TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Daniel Balch
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader

#2 We Praise Thee, O God
#47 Holy, Holy, Holy
Opening Prayer by: Don Taylor

#11 As the Deer
Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard
#313 The Old Rugged Cross
Communion Devotional by: Don Lynn
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#134 The Lord's My Shepherd
Sermon: "Rightside Up"
Acts 17:1-15

#912 Burdens Are Lifted
#716 Sing to Me of Heaven
Closing Prayer by: Craig Girard

Welcome by: Daniel Balch

Evening Assembly Song Leader: Bobby Rader

#144 O, Worship the King
#100 Holy Ground

Opening Prayer: Jerry Mallernee
#162 All ail the Power

Sermon: "Redeeming the Time"
James 4:13-15

#911 Bring Christ Your Broken Life
#742 When Upon Life's Billows

Closing Prayer: Wayne Noonkester

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Sept. 4, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Taste Test

Like most languages, English has a number of idioms we easily understand as native speakers, but sometimes make little sense if you break them down. "The proof is in the pudding" is a good example: can the eater of the pudding in question (whatever that is, anyway) find some sort of evidence related to the character of something else within that pudding? We all know what the expression means, but where in the world did it come from?

It helps to know that this is an abbreviated version of a longer phrase: the proof of the pudding is in the eating/tasting. While we typically think of proof today in the sense of evidence, it had another, nearly archaic meaning of something that has been tested or tried (preserved in terms like soundproof, bulletproof, etc.) And puddings were not something that came from instant Jell-O boxes, but were mixtures of minced meat, cereal, spices, and sometimes even blood (like the British black pudding)—basically sausages. To know whether that concoction was good or contaminated, you had to put it to the proof and taste it.

That's a roundabout way of pointing us to a passage in Scripture that is reminiscent of that old phrase. In **Psalms 34:8,** David says, *Oh taste and see that the Lord is Good*! David's challenge is that we make the pragmatic test. One of the great principles of the Bible is that the Lord is good. How are we to know this? Not by hearing what someone has said. Not by believing the words of others. We are to know by making trial ourselves. David invites us to *taste and see.*

And isn't that in keeping with reason and our own experience? That is the best way to find out whether anything is good: we subject it to a trial. When we buy an automobile, we take it for a test drive. When we buy a suit of clothes, we first put it on. When we go to a restaurant, if someone with us orders some concoction we are not familiar with, we ask if we can have a bite. When you go to Baskin-Robbins, they have those little tasting spoons so you can sample the ice cream if you are getting an unfamiliar flavor—that way you know what the tutti-frutti coconut coffee peach amaretto ice cream tastes like before you order a triple dip serving.

And when we try something, we can act upon the knowledge we gain. We may not like the way the car handles. The suit may not fit just right on the shoulders. The poached pecan crusted grilled salmon might not taste right.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Matt Horelica, friend of Lisa Young, had surgery last month to remove a non-cancerous tumor is in rehab.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Tina Garcia, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Susan McCain, Gary Nielsen, Russell Godby

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

No Elders, Minister this week.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Sept. 6th at 8:00 a.m.

We will have a meal on Wednesday, Sept. 7th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, Sept. 15th at 8:00 a.m.

The new paper directories are in the foyer.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

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So it is with Christianity. David says, *taste and see.* But notice exactly what David says. He does not say taste and see IF the Lord is good. He says taste and see THAT the Lord is good. There is no doubt. There is no question mark. It is a settled fact that the Lord is good.

Unfortunately, to many, this does not dispose of the question. There are those who want to ask, "If God is good, how could he have made a world where suffering, tyranny, crime, injustice, poverty and disease exist? He either must not be good, or he must not be powerful—not God!"

The fact that God doesn't make life easy is no sign that he is not good. Perhaps something happens in the prime of life. A body is racked by a crippling disease. An individual's activity is limited, they lose their position, it is the end of a promising career. A person in that situation would often ask, "if God is good, how could he let this happen to me?" But is that a mature understanding of the goodness of God? Do good parents who love their children always make life easy for them? Would Beethoven's music have been more beautiful if had never known deafness? Would Milton's poetry have been more moving if he had not been stricken by blindness?

The fact that God does not overrule our freedom to destroy ourselves is no proof He is not good. Suppose someone drinks too much, drives too fast and then kills someone. In the process, they also seriously injure themselves. Then they say, "if God is good, why didn't he stop me? Why didn't he prevent this?" If we choose to use our freedom to destroy ourselves, it is not God's goodness we need to question: it's ours.

The challenge of the Psalmist is a challenge to the unbeliever and the doubter. To taste is the most expressive image for personal experience. Tasting the goodness of God means to receive it and enjoy it in heart-felt experience. God's goodness in pardoning sin can be known only by the pardoned sinner. God's goodness in answering prayer can only be known by those who pray.

Scripture is filled with examples of the goodness of God. Just think of how he provided for the Children of Israel when they left Egypt. He parted the waters of the Red Sea to allow them safe passage. He provided manna in the wilderness. When they came to the promised land under the leadership of Joshua, he gave them victory after victory. Then, when we come to the NT, we see the goodness of God in the forgiveness of Peter. We see the goodness of God as Paul was able to put the past behind Him. When we read the story of the prodigal son in **Luke 5**, it shows for us vividly the love of God. And, of course, the ultimate example of the love of God is in the cross where Jesus died. The blood he shed on that rough-hewn, wooden cross is the blood that cleanses me and washes away my sin.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. *Oh taste and see that the Lord is good!*

Bryant Perkins