

TASTE OF THE LORD

8/1/2010

Job 23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Psalms 119:103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Last Sunday Pastor was talking about how it is his responsibility to feed the flock; 1 Peter 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

I got to thinking about that. Surely, it is a Pastor's responsibility to feed the folks. But what responsibility do "the folks" have? He used the example of a wife who spends all day fixing Thanksgiving dinner, only to have "the folks" devour it, thanklessly often, in less than 30 minutes. Just as a family has the responsibility to the ones who prepared and presented the meal, so too does the family of God have some responsibilities when it comes to our spiritual meals.

So often our Pastor works his heart out on a message, presents it in a fantastic, Holy Spirit empowered way, and this can be our response, without saying a word:

Malachi 1:12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.

Malachi was a prophet to the remnant of Israel. A people whose worship was formal, and insincere. It's easy to fall into that kind of mindset.

Pastor uses often the phrase, "I set the table, and it's your responsibility to partake". How easy it is to have the attitude mentioned by the prophet Malachi.

Here are ten responsibilities I believe we have, using the book of Nehemiah as a foundation:

1. **Show up on time!** When I was a young man at home and I showed up 5 seconds late for dinner, I didn't eat with the family. The lesson is that out of respect for the person preparing the table I should be there in time to prepare myself (wash my hands, get cleaned up) and be in my seat before the food hits the table. So it is with our spiritual meals. We must be prepared to receive the meals our Pastor (and the Holy Spirit) has prepared for us and we can not do that if we are running in at the last minute or late. Look

at what Nehemiah said about the people's preparedness: **Nehemiah 8:1** And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2. **Show up hungry!** Imagining showing up and telling your mom "I'm not really hungry" after she spent hours preparing the meal. Our anticipation must be at it's highest level. Our eyes must tell our Pastor .. "come on .. I'm starving .. fill up my plate!" **and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.** These folks were starving to death. "Come on Ezra .. bring the book ... read it to us now!!!" You cannot imagine how hard it is to preach to a bunch of people who are ambivalent to hearing the Word of God.
3. **Be willing to taste all the food prepared .. even if you don't like it.** I get in trouble all the time from my wife, just like I did with my mom. I am quite unwilling to try foods I haven't tried before. I just want foods I am comfortable with. **Nehemiah 8:7** Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. The folks had never tried this Godly food before .. but they were willing to allow these men to explain it to them. We must be willing to try the steak as well as the pablum. **Isaiah 7:15** Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. **Hebrews 5:14** But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. We must move from the milk of the Word (the pablum) and learn to partake of the food that while may be more difficult to digest, will help us to live our lives perfectly before the Lord. **2 Timothy 4:3** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; You would have a hard time convincing me we are not in this time right now. People simply don't want sound doctrine. They would rather have teachers that would feed them ice cream and cookies.
4. **Bring the tools.** You aren't going to eat a 5 course meal with your fingers. You shouldn't come to a preaching/teaching service without necessary utensils; your Bible, a note pad .. something to write with. At times it seems people are like little babies who want to be spoon fed. **Hebrews 5:12-13** For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. At some time we must pick up the fork and feed ourselves. Be prepared to do something with the meal you are about to

eat. **Proverbs 7:2-3** Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

- 5. Chew completely and swallow carefully.** In other words, pay attention to what is going on. You aren't going to just stuff food into your mouth and swallow. You must be aware of the condition of the food before swallowing. **Nehemiah 8:3** And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. Be attentive to what is being said. This is a practiced habit. You cannot listen casually to the Word of God just like you cannot amble through a gourmet meal. I remember my Mom too many times saying, "CHEW YOUR FOOD BEFORE YOU SWALLOW IT! DID YOU EVEN TASTE IT?!" **Song of Solomon 2:3** As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. **Psalms 119:103** How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Is that what the Word of our Lord, the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley, means to us?
- 6. Allow it to digest properly.** **Joshua 1:8** This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. You don't eat a large meal and then run a 10K run. You have to let the food digest properly, at it's time. It is the same with God's Word. You have to properly meditate on it. Consider it. **Psalms 119:159** Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness. Oh, how we love a great meal. Do we love God's precepts as much? Do we consider them the same? Consider the last time you saw a really great movie? After the movie, what do we do? We talk about it. We think about it. We tell other people the just "HAVE" to see it. Then we see it again, maybe more than once. Then we go out and spend \$25 and watch it again! But after a really great message? Often thirty minutes later we can't remember what the topic was. We must consider how much we love the precepts of God's Word. **Psalms 119:15-16** I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. I'm not talking about Bible memorization here. I'm talking about letting the Word of God spoken by our Pastor digest in our life. **Luke 2:19** But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. Mary pondered the words of God as spoken by the shepherds that night. She kept them in her heart.
- 7. Utilize the energy to produce results.** There is a practical reason for eating. Other than to enjoy a good meal, we need the energy it provides to live our lives. The Word of God

should empower us. It should change us. It should energize us. There is a practical reason for being in the house of the Lord .. to get fed and take that food and use it to do the Lord's work. **Psalms 119:27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works. Psalms 119:32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.** The energy from God's Word gives us the power to serve Him.

8. **Pay for the meal.** Show some appreciation. A friend or relative invites you over for a sumptuous meal. After this feast do you just walk out without complimenting the hostess? **Nehemiah 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:** The folks respected, and appreciated the Word of God enough to stand during the reading of it. There is also a practical side of paying. This is not a message on tithing, but we show our appreciation by upholding our fiscal responsibility to "pay for the meal".
9. **Thank God for it.** It is customary to thank God for our meals before we partake. Do we thank God for the Spiritual food He provides through the preaching and teaching? **Nehemiah 8:9 And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.** When was the last time we were so thankful for the Spiritual table set by our Pastor that we wept in gratefulness?
10. **Put it to use in your life.** Proper physical nourishment is only beneficial to us if we use it to live our lives. What happens when we eat big meals and then go lay on the couch for the day? We get fat and lazy. Yes, many stuff their faces with empty calories with no regard to their health, but this should not be the purpose. So it is with Spiritual nourishment. We must "work out our salvation" and exercise our faith. If a man doesn't work, neither should he eat. God expects us to work: **Revelation 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Psalms 119:33-36 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.** Note the words, "send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared..." It is our responsibility to take portions of God's Word

to those for whom nothing is prepared. To those who have never heard the clear presentation of the Gospel. It is not for us to sit in church week in and week out and “eat the fat and drink the sweet” and do nothing with it. Jesus commands us to “Go Ye Therefore” ... **James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.**

As members of The Olde Tyme Baptist Church, let's hold up our end of the responsibility. Let's savour every opportunity we have to sit at the Lord's Table, that our sacrifice of service might be a sweet smelling Saviour unto Him.