

What Do You Savour?

(Mark 8:27-38)

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1/13/08

Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I. Introduction ó

- A. Title taken from verse 33 of our text where Christ rebuked Peter and the disciples saying, (read vs. 33).
- B. This word òsavourestö means: to be (mentally) & earnestly disposed towards; to interest oneself in ô set the affection on, to be mindful of, to think on. The literal reading of this verse would be òthy thoughts are not of the things <that be> of God, but the things <that be> of men.ö Notice that he is not accusing them of not thinking of God ó but concerning the things that òbe of God.ö (Read vs. 33 again.)
- C. For you and me to consider the question inherent in today's title, òWhat do you Savour?ö - the things of that be of God or the things that be of man, let's look carefully at the context in which this rebuke is given. Here, we can glean much from the context, both before & after this rebuke delivered by our Lord. So first let's look at the context preceding vs. 33:

II. Preceding Context: (Read Mark 8: 27-33)

A. Perceptions of others:

- 1. 1st note in vs. 28, we see that those cited here all spoke highly and honorably of Jesus, having perceived by his doctrine and miracles that he was extraordinary, for they mistook him to be men who were of great reputation (John the Baptist ó who was considered a superior prophet, Elias who wrought miracles & who they expected to return to usher in the Messiah, & none thought him to be any less than one of the prophets).
- 2. Note ó all of these perceptions would require them to view him as one raised from the dead (Ref. Mt 14:2) ó He not appearing to be the temporal prince that they envisioned the Messiah would be.

B. Vs. 29 ó But Peter & the disciples knew differently ó it had been revealed to them that He was indeed the Messiah so long ago promised and prophesied of by the prophets. He wasn't the forerunner or a prelude to the Messiah, but they knew Him to be the Messiah Himself.

- 1. Note the interesting omission of Mark's record in the same discourse as recorded in the book of Matthew, chap 16 (Be turning there). Both passages are inspired by God and I believe their differences are to draw our minds to a different emphasis on what is taking place. In Matthew, we have additional dialogue with Peter and the disciples where Christ points out that man's revelation of God & His Son as He truly is does not come naturally, but rather is a revelation from God Himself.

2. Read Matthew 16:16-17. Here Christ makes mention of the revelation given to him and the other disciples by God ó a product of God's eternal design to bless them in Christ. They rightly understood Him to be the promised Messiah, the Christ ó God Himself, manifested in the flesh ó the Son of God. And He proceeds to tell Peter (meaning little rock) that upon the truth of this God-man, the rock ó the Christ, He would build His church that nothing (Satan included) could prevail against. (Now turn back to Mark 8 ó holding your place in Mt 16).

C. Vs. 30 ó 32a:

1. He taught them that He must:

(a) Suffer many things

(b) Be rejected by the Sanhedrin ó the religious authorities of that day

(c) Be killed ó not simply die

(d) And rise again after 3 days

2. Vs. 32 ó It says He spake õopenlyõ ó meaning boldly & in plain words

3. Vs. 31 ó Note He õbeganõ to teach them. Consider how shocking it must be unto them.

They too imagined the Messiah would, as a prince, establish a temporal kingdom on earth wherein they would be blessed.

III. The Rebuke by Peter ó Read vs. 32

A. Look in Mt 16:22 for additional insight on Peter's rebuke. As recorded in Matthew's account, this same Peter, who had just heard that He would be given the keys of the kingdom (vs. 19) ó (properly understood to be the gospel setting forth the terms of how salvation's requirements were fully met by Christ alone, based upon what He would accomplish) ó and he (Peter) given the ability to declare it unto others. Yet it is reasonable that Peter might have understood Christ to be referring to some high post in the temporal, earthly kingdom He imagined the Christ, the Messiah, had come to establish.

B. How disheartening this apparently must have been to him ó to discover things truly aren't as he had imagined. And this is precisely the experience of all sinners when God begins to reveal Himself.

C. So we read in Mt. 16:22 (read)í Peter indicating that this is not fitting to Christ (as He understood Him to be at that moment) ó this shall not be done for He imagined it to be unworthy of Him.

IV. The Rebuke by Our Lord

A. This brings us to the rebuke by Christ of Peter and the other disciples prompting the question I've posed to you in today's title, õWhat do you savor?õ (Read vs. 33).

B. Consider this one He calls blessed, to whom He says will be given the keys to the kingdom of heaven, that here He calls him Satan. This serious rebuke is delivered here because Peter, in his natural ignorance, denies the truth of Christ's stated purpose as Peter, like all of us as sinners born in darkness, find within us a natural ally with Satan ó particularly as we õsavorõ (or as we are mindfully predisposed to) that way of salvation which seems right to us, but which the scripture says leads to death (Prov. 16:25).

- C. Our Lord is saying that this is an offense to me ó that nothing is more offensive than to deny me by denying by work ó prompting Him to say òGet behind thee Satan.ö
- D. Note that he accuses them of not savoring ó not being disposed towards, mindful of, òthe things that be of Godö ó i.e. those things He had just cited concerning His work, but rather disposed towards the things that be of men.. That's what it is to deny salvation by grace, i.e. ó salvation conditioned on Christ and Him alone.
- E. It's important to note that we're talking here about men who are eternally blessed by God ó those for whom Christ knew He would bear their sins on the cross of Calvary. We know that God had begun to reveal things of Himself & that it indeed was of God.

I know that the scriptures teach that the natural man (apart from God-given faith in the new birth) cannot discern the things of God and that these men did. For after the resurrection, we know Christ more fully revealed Himself to the disciples as He opened their eyes to see how the Old Testament scriptures spoke of Him and the necessity of His suffering and resurrection (Luke 24).

I'm not here to argue the precise moment of their spiritual rebirth for I know it must precede their grasping the truth of God's gospel -- & how salvation is conditioned on Christ alone, based upon His very death.

But it is important that we realize that until men do manifest a knowledge and a love for the truth of the Gospel ó of how God saves sinners by Christ alone meeting all the conditions for their salvation through His substitutionary death on the cross, based upon that righteousness alone ó there is no warrant to consider themselves among the inhabitants of this kingdom ó there being no affirming evidence of life.

You need to look no further than the 1st 4 verses of Romans 10 to see plainly that as long as one remains ignorant of or not submitted to the righteousness of God in Christ, (as established in His death & proven to be effective by His very resurrection), -- while ignorant of that, the evidence of spiritual life has not yet manifested itself if indeed it is present.

But the blessed of God (just like the disciples) must and will progress beyond a mere (even accurate) understanding of Christ as the Messiah, the Son of God Himself so as to also comprehend His words (the Gospel) that pertain to His very works. To remain ignorant of what He accomplished would be to persist under the indictment brought upon the disciples by our Lord here when He says they òí savour not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.ö

V. Context subsequent to vs. 33: Read Mark 8: 34-38.

- A. Vs. 34: "Deny Himself" be willing to suffer with Him, but also deny the things that be of God derived by or through men (ala vs. 33). See the necessity of the cross for the perfect righteousness we must have!
- B. Vs. 35: He who would save His life will lose it & vice versa for my sake and the gospel. Again God cannot separate Him from His work.
- C. Vs 36: What shall it profit a man?
 1. Gain a temporal position in this life or the esteem of religious mainstream, but also
 2. Imagines that he gains it that what we do by default in ignorance of the gospel of grace of salvation conditioned on Christ alone, by His righteousness alone.
- D. Vs. 37: What can you give in exchange? you cannot redeem yourself.
- E. Vs 38: Ashamed of me and my words: Christ's Person and His doctrine are inseparable. Here we see the seriousness of remaining in this position that I pray even today God will deliver His people by revealing Himself under the Gospel. And the good news is that they who hear this very message with God-given ears shall (see Mk 9:1) that Some shall not taste death until they see with God-given eyes the kingdom He established at the cross of Calvary and the necessity and certainty of their redemption there.

VI. Summary:

How is this relevant today? Consider what most in Christ's day said of Him as we read in our text today that He indeed was extraordinary as perhaps one of the prophets and so extraordinary as to be one who had conquered death by being raised from the dead.

Or perhaps through God's word or the teaching of others your understanding would mirror that of the disciples at this time that is like much of so-called Christendom, you believe that He indeed was and is the Messiah that the God-man.

And it's likely, that in 20-20 hindsight you now know and believe to be true what the disciples struggled with at that time that He actually did suffer, die, and rise again.

But my friend, it is imperative that you too understand the necessity of that death and how there that in His accomplishment, He established the kingdom for a people.

Christ in verse 31, said he "must" suffer, must be rejected, must be killed, and must rise again. Now as you consider whether or not you "savor" the things that be of God or "the things of be of men," it is helpful to ask whether or not your understanding of these things that He said He must do are truly of necessity given your sense of how God saves sinners. (Cite past personal sense).

You see, to savor the things that be of God is to savor, rely upon, have a vested interest in that which is of Him that which He alone accomplished in His son with no contribution from you the sinner.

To savor the things that be of man is to imagine that something done by, in, or through us, makes the real difference, all the while imagining that we honor Him as extraordinary, even as God in the flesh, yet imagining that our blessedness is ultimately based upon our meeting a condition versus relying solely upon that which He finished in His death.

A. Many who devote much of their time and energy in following Christ as they understand Him to be, (in ignorance akin to that of the disciples at this moment of time), likewise cry out in rebuke with Peter at the very words of Christ, saying that can't be so. When they hear clear declarations of the Gospel and the sovereign God saying, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will harden whom I will" (Rom 9), or I

Christ saying, "I pray for them (referring to those whom the Father gave Him) and I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me" (John 17), or that those "whom He did predestinate, them he also called (or named); and whom he called, them he also justified, etc." (Romans 8) When they hear that a Sovereign God has chosen a people unto salvation in the doing and dying of Christ and that He truly finished the job at the cross so as to insure the revelation of Himself in time to them, and to them alone, -- they like Peter cry out "Be it far from thee Lord, this shall not be, that would be unfair, this isn't the risen Christ I worship."

Well if you identify with that, consider prayerfully that, like Peter, this is to deny His own words and as vs. 38 of our text points out, "Whoever therefore shall be ashamed of Him and of His words of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed."

To savor the things that be of God is to fall down in abject spiritual poverty in need of unadulterated mercy, based solely upon the finished work of Christ in perfect satisfaction to our God and Father.

B. Just as God ultimately revealed Himself more fully unto the disciples, likewise, all of the blessed of God ultimately are brought to behold Him in His glory in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and find their confidence there, and there alone.

And so I pray it shall be for you. Seek salvation His way. When it comes to your salvation, be disposed exclusively towards that which He alone accomplished so that with the Apostle Paul, you too can say from the heart, "God forbid that I should glory save (i.e. in anything but) in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is what it is to savor the things that be of God. What do you savor?

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself -- the Bible.