

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas
April 27, 2016

Tasting the Grace of the Lord

1 Peter 2:1-3

2:1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

2:2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation --

2:3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

1. Taste of the Word

In 1 Peter 2:2, the Word is called “spiritual milk”. For the newborn babies, the milk is essential for their life and growth, and the Word is also essential for the children of God. In verse 3, it was written, “if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.” The verse says the Word provides not only the spiritual nutrition but also the taste, good taste to us.

For the foods, if it is tasty and you eat it too much, it might be harmful. If it is not tasty, you might want to eat it because it is nutritious. However, the taste is very subjective. Some people do not like carrots or tomato because they have a raw smell but other people like and eat them as a snack. Some people do not understand that the Bible, the Word of God, is delectable, tastes good, though they know the Word has nutritional value for our spirit and soul. Then they keep away from the Bible. They think “The Bible is very hard to digest,” but it is not true. It actually chewy but that’s why it is good. The Word is very nutritious and very delicious.

“If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good” is taken from Psalm 34:8 “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!” This Psalm was sung when David was saved from the enemy by the skin of teeth. David experienced God’s salvation and tasted the grace of God by the experience. He remembered how God was good to him, praised God, and encouraged others by saying “Let’s together taste that the Lord is good!”

The believers of the New Testament era have been saved from the sins and perish by the Lord Jesus Christ’s death on the cross. When we repented and believed in the salvation of Lord Jesus, we were released from the sin. Then, we received the joy from the heaven in our heart. We tasted the grace of Lord Jesus. It is regretful if you have not tasted the grace of the salvation yet, even you have received it. “If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.” is the same statement as “Are you tasting that the Lord is good?. If you haven’t tasted, you shall do it now, do it deeper. Taste the grace of the Lord through tasting the Word.”

Faith begins with the confession that Jesus is the Lord and Christ. “Christ is the Lord.” You say this “Christos ho kurios” in Greek. This is very important confession of the faith. People will be saved by this confession of faith. “The Lord is good” is “chrestos ho kurios” in Greek. It actually sounds very similar but the spelling is slightly different. A person, who confesses saying, “the Lord is Christ”, can say “the Lord is good ” at the same time. The life you live believing in Christ is the life you keep tasting the grace of the Lord. We are the people who believe in our Lord. Let us taste the Word and by the Word taste more deeply that the Lord is good.

2. Take Time to Taste

For tasting the Word and “tasting the Lord is good,” you need to know several things; today I’m going to tell you two of them.

First one is to take your time. Supper is not only for satisfying your stomach; it enriches your mind by tasting and enjoying them. Tasty and looking beautiful is the important elements of your meal, so that you may plan them well when making it. If you just eat them all very greedily, you don’t taste them. If your meal is good, you shall slowly taste them; likewise the food of your spirit, the Word, should be tasted well. What if you just read through the Bible and finish, you may neither taste the verses, stock them into your heart, nor be nourished by His words. Why not taste the Word a little bit more slowly then?

At one session, I talked so, and one person said to me, “We’re too busy to do what you say.” Surely, present days are very busy. If you say, “You look busy,” to someone, it may sound like praising words. However, it is the huge loss if your “busy time” keeps you away from the Word.

The former president of Uruguay, known as “The Poorest President in the World,” Jose Mujica, recently visited Japan and became the popular topic. He talked about “time” like this; “It is not freedom to be filled by stuffs, but to be filled with time.” (*The Words of Jose Mujica* by Miyuki Sato). In Uruguay, the labors brought the action for shortening their working time, and they obtained “six-hours work per day.” They, however, utilized their vacant hours for doing another job and actually worked longer for their loans of motorcycles or automobiles. Mr. Mujica maintained that people sacrifice their free time they won, for satisfying their greed.

The quote of former president Jose Mujica makes us consider what we are busy for. If we are Christians, we may think, “Aren’t we sacrifice the free time to talk with God?” In Psalm 27:4, says, “One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.” The believers need to taste and see that the Lord is good. Why not we take a little bit more time to satisfy our true need of souls?

3. In the Silence

The second one we need for tasting the Word is “silence.” Today we live in noisy world. Music sounds every where. Commercial messages are shouting every time. Many people talk with cell-phones without considering others. Sometime I answered them or look back to them because I thought they talked to me.

“Noise” does not mean “sound” only. Henri Nouwen said that he felt as if he was driving in the huge dictionary when he was driving in Los Angeles and saw a series of advancement and announcement boards at the roadside. The words, which are not the words of God, press on us trying to get our attentions. In fact, we are drafting in the flood of the words. We need “silence” to listen to the Word and taste it. We need the time that we go to the Bible after turning off radio, tv, computer, and cell-phone.

When I was in California, my wife and I attended a “prayer seminar.” It was a one-day seminar starting in the morning and ended in early afternoon. We practice a “silent prayer.” We started to have a calm heart. There are over 100 attendees. The teacher sent us a signal.

Instantly, the church hall became a quite place. I could hear the noise of AC, and of cars running outside. Even I could hear bird calls as I continue to have a quiet time. The silent prayer continues about fifteen minutes. It was not boring, but comfortable time.

“Silence” may distract some one. Many thoughts and feelings come during a silent prayer. They may distract us from praying God. We learn how to handle the distractions in prayer at the seminar. I have been learning about prayer for many years, but this is the first time to get this kind of instruction. I thought praying to God is very natural for Christians and any Christians can pray without instructions. But I was aware that we need to learn how to pray in church and be trained how to listen to the Word of God in prayer. I continued to learn from the teacher. It became my treasure.

This is an old story in Europe. Since people have no fridges at that time, the harvest was stored in the dark and cool warehouse. An owner of a farm lost his watch while he was storing the harvest. The owner became upset and search it with a lamp rummaging sawdust by a rake. He searched his watch with the help of other people, but they couldn't find it. After adults went out for lunch, a boy came to the warehouse, and he found the watch with no efforts. The owner was so surprised and asked the boy, saying, “How did you find it?” The boy answered, “It's easy. I laid myself down on the sawdust, and kept quiet. Then I heard the sound of tick-tack.” Adults couldn't listen to the small sound of the watch because they didn't become quiet. But, the boy could listen to the sound because he keep silence.

Silence is not useless. It is valuable. When we make our noisy hearts calm before God, we can listen to the Word of God. We will

find how wonderful is the Word, and how we miss so often. We will taste the grace of the Lord. By the grace of the Lord, we will live life with confidence and power. We will fill our souls that are seeking the grace of the Lord.

“Take time and taste the words of God spoken in silence.” We cannot achieve this in a short time. However we cannot master it for ever if we do not start. Why wait? Let's start it today. And taste the Word and the grace of the Lord more deeply. For achieving the goal, let's be willing to learn and practice.

(Prayer)

Father God, my only and one desire is to taste Your Word, whose saved me and taste the grace of the Lord who gave even His life for my salvation. Lead us the spontaneous training to taste the Word and the grace of the Lord well. Make us the church where we enjoy the taste of the Word together and share the grace of the Lord each other. In the name of Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.