

Taste and See [Psalm 34]
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INTRO/INSCRIPTION

1. We're in the midst of a study of the Psalms.
 - a. They are most commonly associated with King David
 - b. He was a shepherd/poet/musician/warrior/ and king.
 - c. This is why he's acclaimed as the greatest King in the history of Israel
 - d. This diversity of traits is also a reason Jesus is often likened to David
3. This week, we're in Psalm 34.
 - a. And with this, we start with the inscription of this psalm
 - b. This is actually a part of the Psalm, something that we need to consider.
 - c. This one reads: **"Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left."**
 - 1) This little footnote leaves us a hefty piece of luggage that we have to unpack.
 - 2) This psalm is tied to two peculiar stories in the book of 1 Samuel about David.
 - 3) Before we actually deal with this, we need to look at a rather peculiar story.
 - d. David is fleeing from a madman: since killing Goliath, King Saul wanted to kill him.
 - e. In his flight, he and his band of men (up to a few hundred people) arrive at Nob.
 - 1) This was a priestly city, and David lies to the priest, saying his on a royal mission
 - 2) He talks to the priest there about food for his men.

1 Samuel 21:4-6

*"But the priest [Ahimelek] answered David, 'I don't have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here—provided the men have kept themselves from women.' David replied, 'Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out. The men's bodies are holy even on missions that are not holy. **How much more** so today!' So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence."*

1. There were limited food choices at Nob.
 - a. The "holy bread" that was available was the bread of the Presence
 - b. **Exodus 25:30** "Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times."
 - c. The priest Ahimelech was bending the rules
 - 1) Only priests were allowed to eat the bread, and only in a holy place.
 - 2) In Mark 2, Jesus endorsed Ahimelech's judgment putting mercy before law
2. This was the choicest of food, not available to ordinary people.

NOW WE TRANSITION TO THE SECOND STORY OF THE CHAPTER

1 Samuel 21:10-12

*"David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to [the King] 'Isn't this David, the king of the land . . . David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. So he pretended to be insane in their **presence; and while** he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard."*

1. David wanted King to think he was a simple soldier for hire, not an actual King
 - a. If Achish thought he was this acclaimed king, he would've killed him
 - b. Plan was working until he was discovered by the servants.
2. So David decides to play a fool
 - a. Thus, the king wouldn't have felt threatened by him
 - b. Nor would he have been useful as a mercenary anymore, so he sent him away.

SO WHAT DO THESE STORIES HAVE TO DO WITH PSALM 34?

VERSES 8-10

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

⁹*Fear the LORD, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.*

¹⁰*The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*

1. Verse 8 is what most people know about Psalm 34. "Taste and see"
 - a. One of the fascinating things about our survival: we need food for sustenance.
 - 1) But we do not need for food to actually taste good.
 - 2) As such, "foodies" (Food Network) live for refined tastes in foods.
 - 3) As you make efforts to refine your palate, understand this:
 - b. In a society of rudimentary cookware, the taste of the Lord is unparalleled.
 2. But most people don't understand the context and interplay with 1 Samuel 21.
 - a. There's an undeniable connection to the 1 Samuel text about David eating Holy Bread
 - b. The taste of that Holy Bread was even greater than bread on a normal day.
 - 1) First, David and his companions were starving. Hunger makes food taste better.
 - 2) But also, as Holy Bread, there was a spiritual component to the consumption.
 - a) Among certain societies, food consumption is a religious experience
 - b) An Italian meal is sometimes likened to a ritual.
 3. But when we look to verse 9, things become just a little more clear.
 - a. The taste of God's goodness is actually FEAR. Sounds peculiar, doesn't it?
 - 1) But it shouldn't because some of our food tastes skirt the wild side.
 - 2) Do you like hot food? Or the Japanese Fugu Blowfish which kills hundreds yearly.
 - b. Fearing God doesn't change his nature, just our posture. We should RESPECT HIM
 - 1) This we can **EAT SINFULLY**—abusing food to excess (alcoholism/gluttony).
 4. David pushes a metaphor to show this fear: even lions can starve to death
 - a. It's not about your strength. It's about your God, and fearing Him.

VERSES 11-14

¹¹*Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*

¹²*Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days,*

¹³*keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.*

¹⁴*Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*

1. The first section was the WHAT. This section is the HOW
 - a. And here, after life experiences, David uses psalm to teach people from his mistakes.
 - b. Learning to fear is usually a process of maturation, not easy for youth to access.
2. David's advice: if you love life and want it to go long, DON'T TASTE
 - a. The best food choices are sometimes the things from which we abstain
 - b. We can **EAT STUPIDLY**—TacoBell after midnight?
 - c. Keep from tasting evil and regurgitating lies.
3. And verse 14 shows that David has learned from his mistakes.
 - a. He urges us to seek and pursue peace when he himself didn't.
 - b. **1 Samuel 21:11** "David [killed] tens of thousands"
 - c. David was the lion he spoke of earlier, trying to obtain peace by the sword.
 - d. True peace is only obtainable by the hand of God.

VERSES 19-22

¹⁹*The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all;*

²⁰*he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.*

²¹*Evil will slay the wicked; the foes of the righteous will be condemned.*

²²*The LORD will rescue his servants; no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.*

1. As I wrote this message for today, it kinda felt all over the place.
 - a. But let's see if we can tie all of this together now.
 - b. The end of this psalm wraps up the lesson: FEAR AND TRUST GOD.
 - 1) If you do, in the end, it will all go well with you.
 - c. But remember that inscription from the beginning of the chapter?
 - 1) It begs us to go back to the CRAZY DAVID story from 1 Samuel 21.
2. Also, take a look at the names from this chapter:
 - a. Abimelech was the traditional dynastic title for Philistine kings
 - 1) Abi = father/leader, Melech= king of Molech (pagan deity)
 - 2) Achish was King of Gath, a Philistine City.
 - b. What was the most famous thing for which David is known? Killing Goliath.
 - 1) When things got bad, he didn't trust God to deliver him. He fled to enemies.
 - 2) Why, when he knew who had provided for Him, did King David trust the Philistines more than he trusted God to provide for him?
- c. He lost his TASTE for the FEAR OF GOD.**
3. Eating is something we do everyday so that it becomes commonplace
 - a. If you stop to contemplate the process, your wonder for the Lord could be renewed
4. Communion is the perfect summation of this.

1 Corinthians 11:27-29

"So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves."