THE WORD OF GOD – OUR BASELINE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

Part 5: The word of God is as sweet as honey

Pastor Maselo Mosomane

"*Moreover He said to me, Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. And He said to me, Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you. So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness."* Ezekiel 3:1-2

At the beginning of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry God ordered him to eat the scroll. According to Nelson's New Illustrated Dictionary a scroll is a roll of papyrus, leather, or parchment on which an ancient document – particularly a text of the bible – was written. Rolled up on a stick, a scroll was usually about eleven meters long.

God ordered Ezekiel to eat the scroll. This prophetic act was symbolic to reading and studying the word and put it into one's heart. We read in the above text that Ezekiel ate the scroll and filled his stomach. He says the scroll was in his mouth like honey in sweetness. The word of God has taste – it is sweet.

How did it happen because the scroll is made out of tasteless material? Dry grass and old animal skins provides no taste for one to say "so I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness." I think we all know that it is not what we eat that gives taste but what we extract out of what we eat. For instance; if you can chew a piece of meat and extract all the juices out of it you end up with a tasteless piece of fiber. What are we saying? We are saying it is not the material object we hold in our hand that is sweet as honey; it is the word of God written on that tasteless material that the prophet says "and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness."

The word of God has taste – it is sweet. Many people would question this statement and to them I say the taste of the pudding is in the eating. You see, nothing works when you don't use it. You can sit for ten days near a loaf of bread my friend and it will never jump into your mouth no matter how loud you cry for food. Food works when you eat it. The same applies to the word of God.

Some say; well Pastor, I have been in church for the rest of my life. In fact I was born there. I've been sitting there listening to the preacher all the time and I still don't feel the taste. What do you mean you don't feel the taste? Are you sitting there or are you feeding there? I have seen many people getting into a restaurant just to wait for a friend. They sit there and they don't place any order. They just sit there and wait for a friend and go as soon as he arrives. Do you expect such a person to feel anything in the restaurant? Friend, maybe you don't feel anything because you don't eat anything.

Let us say for argument's sake you placed an order but the food is just not up to standard. It is possible that the food may not be as good as you expected. What do you do when you eat at a restaurant and the food is always not good? Maybe it's time to change the restaurant my friend. Don't kick the dust; don't cause any commotion; just leave. There are other restaurants out there to meet your expectation.

Listen to what the prophet says; "*So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.*" Where is it sweet? In the mouth! Taste is detected in the mouth. Taste buds are in the mouth. Not in the stomach, not in the head, not in the legs, but in the mouth. Unless food is in the mouth no taste will be felt. Food is not tasteful elsewhere but in the mouth.

The right time to enjoy food is when you chew. This is the best time to enjoy your meal. I've seen it with myself. Sometimes I find myself faced up with my eyes closed as I chew the stuff. I like it. Chewing is the best time to enjoy your meal. I think that's why you cannot let someone chew and give you to swallow; you want to do it yourself.

Many times we say there is no taste in the word simply because we never chew for ourselves. Someone is always chewing for us. If you never just take time to study the word yourself you will always end up with fiber to swallow. As a teacher of the word I know what I am talking about. It's hard to teach people who haven't been studying the word for themselves. It feels like the word is bouncing back to you.

I encourage you to take the word and study for yourself. What the preacher preaches must stir what is already inside your heart. Have you ever seen two people talking about a match they both watched? Oh my! It's fireworks I can tell you. I mean they are talking about the same thing they witnessed and it is good conversation.

Spend time in the word and you will tell us a different story the next time we raise the subject. At the beginning of his walk with God Ezekiel was ordered to eat the scroll and fill his stomach. You don't walk with God with an empty stomach. Eat and fill your stomach so you can be ready to walk with God. The children of Israel had to eat the Passover first before they could start out with their journey across the cruel desert. Eat or you will faint on the way.

For us Christians, studying the word of God is not something to be tolerated; it is something we love to do because of its taste. It is like a warm meal served to us on a winter night. It is not a duty to be performed - we love what we are doing. None of us thought it was going to be so sweet when we started. But now the taste keeps on inviting us to feed more and more. The word of God is as sweet as honey.