

“Taste and See that the Lord Is Good”
(Psalm 34:8)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Context: David’s running away from Saul.
 - a. Saul threatened David’s life and tried to kill him several times.
 - b. When Jonathan found out that Saul intended to try again, David fled.
 - c. He first went to Nob and was helped by Ahimelech the priest.
 - d. Then he went to Gath to seek sanctuary from Achish (1 Sam. 21:10).
 - e. But when the servants of Achish saw David, they pointed him out as the one who had slain ten thousands of their own people.
 - f. David was afraid and acted as though he was mad.
 - g. Achish, who is the Abimelech mentioned here (this being the name of a king in Philistia), believed him and drove him away.

2. David saw this as the miraculous intervention of the Lord.
 - a. David here clearly deceived Achish.
 - b. Later David would receive a city from him, from which he would attack the enemies of Israel: but he will tell Achish he is attacking Israel.
 - c. How could David do this? In war, deception is permitted; at times it was even commanded by the Lord (2 Sam. 5:23-24). It is necessary in war.
 - d. David attributed the fact that it worked to God’s grace.

B. Preview.

1. In response to this, David offers a psalm/song of praise.
 - a. In the psalms, the psalmist often expresses his predicament, asks for God’s help, and then promises to give God His due if He should save him.
 - b. Then when he is delivered, he returns to give God praise.
 - c. Here, David is giving God His due:
 - (i) He promises to bless and praise God constantly because of His goodness.
 - (ii) He promises to do so publicly that he might encourage others, especially the humble, to trust Him.
 - (iii) He instructs others to learn the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of these blessings, and to do His will.
 - (iv) He extols the attributes of God.
 - (v) And among other things, he issues an invitation to the people of God to come to Him and find that He will be good to them as well.

2. It’s this particular aspect of the psalm that I want us to focus on this morning: the goodness of the Lord that we are challenged here to experience.
 - a. First, I want us to see *that* the Lord is good.
 - b. Second, realizing this, that we are to taste and see that this is true: in other words, we are to put our trust in Him as well and find out for ourselves.

- c. We will deal only with the first point this morning.

II. Sermon.

A. First, David tells us *that* the Lord is good.

1. He is the only One who is good.

- a. When Jesus was called “Good Teacher,” He replies, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone” (Mark 10:18).
- b. Jesus was not denying that He was good, but was perhaps asking this rich young ruler whether he recognized that He was God.
- c. Jesus tells us, “No one is good except God alone.”
 - (i) Jesus is not denying that the angels are good.
 - (ii) He’s not denying that Adam and Eve were good when created, or that the saints in heaven are now made good.
 - (iii) But theirs is a derived good:
 - (a) It comes from the source of all good.
 - (b) From the Holy Spirit dwelling in them.
 - (c) He is the source of their holiness, their love, their goodness.
 - (iv) But only God is inherently good. This goodness can be seen in two ways:
 - (a) In His natural attributes: which show His greatness.
 - (b) But especially in His moral attributes: which reveal His great love and mercy.
 - (c) David exhorts us to taste and see that the Lord is good: that is, He has the power to save and the disposition of heart to save those who are His.

2. God has many attributes that make Him praiseworthy and able to help us:

a. First, His natural attributes.

(i) He is Almighty:

- (a) When Sarah laughed after the Lord promised a son, the Lord asked Abraham why she laughed: “Is anything too difficult for the Lord?” (Gen. 18:14).
- (b) When Mary asked Gabriel how she could have a child without a husband, Gabriel replied, “Nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).
- (c) The God who created the heavens and earth with a word can do whatever He wants to do.
- (d) Who or what can withstand His power?

(ii) He is all knowing:

- (a) David writes, “O Lord, You have searched me and known *me*. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all. You have enclosed me

behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. *Such* knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is *too* high, I cannot attain to it” (Psalm 139:1-6).

- (b) The psalmist writes, “Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite” (Psalm 147:5).
 - (c) He knows whatever has been, what is, what will be, what might have been.
 - (d) Nothing we or anyone does will ever take Him by surprise.
 - (e) He knows how to save us.
- (iii) He has all wisdom:
- (a) Jeremiah writes, “*It is* He who made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom, and by His understanding He stretched out the heavens” (Jer. 51:15).
 - (b) When the mystery of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was revealed to Daniel, he said, “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him” (2:20-22).
 - (c) Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge skillfully.
 - (d) God has the wisdom necessary to save us.
- (iv) He is eternal:
- (a) Moses wrote, “Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God” (Psalm 90:1-2).
 - (b) This is implied in His name: “I Am who I Am” (Ex. 3:14).
 - (c) He is the One who forever exists, and who will never cease to be.
 - (d) This is why we can always depend on Him to save us forever.
- (v) He is everywhere present:
- (a) Solomon prayed, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!” (1 Kings 8:27).
 - (b) David writes, “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me” (Psalm 139:7-10).
 - (c) He is a God who is near and not far away.
 - (d) His presence is always there to help us.

- (vi) He is independent:
 - (a) He doesn't depend on anything to be, or to do what He wants.
 - (b) Paul said to the Epicureans and Stoics on Mars Hill, "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:24-25).
 - (c) Since He doesn't depend on anything that could let Him down, He will not fail and let us down.

- (vii) And finally, He never changes:
 - (a) The psalmist writes, "Your years are throughout all generations. Of old You founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. Even they will perish, but You endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end. The children of Your servants will continue, and their descendants will be established before You" (Psalm 102:24-28).
 - (b) "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6).
 - (c) Because the Lord never changes, His purpose for us will never change.
 - (d) He has purposed to save us, and He will save us.

- (viii) Each of these attributes is a perfection of God which is good and for which He is worthy of praise.

- b. But it is His moral attributes that make Him especially lovely and desirable.
 - (i) His righteousness:
 - (a) He loves what is good and right.
 - (b) "For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face" (Psalm 11:7).
 - (c) He will do what is right.

 - (ii) His justice:
 - (a) He enforces what is good and right in His world.
 - (b) "For You have maintained my just cause; You have sat on the throne judging righteously. You have rebuked the nations, You have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever. The enemy has come to an end in perpetual ruins, and You have uprooted the cities; the very memory of them has perished. But the Lord abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment, and He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity. The Lord also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble; and those who know Your

name will put their trust in You, for You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You” (Psalm 9:4-10).

(c) He will vindicate us when oppressed.

(iii) His truth:

(a) He believes and upholds what is true.

(b) David writes, “But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth” (Psalm 86:15).

(c) And again, “For Your lovingkindness is great above the heavens, and Your truth *reaches* to the skies” (Psalm 108:4).

(d) He will not deceive us; He will do what He said He would.

(iv) His holiness, in which are bound up His love, grace and mercy.

(a) His holiness is again His love of what is right.

(b) David writes, “You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel” (Psalm 22:3).

(c) The psalmist writes, “Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His footstool; Holy is He” (Psalm 99:5).

(d) He loves everything consistent with His Law, His justice, His truth.

(e) On the contrary, He hates everything against them.

(f) The thought of ever going against His Word is abhorrent to Him.

(v) These attributes are what make God truly lovely.

(a) If God possessed only His natural attributes without His moral perfection, He would be a perfect monster.

(b) If such a being existed who was infinitely evil, we could not imagine how terrible He would be.

(c) But God is infinitely holy, as well as powerful.

(d) And this holiness is what makes Him to be infinitely lovely.

(e) It adorns His infinite power with the infinite love of what is good.

(f) And this makes Him a perfect Savior.

c. It is His moral nature that the psalmist particularly praises Him for.

(i) Because He is good, He does good.

(ii) David was in danger; but the goodness of God was His shield.

(iii) He trusted in the Lord, and the Lord delivered him.

(iv) And so he calls upon us to do the same.

d. This evening, we’ll look at the fact that knowing the Lord is good, we are to trust in Him and find out for ourselves that He is good.