

# Spiritual Senses #2: Taste

## Psalm 34 v 1-8

### Context:

In today's study we continue our journey through Lent exploring five spiritual senses. Last week we looked at spiritual sight with Isaiah's hair-raising vision of God in the temple, and today we turn our attention to spiritual taste. We are told that Psalm 34 was written by David at a time of great challenge in his life. At God's command the prophet Samuel had secretly anointed this young shepherd boy from Bethlehem to be the new king of Israel. But there was a big problem – the throne was already occupied by a man called Saul who had been rejected by God due to his failure to trust and obey. As David becomes more and more popular in the country due to his feats of bravery, such as slaying the giant Goliath, Saul turned on him with murderous hatred and began to hunt him down to kill him. So David became a reluctant fugitive, finding refuge wherever he could. After one particular narrow escape from the hands of Saul, David fled to Gath where a man called Achish was king (his official title was Abimelech, which means 'Son of the King'). As soon as Achish learned the true identity of David, feeling threatened by his reputation as a brave warrior, Achish turned against him. In a desperate bid to save his own skin David pretended to be insane and indulged in some very odd behaviour which resulted in him being thrown out of Gath by Achish. You can read about this in 1 Samuel 21 v 10-15. Psalm 34 was written by David as a reflection on his experience of God's provision and protection during his time in Gath and, as far as our Lent theme goes, David encourages us all to taste God's goodness for ourselves. So, let's read Psalm 34 v 1-8, but having an eye open to the rest of the Psalm too.

### Observation:

1. With what words of praise does David open this Psalm in v 1?
2. What appeal does he make in v 2 as a response to his praise?
3. What does he urge us to do in v 3?
4. What is David's testimony in v 4 and v 6?
5. What amazing statement does he make in v 5?
6. What bold declaration does he make in v 7?
7. What does David invite us to do in v 8 and what does he say will be the outcome?

### Meaning:

1. Do you think David meant his words in v 1 to be taken literally? Is it possible or even right to extol/praise the Lord *at all times*, even in times of darkness, suffering or challenge? Read 1 Thessalonians 5 v 16-18 and explore what Paul's words add to this discussion.
2. In what sense can our praise/extolling/glorifying God have a positive impact on others who are going through difficulties (v 2)?

3. In v 3 David encourages others to join him in praising God – in what ways can corporate worship (praising God with others) help us when we are struggling?
4. Can you identify with David's testimony in v 4 and 6 – can you share any times in your life when you called on the Lord for help and he answered?
5. What do you think David means in v 5?
6. What images do David's words in v 7 evoke in our minds and how might this verse be a comfort to us?
7. What do you think it means to 'taste and see that the Lord is good' (v 8)? How do we do this and what might be the result?
8. Look at the rest of Psalm 34 (v 9-22) and discuss the different ways David illustrates what it might mean to taste the goodness of God.

### **Application:**

1. Are there any practical changes God is calling me to make this Lent so I can taste the goodness of God more fully and beneficially?
2. Read the following passages and explore what they have to say about tasting the goodness of God:

Isaiah 55 v 1-2

John 6 v 32-35

John 6 v 48-59

Isaiah 25 v 6-8

Mark 14 v 22-25

### **Pray:**

- Pray for anyone you know who is going through difficulties right now.
- Ask God for his grace to be able to praise him even in dark times.
- Ask God to show you how to taste his goodness more fully this Lent.