

North Kent Methodist Circuit

Sunday service 1st November 2020

Call to worship

Heavenly Father, creator of all colours, flavours, fragrances, shapes and sounds. Invisible yet approachable. We come close to you through Jesus Christ. Woken up by the power of the Good News we are thirsty and hungry to learn and experience how deep and wide is your love for us. Draw us closer and closer to you so we can reflect your glory and worship you in your Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Hymn StF When the saints

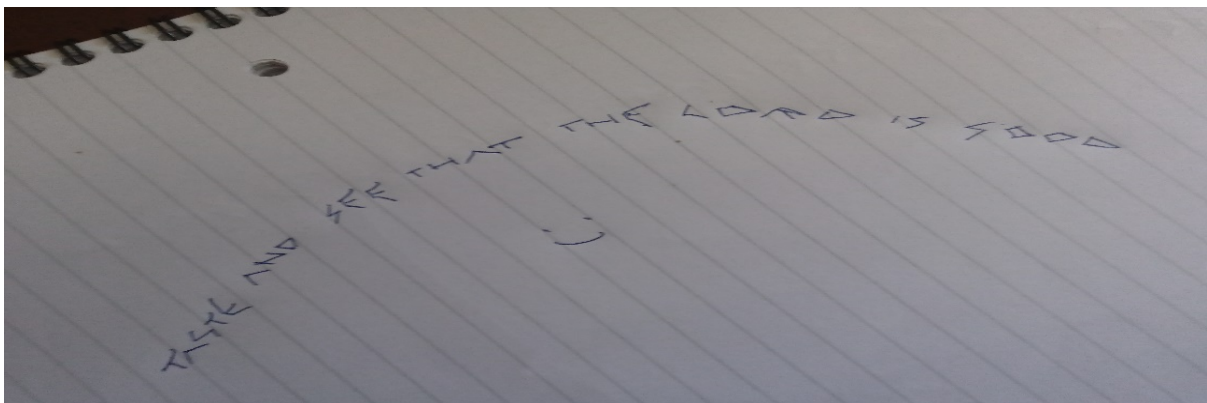
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkNPSIQbxNc>

Prayer of confession:

In your presence we learn how much we need your pardon, how much we failed and saddened your spirit by our own actions. We thank you even for this work of your spirit, for pointing us to Jesus and the cross. Unless we realise these well hidden truths of our nature your forgiveness and restoration is on hold. So we thank you for giving us these special moments of truth.

O Lord forgive us and do not take your Spirit from us. We confess our sins and trust you that in Jesus Christ you have forgiven our sins and remember them no more.

Bible readings: Psalm 34: 1-10; Matthew 5:1-12; 1John 3:1-6



Reflection

“Taste and see that the Lord is good” - this statement from psalm 34 is a **confession and an invitation** at the same time.

In terms of confession we have to look behind the scene. Psalm 34 refers to the episode of David's life, when he was pretending to be insane in order to save his life from King Saul. This story somehow doesn't fit our imagination of what a biblical hero should look like. David in his right mind sees no other way to survive the day! First he put others in danger and made them pay with their own lives for his rescue. Then he pretends insanity to gain pardon from the king whose soldiers he was killing on the battle field.

I am sure as time passed on and David remembered what he did he did not feel proud of himself. Nobody would.

This certainly takes away our naive understanding of how God works. How he can make *"such a wreck like me holy"* Despite his evil actions, David remains in the cloud of witnesses who are preserved for us to see what God can do in people's lives.

At a closer look into the writing of this psalm we have to see that David is not saying "taste and see how great a person I am". He is saying: "taste and see how good God is". He is as good as we are bad. This is an integral part of the Good news we proclaim to the rest of the world. We are fools but God is good. That is the confession of every genuine follower of Christ. Even the apostle Paul didn't hesitate to say it about himself.

"Taste and see that the Lord is good" is also an invitation to experience what God is like. As much as this sounds like a friendly and kind invitation in every case it will be a very dramatic experience. Once you taste and see what the living God is like you will never be the same person. This invitation is a serious business and perhaps we are not always fully aware that God in his wisdom has chosen us to carry it. He has placed an entire nation in history to demonstrate what he is like. Now he has his disciples and the church to be the agent of his presence.

How can anyone taste and see God's goodness? Perhaps some of you are familiar with the popular TV series "Eat well for less". An important part of the program is when Greg Wallace and Chris Bavin bring new brands of food to replace the ones used by the family and they taste the samples. Many times they face the challenge of fussy eaters and people convinced that they can't change their eating habits. After a week of tasting and seeing what they like, the true brands and prices are revealed. It is a moment of surprise. Sometimes it takes a lot to encourage children to eat the right food, or change eating habits. But the team is doing a great job helping people to do it.

Encouraging people to taste and see that God is good is also not easy and can be very disheartening when everybody declares that they don't want to change, don't feel the need to change, the way they live their lives. It often comes from example. In the same way that we encourage children to eat brussels sprouts by eating them ourselves so we can invite people to meet God by our own example of how important He is to us first.

In Scripture food and eating is important too. In a literal and in a symbolic way the truth about God and man are often presented to us at the table. Sometimes we are like children, not believing that broccoli could by any chance taste nice. It takes a life, a committed life to Jesus, to say: "taste and see that the Lord is good" Where do you stand today? Are you at

the point in your life where you need to accept this invitation and see for yourself personally that God is good? Perhaps you have already tasted and seen God's goodness and you need to invite someone else to "taste and see". But no matter where we feel we stand on the imaginary scale of holiness, it is not our greatness but his work in our lives which brings that special flavour to life. We might not feel proud of ourselves, or worthy to offer the invitation, but we have every reason to boast in Jesus. "Taste and see that the Lord is good"

The Apostles' teaching about the fruit of the Holy Spirit falls well into this train of thought.

(kindness, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control).

Reconnected to God we are made holy, set apart to bear witness to His majesty. It is the work of his spirit that causes us to produce fruit which is for the healing of the nations.



Hymn StF 29 Jesus lead us to the Father

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUSbgFc_WXw

Prayers of intercession

Hymn StF 440 Amazing Grace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oav8CkGpcwA>

Blessing

And from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace John 1:16

Bible readings and hymns:

Psalm 34

¹ I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise will always be in my mouth.

² praise the LORD- let the suffering listen and rejoice.

³ Magnify the LORD with me!

Together let us lift his name up high!

⁴ I sought the LORD and he answered me.

He delivered me from all my fears.

⁵ Those who look to God will shine;

their faces are never ashamed.

⁶ This suffering person cried out:

the LORD listened and saved him from every trouble.

⁷ On every side, the LORD's messenger protects those who honour God; and he delivers them.

⁸ Taste and see how good the LORD is!

The one who takes refuge in him is truly happy!

⁹ You who are the LORD's holy ones, honour him,

because those who honour him don't lack a thing.

¹⁰ Even strong young lions go without and get hungry,

but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Matthew 5: 1-12

¹ Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up a mountain. He sat down and his disciples came to him. ² He taught them, saying:

³ "Happy are people who are hopeless, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

⁴ "Happy are people who grieve, because they will be made glad.

⁵ "Happy are people who are humble, because they will inherit the earth.

⁶ "Happy are people who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, because they will be fed until they are full.

⁷ "Happy are people who show mercy, because they will receive mercy.

⁸ "Happy are people who have pure hearts, because they will see God.

⁹ "Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God's children.

¹⁰ "Happy are people whose lives are harassed because they are righteous, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

¹¹ "Happy are you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me. ¹² Be full of joy and be glad, because you have a great reward in heaven. In the same way, people harassed the prophets who came before you.

1 John 3,1-6

See what kind of love the Father has given to us in that we should be called God's children, and that is what we are! Because the world didn't recognize him, it doesn't recognize us.

² Dear friends, now we are God's children, and it hasn't yet appeared what we will be. We know that when he appears we will be like him because we'll see him as he is. ³ And all who have this hope in him purify themselves even as he is pure. ⁴ Every person who practices sin commits an act of rebellion, and sin is rebellion. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and there is no sin in him. ⁶ Every person who remains in relationship to him does not sin. Any person who sins has not seen him or known him.

StF 29 Jesus lead us to the Father

Jesus, lead us to the Father by your Spirit,
help us draw near.

As we come with awe and gladness,
help us draw near.

Alleluia, alleluia,
help us draw near.

Sam Hargreaves

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And we'll all be reunited
On that new and sunlit shore

When the saints go marching in
When the saints go marching in
Lord, how I want be in that number
When the saints go marching in

And when the sun refuses to shine
When the sun refuses to shine
Lord, how I want to be in that number
When the saints go marching in

When the Saints

We are all traveling in the footsteps
Of those that'd come before

Oh when the saints go marching in
Oh when the saints go marching in

I wanna be for that number
When the saints go marching in

Oh when the trumpet sounds its call
When the trumpet sounds its call
Lord, how I want be in that number
When the trumpet sounds its call

Oh when the saints go marching in
Oh when the saints go marching in
How I want to be in that number
When the saints go marching...

StF 440 Amazing grace

How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost
But now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught
My heart to fear
And grace my Fears relieved
How precious did
That grace appear
The hour I first believed

Through many dangers
Toils and snares
We have already come
'Twas grace hath brought
Us safe thus far
And grace will lead us home

When we've been there
Ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun...