

Taste Salvation
October 3, 2021

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Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

What are your five senses? Of our five senses - seeing, smelling, hearing, touching, tasting - as Christians, when we talk about faith, we often do so about our sense of hearing. Maybe because we know from Romans chapter 10, that ***“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the Word of Christ.”***(Romans 10:17)

But today, we're reminded that when it comes to faith and salvation, we use our other senses as well. Because in a little while we'll be celebrating the Lord's Supper, where not only will we see the very body and blood of our Jesus – in, with, and under – the bread and the wine, we'll also be able to touch and feel it. For as our second reading points out, it was Jesus Himself who tasted death for us, that we – by faith - might be able to taste and see the salvation that comes from God.

The writer to the Hebrews focuses on Jesus and makes it clear that Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. Because, and most likely, those who received this Epistle preferred the Old Testament laws and covenant that God had made with man. Where they could work out their salvation in a kind of works righteousness, rather than trusting in Jesus and the salvation that He had come to bring. They

wanted to trust in themselves. And yet, Jesus is the author and founder of our salvation.

According to verses 9-11 of our text, “we [can] see [Jesus] who for a little while was made lower than the angels....crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God, He might Taste Death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers...”

When Jesus became flesh and blood, for a time, even though He was above them as the Son of God, He was made a little lower than the angels. He did so, in order to fulfill God’s commands and covenants as one of us. And in doing so, He tasted death for all mankind and became the perfect sacrifice. All of those Old Testament sacrifices done under the Old Covenant pointed to His perfect sacrifice so that the sins of all might be atoned and salvation might be given.

He took all our sins and He suffered. Sins that we actually commit as well as those sins inherit. He did so for us, on our behalf. We see Him suffering with them as He makes His way to Calvary. We see Him suffering with them as He hangs on the cross. And we see Him suffering with them right to the very end, just before He gave up His Spirit to the Father and died. And yet, He was the perfect

sacrifice of all time, because He was a man who had no sin, except for the sins of mankind that were placed on Him by the Father.

He died for us and He died for those who persecuted Him – like Pontius Pilate. The soldiers mocked Him and nailed Him to the cross. Those who once shouted, “Crucify Him.” And He died for those who will come after us. Because, as St. Paul tells us, **“For while we were still weak, at just the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.”** (Romans 5:6) Even the ungodly people who have allowed their hearts to become hardened and have rejected Jesus. He died for them. Because like them, our hearts too can become hardened by sin. And yet, even though we might think evil thoughts, speak evil words, or do evil things, and wander off on our own, He calls us back because He has already taken our sins, and has tasted death for us, that we might be redeemed once again and receive the salvation He came to give us.

This isn't some kind of concept meant for other people because it's personal. A personal salvation that brings to us joy as we look to Him as our perfect sacrifice. Joy because He was made one of us. Joy because He took our sins and tasted death for us. Joy because through His death and resurrection, we are redeemed. And Joy, because through His death and resurrection He sanctifies us, He makes us holy, and acceptable in the sight of God. He brings us back to the Father, and readily confesses before Him and all creation that all those who believe in Him are truly His brothers and sisters.

We come into the family of Christ by hearing God's Word and putting it into practice. Of course, it's always easier simply to hear His Word, but our faith calls us to put it into practice. We share it with one another and with others. We volunteer our time and talents so that His Will might be done in and through us. Knowing that none of us are perfect, and from time to time we might even fail. And yet, because none of us deserve the salvation that is ours, God forgives us and gives it to us anyways, because His Son, Jesus, tasted death for us all. And we can forgive one another as well.

Today, we're reminded that when it comes to faith and salvation, not only do we use our sense of hearing, but we use our other senses as well. In a little while, during Holy Communion, we'll see, feel, and touch the very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ – in, with and under – the bread and the wine. And because He tasted death for us, we have the Joy of tasting and seeing our salvation. For as the palmist says in Psalm 34:8, ***"Taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!"***

In Jesus' name, Amen.