

MY EDUCATION ON TASTE or TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD

I grew up as a dinner table outcast. This was due to my siblings, who insisted that my strange and “icky” tasting mechanism was no doubt ordered specifically by my parents before my birth. This, they explained, was the reason I loved the taste of liver and onions and other such gag-inducing foods and, therefore, this substandard-taster-of-mine made it possible that my parents wouldn’t have to waste the “good stuff” on me.

The “good stuff,” i.e., steaks and chocolate cake, for instance, could instead be served to my better-loved brothers and sister (or so they said). It also explained why the chicken gizzard was always left for me, as was the wing. Spinach was ambrosia to me, and so was broccoli—my grateful siblings passed theirs beneath the table with love in their little steak-fed eyes.

When slaw was prepared in the house, the heart of the cabbage was left for me while the rest of the brood settled down to bowls of shredded slaw dripping with mayo and whatever—I contentedly gnawed away on the crunchy heart. It seemed only the family dog envied me, and then only occasionally.

That kind of upbringing caused me many times to wonder about this “tasting” thing. Was I, perhaps, taste deformed? Was I born with a crippled tongue with dysfunctional taste buds? Was I truly a taste-paraplegic? Had fate played a cruel prank on me by giving me the mouth of a buzzard? Why, I wondered, was I so tastefully different?

All these things I mused over while many times munching on a raw **turnip**.

As I grew older, I found that I was not completely alone in my weird-tasting world—there were a few other taste-impaired people scattered about. I also had a great experience that helped my confidence in my taste buds. When I was in high school, I was a member of the F.F.A. (Future Farmers of America-for, all you city dudes).

I was a member of the Milk Judging Team in our local chapter since I lived on a dairy farm; they thought I should fit in. Milk judging was done by swishing a small amount of milk in one's mouth - spitting it out, and then scoring it and placing it in several categories—from rancid to fresh according to taste.

Well, at the Texas State competition, I somehow ranked as the highest scorer among them all! I brought my certificate and blue-ribbon home and proudly shoved it into the faces of my clan—to which they replied, “We knew you could do well judging bad milk.” Even the dog looked away.

Well, I have finally come to realize that among the human race, there is a very wide spectrum of taste-ability. I have also come to be at peace with those that shriek, “How can you eat that?” And among those that look at me pathetically when I announce, “No, thanks, I don't like chocolate.” But I have also watched others closely at certain tables of life and witnessed the variance among taste buds. Truly, one man's tartar is another man's torture. Tastes seem to be as varied as noses.

I once was served some mullet (which is a fish and a Florida Panhandle specialty) – it was the worst thing I ever placed in my mouth! (And that's saying a lot, coming from me.) I spit it out. Thereafter, anyone that ever offered me mullet got a sneer and a “NO! Thank you.”

But long afterward, an individual listened to my description of the taste of my first and final mullet and said, “You didn't get the right kind—it wasn't done right.” He explained how mullet must first be fresh and second it must have the blood stripe cut out. So, I ventured with him to a mullet house, and he ordered me some “rightly prepared” mullet. As I waveringly raised the fork to my mouth loaded with mullet, I scanned the restaurant for the men's room out of the corner of my eye. In it went. ...Hey! Mullet is GOOD!

Some people have had the misfortune of not “Learning Christ” correctly and, as a result, have a wrong conception of Truth.

There are tastes that seem to be inherent in people, and then there are “acquired tastes.” There are tastes that are mental—something in the mind that prevents acceptance—like how raw oysters affect some people.

There are likes and dislikes that are formulated without ever having experienced the food—for some; it would not matter if caviar went to 5 cents a spoonful, “I ain’t puttin’ no stinkin’ raw fish eggs in this here mouth!” Not to mention the true “hot dog” of the Philippines or the chick-in-the-shell sold on their street corners. Indeed, the mind has MUCH to do with what we like and dislike. We can mentally acquire likes and dislikes without having ever experienced an actual taste.

I therefore wonder if there is a connection in how people formulate preconceived “tastes” in regard to the things of God? Psalms 34:8 says, “O taste and see that the LORD is good.” That verse seems to tell me that there are a LOT of preconceived ideas about God, His Church, and all things related that can only be changed by a personal “tasting.”

The people returned to the woman at the well to inform her that they first went to see Jesus because of what she said, but now they had seen and heard Him for themselves. I am certain a lot of preconceived “tastes” were changed by their personal experience with Jesus.

Perhaps we need to introduce a few folks who appear to have preconceived erroneous ideas about God to a personal encounter with Him—Acts 2:38, the Apostolic Faith that satisfies! “Taste and see that the LORD is Good!”

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