



Hillside Monthly Dispatch

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

Volume 23 No. 2

Modeling the Truth of God's Word

February 2024

Do Not Live on Bread Alone

From the Pastor's Desk

Is God's Word Sweet to Your Soul?

Ezekiel 2:8-3:3

Have you ever eaten anything that was unexpectedly sweet or pleasing to your taste buds? I know for me the less sugar I eat in my diet the sweeter things tend to be when I am not expecting them to be so. I am not a person who indulges too much in the sweets department, never really have.

My bane is the second and third helpings of savory food that just taste too good to pass up while I am sitting there. I realize that often when eating the only muscle getting a workout is the tummy muscle. However, when I do finally give in and enjoy something sweet I intentionally choose things that are not overtly sweet.

When I was at Aldi's a few months ago I had purchased a box of wafers that were dipped in chocolate at the end of each piece, so the entire rolled wafer wasn't completely doused in the chocolate, but gave just a little bit. That night when I decided it was a good time to have them I bit into a wafer roll and was pleasantly surprised at how sweet and delicious it was. The wafer was a nice flavor of vanilla while the chocolate, being an unfamiliar chocolate to me, was quite tasty.

Others who had some of my wafers agreed that they were indeed unusually sweet. The thing is that the chart on the back of the box indicated that each wafer had in fact very little sugar in them. So what did I do? I decided to eat a few extra because they were that good. Looking back I realize that the wafer may have been a bit sweeter to me because I maintain a low sugar diet. I try my best to minimize processed sugars, so when I do have something, it is very sweet and very good to me.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

Feb. 4, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper

Feb. 14 – Valentine's Day

Feb. 19 – Presidents' Day

Weekly:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School

Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service

Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. – Weekly Bible Study

Starting March 6

That brings me to today's passage in Ezekiel. This past week in my daily Bible study I decided to start in this wonderful book of a prophet who was sent to the exiles in Babylon after the first deportation from Jerusalem. The people of the kingdom of Judah had become decadent and idolatrous over the course of several generations. Their sin was so great that God evicted them from His land as a form of punishment.

After the first deportation many Israelites were hauled off to Babylon and that is where we find Ezekiel at the beginning of his book. After God shows Ezekiel an awesome vision He then commissioned the prophet to be His mouthpiece to the people of the kingdom of Judah, those in exile as well as those who remained in the land until the third deportation. In the commissioning of this prophet, God tells Ezekiel to take a scroll being handed to him and read it, then eat it, to which Ezekiel was obedient.

See *Pastor's Desk* on p. 2

In This Issue: Pastor's Message | Upcoming Events | Property & Space Patrol | Presidential Birthdays | Nine Critiques | Birthdays & Anniversaries

On the web at <http://www.hillside-sbc.org>

Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

What was written on this scroll? It had a message of “lamentations, mourning, and woe” to the stubborn Israelites written on the front and back of it. God told Ezekiel that when he ate of the scroll that it would feed his stomach and fill his body. After reading it Ezekiel ate the scroll and said of it that it was “sweet as honey in my mouth.”

Yet when he completed the task of eating it God then said to him that he was being sent to the Israelites with His word and they would not listen to it. Why? Because they were a disobedient people who had left God and worshipped other things, and because they were so defiled by their sinfulness they would not listen.

What I find interesting about this passage is two things. First, Ezekiel was a man chosen of God because he had not defiled himself with false worship or idolatry. Since he remained faithful God called him to a work that would glorify Him in spite of His people rejecting Him, thus Ezekiel was positioned to be used of God and benefited from a closer relationship with God because of it.

Secondly, since Ezekiel was not tainted by idolatry when he received the word of God, even though it was a message of “lamentation, mourning, and woe,” he received it with and found it satisfying. Why could he respond this way? Because he was right with God! When a person remains unstained by the world, he or she finds God's word sweet and pleasing to spiritually ingest. When a person remains sanctified in the word of God even messages that are unpleasant towards the wayward, the fallen, the wicked are pleasing to our souls.

We celebrate God's word for it is just, righteous, holy, and saving. It is just because it points out the eternal punishment our sins deserve. It is righteous because it moves us away from our sin and towards Him. It is holy because it points us to the truth of who He is and what we are, fallen. It is saving because of the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord who saves us.

Ezekiel was a watchman for his time, meaning he was commissioned by God to declare a message no matter the response. If he failed to deliver the message, though people would rightly perish in their sins, Ezekiel would be held accountable for

their blood if he refused to proclaim the messages God gave him to His people.

We who are in Christ are watchmen as well. We have the message of the good news of Christ and it is our blessed duty to share our faith with everyone, for it is a message of salvation to all who will receive. To us God's word feeds our stomachs and fills our bodies with His grace and mercy and love, thus we find it sweet as honey to our souls. I have to ask, when you read God's word, even the hard parts; do you find God's word sweet to your soul?

For we who celebrate Him, love Him, adore Him, and truly worship Him find His word as nourishment to our very beings, nourishment that lasts for eternity. For God's word tells us that man does not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Such words are indeed sweet to our souls.

Blessings,
✠ Pastor Jim

Property and Space Patrol

The driveway and parking lots were plowed after each storm this past month.

- Replaced a faucet on a parsonage sink.
- Got new trash barrels for the parsonage.
- Entered into a contract with NH Timber Harvesting LLC to log the 18.8 acres behind the parsonage.
- The church sanctuary was cleaned once this past month.

Thanks you to all of you for your many donations of paper products and hand soap.

✠ Pastor Jim

Presidential Birthdays

Four U. S. presidents have February birthdays: **Ronald Reagan** (Feb. 6, 1911), **William Henry Harrison** (Feb. 9, 1773), **Abraham Lincoln** (Feb. 12, 1809), and **George Washington**, our first President (February 22, 1732).

To make these historic dates less meaningful, the federal government created a federal holiday on the third Monday in February, called Presidents' Day. This is another sad excuse to give government and bank employees another day off to go shopping.

Nine Helpful Critiques for Pastors

A not so serious set of criticisms from Focus on the Family

Above all else, what pastors need these days is more criticism! Providing pastors with a constant stream of tips and suggestions is the key to building up the church and nourishing the pastoral soul. Here are nine excellent examples of helpful critiques to offer to your pastor today:

1. "I wasn't really feeling the worship this morning." It's helpful to clue in the pastor that his choice of hymns prevented you from praising the Lord of all creation.
2. "You should cut the altar call thing, it's getting repetitive." More variety, less asking people to accept Christ's grace and Lordship.
3. "You don't have as many programs as that big church across town. You should do more programs. I won't volunteer, of course." Once the pastor finds people to help him, it'll be great.
4. "The communion juice has to be Welch's, not some generic knock-off." Get it together, pastor.
5. "I would really appreciate it if you stopped calling out my sin, thanks." Gently remind your pastor that he should be a constant source of positivity, like that pastor Joel guy with the shiny teeth.
6. "Here are 38 suggested amendments I have written for the church constitution and bylaws." Your pastor will appreciate you doing his work.
7. "I just... don't feel like I'm, ya know, being fed lately." Remind your pastor that he is at all times solely responsible for meeting the varying spiritual needs of all the people in his congregation.
8. "Can you pray a little shorter? I'm bored." Alerting the pastor to your boredom will encourage him to limit time spent sitting and focusing on God.
9. "Your sermons could use more cowbell." Your congregation has a fever, pastor, and the only prescription is more cowbell. Also, Jesus. Your pastor will love hearing your opinion on what may seem like the most insignificant details of your church experience, so don't hold back. After all, you're the one he's here to serve.

--submitted by Tom Cairns

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to anyone who is celebrating another orbit around the Sun. Let the Editor know about it.



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on the following people who celebrate a wedding anniversary this month:

2/15 Michael & Gail Frascinella

Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It is our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillside-sbc.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is Feb. 25. Send news items to News Wrangler and Editor, Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella at comcast dot net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the Baptist Churches of New England, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.



Hillside Baptist Church
547 Pembroke St.
Pembroke, NH 03275

Modeling the truth of God's Word

