

Reflection 26th January 2021

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*"Taste and see that the Lord is good,
Blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him."*

Ps 34:8

Did you know that a baby's sense of taste first starts to develop in the womb? By the mother's 9th week of pregnancy the baby's mouth and tongue have been formed and he/she has their first tiny tastebuds. As he/she breathes in and swallows the amniotic fluid they have their first experience of different flavours. So, if Mum has been eating curry they can taste it and smell it! If Mum eats curry regularly the baby will more than likely enjoy it too as it becomes a familiar and therefore comforting taste and smell. By three months old a baby has a wider distribution of taste buds in his/her mouth than you do and already they can distinguish between sweet and bitter tastes. Also, by this stage, the baby's tongue will have grown and toys and many other objects are put into his/her mouth for further investigation. They are using their tongue to check out the taste.



Psalm 34 is one of the psalms set for morning Prayer today, when we celebrate the Feast of Saints Timothy and Titus. In this psalm David uses images of the mouth, the lips and the tongue. He warns us to guard our lips and tongues

because, as we well know, from them can come abuse and lies. Those who love God will try their best to keep their tongues in check. David wants to use his lips and mouth for more positive purposes: to praise God so that others will hear and be encouraged to do the same.

Then we come to verse 8 where David invites his listeners to "taste and see that the Lord is good". In my imagination, I can see the delighted expression on a baby's face as they taste something they enjoy. The happiness and excitement of finding something which they can enjoy whenever they taste it - a favourite taste. The delight seems to spread to their whole bodies as they squirm and jump around in pure unadulterated pleasure. The decision about whether *this* food ie the presence and power of God, is to our liking is not what this is about. We will never spit this food out or cry for something else because the Presence of the Lord becomes our greatest pleasure.

We are invited to take God into ourselves knowing that He is good. There are no bones or bitter tastes in this food. We can trust it to nourish us and sustain us. It is equally as perfect for a baby as an elderly person reaching the end of their life. Just as food we enjoy comforts us and helps us to feel loved and secure, our Father God enfolds us and takes us close to His heart. As we open ourselves up and take the Lord in through our prayers, our hopes and our dreams, His love for us gradually subdues the things which threaten our peace and can cause us to feel hungry and empty inside.

The next time you have something to eat: offer up a prayer of thanks that the Lord is as close as when you take that food into your mouth. Eat slowly and as you taste all the different tastes, know that your Father God is good and is on your side and will sustain you.