would eat them if I was very, very, very hungry!
- We are sometimes afraid to try something because there is that element of the unknown.
- Do I really want to taste that or can I trust that person?
- The only way to be sure if we like something or can trust someone is to try.
- Psalm 34:8 is my favorite verse. I even have it on my business card.
- Let me give you a little background on this scripture.
- **1 Samuel 21:10–15 (NLT)**
- **10 So David escaped from Saul and went to King Achish of Gath. 11 But the officers of Achish were unhappy about his being there. “Isn't this David, the king of the land?” they asked. “Isn't he the one the people honor with dances, singing, ‘Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands’?” 12 David heard these comments and was very afraid of what King Achish of Gath might do to him. 13 So he pretended to be insane, scratching on doors and drooling down his beard. 14 Finally, King Achish said to his men, “Must you bring me a madman? 15 We already have enough of them around here! Why should I let someone like this be my guest?”**
- David wrote Psalm 34 in praise of God who delivered him from harm.
- If you think about it David is fleeing Saul who wants to kill him and he lands up in Israel's enemies, the Philistines.
- **Ps 34: 1 I will praise the LORD at all times. I will constantly speak his praises.**
- David declares that he will praise God at all times.
- Do we praise God at all times? Do we see how He moves in our lives?
- We praise God on Sunday's. Through our sing of songs. After we give our gifts to God we sing praise from whom all blessings flow.
- Our praise is not meant to limited to just Sunday mornings.

- **Hebrews 13:15 (NLT)**
- **15 Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.**
- Praising God all the time and proclaiming our allegiance to Him.
- This is important because it sets our minds on God. When something happens in our lives we will already be thinking about God.
- **Psalm 34:2 I will boast only in the LORD; let all who are helpless take heart.**
- David believed that we should only boast in God. What about the things that I did?
- What about the effort that I put into the project that was successful?
- When we boast only about God we begin to realize that He is the source of all things. He is our strength. He gives us our talents. He provides for all our needs. He is the one that blesses us.
- When we look at the way our church has grown we could say it is because of the great programs, music, teaching and dare I say preaching? We could brag about our wisdom in the programs that we set but it is God that has given us that wisdom. I could brag about the sermons that I give but it is not me it is God that gives me the words. We need to boast about God because without Him we have nothing!!!
- Paul tells the Corinthians and the Romans about boasting.
- **2 Corinthians 10:17 (NLT)**
- **¹⁷ As the Scriptures say, "If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD."**
- **Romans 15:18 (NLT)**
- **18 Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them.**
- Let's hear the invitation from David.
- **Psalm 34: 3 Come, let us tell of the LORD's greatness; let us exalt his name together.**
- Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
- In the next four verses we see some of the reasons that David has to boast and praise.
- **4 I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears.**
- **5 Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.**
- **6 In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened; he saved me from all my troubles.**
- **7 For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him.**
- Listen to some reasons; answers prayer and freedom from fear, Joy and no shame, save us from our troubles, and God will defend and protect those that respect Him.

- Some may say God didn't answer my prayer. My loved one died or I had to go through a hardship.
- Years ago when I was working at Letterkenny someone put a Ziggy cartoon on my toolbox. It said God answers prayers. Sometimes it's no.
- When we realize that God knows all and is wiser than the wisest person, then we can learn to be patient and accept His answers to our prayers.
- I think that is why David wrote what is my favorite verse.
- **Psalm 34: 8 Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!**
- I can tell you that I have seen God's goodness in my life over and over. Most of you heard my story of God bringing me out of depression from my divorce. Here is a story not many know.
- I pastored a church before I came here. This church was extremely traditional and I was there for 3 ½ years. A week before their spring council meeting I was informed that they were going to vote on me. Well Sunday came and the vote came. They voted to fire me. I was hurt, Joni was hurt and we allowed the kids to stay home that day because we didn't want them to see what was going to happen.
- I struggled for 7 months. I was ready to turn in my ordination and just become someone that comes to church and Sunday school then goes home. I made my mind up that I didn't want to be involved anymore.
- Well the rest of the story is when I received a phone call about a church that will need pastoral care. I said yes and I landed here on December 6, 2006.
- It was my dream for 12 years to become a full time pastor and I don't think I would have chosen to go the way I went to get here in my life. God knew what He was doing. God used the experience's I had to shape me and to put me in a place where He wanted me to be.
- So I can challenge all of us to taste and see that God is good.
- I can say with confidence that there is great joy when we take refuge in Him!
- My family would stand with me and say God is good. He has been good to us through cancer, heart surgery, church struggles and even the loss of loved ones.
- I challenge you to taste and see that God is good.
- I challenge us to praise Him all the time and in all situations!
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