Come to Your Senses During Lent – Noticing the Presence of God.

Taste

Psalm 34:4-8; Matthew 26:26-30 April 6, 2025

John 2:1-10; John 6:47-58 Kimby Young

Today as we share communion in a few moments, we reflect on the last of our five senses for this Lenten season. How does taste help us to notice God? How does taste help us to draw closer to God? Most obviously, every time we taste the bread of life during communion, we remember the body of Christ broken for all, in order to break the power of sin. When we drink the wine or juice at the Lord’s table, we are reminded of Jesus blood poured out on the cross. We remember that it is through this sacrament – this holy practice – that Jesus stands among us again, and calls us to our best. Today, this week before Holy Week, we remember again.

In addition to the scripture passages about communion for today, we heard again the story of the first miracle of Jesus at the wedding in Cana of Galilee where Jesus turned water into wine. We’ve heard it before – every year at the beginning of Epiphany, as Jesus started his public ministry and mission. To hear again about that first miracle here as we approach the last days of Jesus, I wonder what new understanding we might receive. Do you think, even at that first miracle, Jesus was pointing forward to his death on the cross? That would explain Jesus’ response to his mother – “my time has not yet come.” Probably Jesus new that as soon as his ministry started, as soon as the public caught on to who he really was, as soon as his first act pointed people to God. Jesus knew that his destiny of death was coming. My time is not yet. But with the beginning, the end has begun.

One of the many points of this story is one I haven’t mentioned often. At the end of the miracle, when the wedding steward tastes the wine. He says, basically, “this is the best wine I’ve ever tasted.” I don’t know if you like wine or not, and I know very little about wine quality. But I do know a good taste when I enjoy it. I do know what I like. The steward says “this is the best.” Imagine – the best taste you have ever had – wine, juice, milk, lemonade, coffee – the best taste you’ve ever had. Imagine. Remember. And then make it twice as good or better. That’s what Jesus gave to the world. The wine at the wedding was an example, a symbol, of the best we could ever imagine. Jesus gave the absolute best to the world. Full of flavor. Full of joy. The best we can imagine. Jesus pointed the way to God and still points the way. So we can know God’s love. So we can receive God’s gifts. That was Jesus first miracle, and his last. The last act of Jesus in his death on the cross, made possible the very best gift of resurrection and eternal life. Jesus made it possible for us to be with God. And nothing could ever taste any better than that. To be with God for all eternity.

You see this miracle also points forward to heaven, to the end of time, when we will all be together with God in heaven for all eternity. Better than the best wedding feast. Better than the best banquet, the happiest family reunion. Jesus makes that possible as well. And we can only imagine. With all those we love, with all who have gone before – united with God enjoying all the gifts of God. Jesus paints a picture. Jesus makes a promise. And we can only imagine.

Every time we gather around this table of grace, every time we receive the sacrament of communion, we imagine again. We hold on to Christ’s promises of resurrection and eternal union with God. We remember all that God has promised and all that Jesus has already done. And we give thanks. That’s why this service is also called the Thanksgiving feast or the Joyful feast of the people of God. It is solemn and serious because we remember Jesus sacrifice. But it is also absolutely joyful and festive because we receive all of God’s gifts of grace. This is the bread of life. This is Christ’s cup of hope. Our hope in Jesus is absolutely certain. Because of God’s love for us, we belong to Jesus Christ and are saved. Thanks be to God.

One reason this sacrament of communion is so meaningful is because of that hope and promise. I know the little piece of bread is not finally fulfilling. We know the tiny cup doesn’t overflow and quench our thirst forever. We will have to return to the source of all goodness again and again. We will want another meal today, and tomorrow and the next. This taste today doesn’t satisfy completely. It doesn’t finish our need. It is just a taste. A taste of oh so much more to come. It is a promise of all the delights and gifts yet to come. It points toward the future, points toward our hope of all that is to come. Taste. And remember. And receive God’s promise. God promises good for all who believe. And we live in that promise of all that Christ holds for us.

You see, it is just a taste. Though we know Jesus is with us, we also live in this world, where evil exists, where suffering is real, where need and longing return. We know Jesus is with us, and yet we also have worries and fears and failures. The taste we experience today is meant to remind us that God has fed us well through this life and God will feed us again tomorrow. We remember that Christ has loved us on the cross and Christ will love us for eternity.

That last reading from John for today is Jesus trying to tell his disciples what was to come. Jesus spoke about belonging and believing. Jesus knew that sometimes the world would be difficult for the disciples, and he was trying to give them hope and courage. Believe in Jesus, belong to Jesus, then whatever happens, you will be safe in God’s loving care.

We receive that same hope, courage and joy today. We don’t know what tomorrow will bring. But we do know Jesus will be with us, God will continue to love us. We know we will be hungry again. We know also that we will be fed and filled again with all that we need.

Praise team sings a song called “Take to the World” by Derek Webb. One of the lines in the song is “may the bread on your tongue leave a trail of crumbs to lead the hungry back to the place that you are from.” It is a great and somewhat confusing line that has layers of meaning. But it is also a reminder. That today in communion we receive one of the greatest gifts imaginable. We receive the grace of God. And though it is just a taste – though it is just a crumb – it is enough. It is more than enough. It is a taste meant to be shared. You have a taste – just a little taste – of all that God has promised in our belonging with Jesus Christ. And it is fantastic. It is delicious. It is beautiful and satisfying and purposeful and fulfilling. And even though it is just a tiny taste of all God’s gifts to come – it is enough to share. It is meant to be shared. It must be shared. Share even the crumb. Share the bread on your tongue. Give this bread of life to the world. Offer this bread to the hungry so that they might find Jesus and be found by God. Offer this gift of life and grace, so that others may taste and believe the good news of Jesus Christ. Offer this bread that others may follow the crumbs and find their way back to Jesus. Offer this grace that we all may receive and rejoice in the presence of our loving God. Give everyone a taste of this grace. May you be blessed as you receive and remember this taste of God’s goodness for you and for all. Thanks be to God. Amen.

April 6 – Taste

Psalm 34:4-8

I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him, and be radiant, so your faces shall never be ashamed.

This poor soul cried and was heard by the Lord and was saved from every trouble.

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.

Matthew 26:26-30

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to me and to you? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the person in charge of the banquet.” So they took it. When the person in charge tasted the water that had become wine and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), that person called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

John 6:47-58

Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever, and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” So Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day, for my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which the ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.