

# The Kind of Good You Can Taste

## Psalm 34

*The Psalms (no. 15 in the series)*

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*Video and audio versions available online:*

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/the-kind-of-good-you-can-taste/>

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*This document was prepared by Michael Hanna using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Michael know. Thank you!*

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## Prayer

So Lord God, I thank you that I'm your child. I'm a child of God, I'm not even a young adult of God. Or a professor of God. Or a Master of Divinity ordained Reverend of God. I'm a child of God. Father, that's really good news when I finally come to believe it. The way there, however, is rather painful at times. But I thank you that it's true. And so, Lord God would you speak through us, your children, this morning, through the message. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Message

Over the years I've received constructive criticism regarding the sermons. And a recurring theme is that people would like sermons that are practical, that help us know what is good, and so, help us make good choices...

And that's why I want to talk with you about Kale.

In just 100 grams of Kale you will find:

- 120 milligrams of vitamin C.
- 9,990 IU's (international units) of vitamin A.
- And 92 milligrams of phosphorous.

Vitamin C protects you from catching cold, Vitamin A keeps you from going blind, and phosphorous is essential to every molecule of DNA in every cell in your body—and without it your bones will crumble. So, unless you want all your bones to break, and your cells to turn into Jelly, while you crawl through your house blind, suffering from the common cold...*you should eat Kale!*

Kale is good... and now you know. So, you can choose kale and feel good about yourself. Next time you see the gals at the gym, in their skin-tight yoga pants, you can say, "Hey I just ate 200 milligrams of Kale."

Kale is good...

Deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza... is also good.

Along about 1977 I went backpacking with my friend Ken Baily. We hiked about seven miles with heavy packs, then left our packs at Upper Cataract Lake in the Gore Range and climbed another couple thousand feet to Dora Lake, came back to camp and said, "Hey let's drive to Vail and sneak into a hotel swimming pool and take a hot tub."

So, we loaded up and took off down the trail, cutting through the woods at switchbacks to save time—which we didn't save, because we ended up on the wrong trail. Lost. But, by the time we realized it was the wrong trail, it seemed too far to turn back and we thought we could make it out of the Cataract Creek Drainage on the North side, just as we had come in on the south side...

And we finally did, but I think we almost died. We got hypothermia. My friend Ken would lie down and he wouldn't get up. I was shaking uncontrollably and couldn't stop. Even when we finally made it back to the car and ran the heater, I couldn't stop shaking. I was exhausted and my body was starving.

We drove a half hour to Frisco, still shaking. Pizza Hut was open late. We stumbled in and ordered a large deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza.

And that pizza was *G-o-o-d*... I don't think there are even words to describe it. I think it was the best thing I've ever tasted. Just writing the sermon the other day, thinking about that pizza, I notice that I was salivating like our dog Inga.



Figure 1 Inga the dog (photo credit: Peter Hiett)

It was Good.

Kale is Good and deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza is Good, but it's a different kind of Good.

King David says God is Good... or sings God is Good.

**Psalm 34**

**Of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away.**

That indicates that David wrote this Psalm just after a really crazy incident recorded in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 20 and 21.

As a young war hero, David finds out that King Saul is trying to kill him, and so he flees Israel, but stops at the Sanctuary in Nob, where he eats the bread of the presence, which he obtains from a priest named *Ahimelech*.

He then flees into Philistine territory where the Philistines recognize him as an Israelite war hero and brings him to their King Achish [aw-keesh]. In fear for his life, David starts salivating like our dog Inga—he drools all over his beard and acts insane. King Achish buys the act, and lets him go.

It's all a bit confused in Psalm 34, because David seems to refer to Achish as Abimelech, which was a title for Philistine kings, but it's also close to Ahimelech who gave David the Bread of the Presence just before he started salivating like Inga salivates when I grill hamburgers.

It's all a bit confusing... but it's a song. It's like David sees something and sings about the something, although he can't fully describe the something. And that's kinda cool, because I think we see the same something...and even have a little more information about what, or who, it is we're seeing.

It's a little like 4<sup>th</sup> grade... Remember? You'd listen to the radio, and pick up on the fact that they're singing about something, but you're not sure what it is... but *it* is, cause they're all singing about it... you just haven't developed a taste for it quite yet...

Well anyway Psalm 34:1

- 1 **I will bless the Lord at all times;  
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.**
- 2 **My soul makes its boast in the Lord;**

[usually our soul boasts in itself doesn't it?]

- 2 **My soul makes its boast in the Lord;  
let the humble hear and be glad.**
- 3 **Oh, magnify the Lord with me,  
and let us exalt his name together!**
- 4 **I sought the Lord, and he answered me  
and delivered me from all my fears.**
- 5 **Those who look to him are radiant,  
and their faces shall never be ashamed.**
- 6 **This poor man cried, and the Lord [*Yahweh*] heard him  
and saved him out of all his troubles.**
- 7 **The angel of the Lord [*Yahweh*] encamps  
around those who fear him, and delivers them.**

In verse 4 David wrote that Yahweh delivers him from all his fears... so v.7 means "The angel of Yahweh encamps around those who fear him and delivers them from their fear of Yahweh and the Angel of Yahweh."

(The "angel of Yahweh" is this weird God-man that appears throughout the OT)

- 8 **Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good [*towb*]!  
Blessed is the man [*geber*: "young warrior"] who takes refuge in him!**

**8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord [Yahweh] is good!**

*That* is an utterly bizarre, and seemingly rather *demented*, sort of thing to say: “Taste and see that ‘Yahweh,’”—the uncreated-creator, the ground of all being, the ineffable light from behind the curtain resting on top of the ark of the covenant... “Taste and see that He’s Good?!”

To this day most Jews won’t say His name. And David writes, “Take a bite of Yahweh!” Most all of us think, “Well that’s just a metaphor... A metaphor for obedience to some knowledge of things that are good for you... but not actually g-o-o-d.”

In other words, God is good like Kale... He’s good for you. God tells you what would be good for you, you take that knowledge, apply that knowledge and make yourself good like God. You can even tell your church friends: “Hey I’ve been saying my prayers and tithing to the church and I just got a promotion at work. God is Good.”

In other words: God is good like Kale—he’s good for making you good.

You eat Kale, your blood pressure goes down, and you say to your friends, “You’re right! Kale is good. It’s working...Tastes like lawn clippings, but it’s working. It’s good.... Kale is good.”

But I’ve never ever heard anyone say, “Friends, Lovers, listen to me well... Drink deeply, taste and see: Kale is g-o-o-d.”

Likewise, I’ve never ever seen anyone take a big bite of fresh deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza and say, “This pizza isn’t working... I’m not sure there’s any phosphorous in this entire pizza. This pizza is not good. In fact, I think there might not even be such a thing as pizza.”

Recently, a wonderful friend confided in me, saying “Peter I’m worried that all of this—all these years of serving Jesus has been a waste—it’s not working.”

And I know what he meant, because I often think the very same thing: “Jesus, where are you? Why all these afflictions? At one time you made my life work and now it’s not working... now you seem to be good for nothing.”

The next day I heard that another friend said he no longer believed in God because he had suffered years of depression and now had lost his job. It’s not working.

Then I visited my Mom in her new nursing home. She can’t walk. She spends most of the day staring at the wall. I think she’s getting ready to die and I think, “God are you good? Sometimes you don’t seem to be working.”

You see? I must think that God is good like kale—he’s good for making my life work; *he’s good for something...*

But according to David, he’s good like deep dish Italian sausage pan pizza. Who cares if the pizza is good for something? It’s just Good. It tastes good.

God is Good that you can taste. He is Beauty that you can see.

That’s not good for something, it’s good for nothing. Beauty is good for nothing, just good.

*Towb* can be translated as “good” or “beautiful.” “Beauty” is good... for nothing. Beauty is good for nothing, just good.

No one looks at a sunset and says, “It’s not working; It’s not good.”

Only the most depraved look at the Grand Canyon and say, “It’s not working. We need to dam it. We need to make hydro-electric power out of it... so we can use it to make our lives good... it’s not working.”

It’s a bit strange that I would think God isn’t working, especially when Jesus said stuff like, “Pick up your cross and come follow.” How is that not working?

Religion, especially religious TV tells me that, God is good cause he makes me rich, he does miracles—he works. I listen, and get really depressed at times cause I think, “God’s not good cause God’s not working,” but then I read my Bible and think “Wait, maybe God is more than good for something—he’s good for nothing, just good. He’s beautiful, and working when he doesn’t seem to be working at all.”

You know the Jews were in bondage 400 years before they were liberated by a miracle, only to wander 40 more yrs. in the wilderness and die. David’s life was filled with affliction, suffering and sorrow, just as the Psalms attest.

In v. 6 he writes “This poor man cried and God heard him and saved him out of all of his troubles.” “This poor man.” That’s one man, yet David knew, and we all know, plenty of poor men that have cried and haven’t yet been saved from all their troubles.

So, God is good for something, but not like Kale, not like a magic pill or medicine. God is good for something, but better than being good for something, God is good for nothing—just good... like deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza.

If you need God to be good for something, you probably don’t see that he’s just good, he’s beautiful.... In other words, if you need some reason to love him, maybe you don’t love... Him

If kale wasn’t good for something, I sure wouldn’t eat it. If God wasn’t good for something; if he were just a baby in a manger, or a poor man nailed naked to a tree, would you love him? Would you call him God?

Well God is like deep-dish Italian sausage pizza when you’re starving. So, David writes, “taste and see that the Lord is good, the Lord is beautiful.” He is the Beauty in every sunset. He is the Truth in every poem. He is the Rhythm in every song. He is the Light and the Life in every smile.

“Beauty is there,” writes David Bentley Hart. “Beauty is there, abroad in the order of things, given again and again in a way that defies description and denial with equal impertinence.”<sup>i</sup>

In other words, you really can’t define Beauty, and you really can’t deny Beauty because everyone recognizes Beauty—offended by it, and longing for it, all at once. “Taste that God is good; see that God is beauty,” writes David.

“God is *towb*.” It’s an utterly fascinating word in Scripture:

In Genesis One, God creates everything in Six Days or eons or epochs.<sup>ii</sup> At the end of each day, God sees that everything is *Towb*; everything is Good. And that's utterly fascinating for Jesus told us that none is good but God alone...<sup>iii</sup> So, if everything is Good on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, God is in everything that's anything.

And yet on the sixth day, before "*it is finished*," God says that something is not good, not *towb*. It is not good that Adam, humanity, is alone. Adam is alone in the presence of God, who is the Good.

The Lord then makes Adam male and female which is a picture of Him and us. And then he puts a tree in the middle of the Garden, and another tree in the middle of the garden. It's two trees that look like one, or one tree that works like two.

On the tree, or trees, is Life and the knowledge of good (*towb*) and evil (the not *towb*). God says, "You eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you do not eat, for in the day you eat of it dying you die."<sup>iv</sup>

Well we know that 'the Life' is Jesus and that God is the Good, and that the Good in human flesh is Jesus; He is the Life and the Good in flesh. So, the tree in the middle of the garden, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of *towb*, must've looked like this:

[image: Jesus on the cross from *The Passion of the Christ*.]

Do you die if you eat of this tree? Or do you live if you eat of this tree? ... Or both?

Is this tree evil? It certainly is the knowledge of evil—evil is taking the life of the Good. Is this tree evil... or Good? Well it's the knowledge of our own evil and it's the knowledge that God is Good—it's the very definition of Good, of *towb*... it's the very definition, and revelation, of Love.

How do you judge this tree? Someone once said, "We do not judge great art. It judges us." We don't judge Beauty, Beauty judges us.

David writes, "Taste and see that God is good; taste and see that God is beautiful." God *is* Goodness and God *is* Beauty. So, if God doesn't taste good to you, or look beautiful to you, maybe the problem is with your taster?

Video clip from *Pirates of the Caribbean*  
Walt Disney Pictures (2003)

*Undead pirate captain Hector Barbossa (Geoffrey Rush) delivers a gravelly, impassioned monologue to his captive, the lovely Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley).*

Barbossa: For too long, I've been parched of thirst and unable to quench it. Too long I've been starvin' to death and haven't died. I feel nothin'. Not the wind on my face nor the spray of the sea, nor the warmth of a woman's flesh.

*Swann recoils as Barbossa reaches a hand towards her impossibly perfect skin. When the hand enters a shaft of moonlight, the flesh melts away, leaving only bones. Barbossa himself then steps into the moonlight and his true form is revealed. He is a skeletal abomination. Shreds of decaying flesh still cling to his face and his eyeballs bulge menacingly from their sockets.*

Barbossa: You best start believin' in ghost stories, Miss Turner. You're in one!

If you remember the story, Captain Barbossa stole the treasure—he took the Good as his own private possession. And then, everything died. He could no longer taste the bread or enjoy the wine.

The Lord said “the day you eat of it dying you will die...” And Paul tells us that apart from Christ we are dead... all of us dead.

It was a snake in the garden that suggested that we take and eat, for with the fruit of the tree we could make ourselves in the image of God. In other words, the fruit on the tree is good like kale is good—good to make yourself good... good to create yourself, save yourself and redeem yourself.

Jesus broke bread, gave himself—the Life and the knowledge of the Good. “Take and eat,” he said.

Do you take it in order to make yourself good, or do you take because he is Good... like deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza?

Do you use him, but don't really like him... kinda like kale... or do you adore him and ingest him because he's good like deep dish Italian sausage pan pizza? (Now he may be good for you, but more than good for you, he's just good.)

Do you use him like a man might use a prostitute? Or do you adore him the way a bridegroom might adore his bride? (She may be good for her husband, but only if he first sees that she's just good)

“Taste and see that the Lord is Good” ... not simply good for something, just good. He is the Good; he is Beauty, Truth, and Life himself.

“Taste and see that the Lord is Good” ... How?

Well, maybe it has to do with allowing your world to be enchanted with Him, just as we preached two weeks ago.<sup>v</sup> Maybe it means gratitude.

Maybe it's the realization that he is the Life in every child, the Truth in every statement, the Beauty in every flower. So, children, words and flowers are not simply items to be used for your own purposes—they are all temples that contain the glory of God.<sup>vi</sup> They are all occasions for worship. Children are not to be used, Words are not to be twisted, even flowers should not be mowed until after you taste and say, “Wow Lord, good job with the dandelions.”

“Taste and see,” means enjoying the beauty that constantly surrounds you... and even thanking God for the moments that it appears to no longer surround you, for it's in those moments that God refines your taster.<sup>vii</sup>

In the darkness we long for light. In isolation we begin to long for communion. In death we learn to love the Life and hope for the resurrection. Surrounded by evil, we begin to long for the Good—not only because it's good for you, but because it tastes like deep dish Italian sausage pizza after you've spent the day lost in the woods, thinking you might die.

“Taste and see,” must mean worship God everywhere and every-when.<sup>viii</sup> And for David, and the Israelites, it meant something more, something very tangible.

When Israel thought they were lost forty years in the wilderness, God sent bread from heaven—if they took the bread and hoarded the bread it went bad. But if they thanked God for the bread, they always had just what they needed.

Jesus said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven” (John 6:11).

Many Jews believed that the temple was built on the ancient site of Eden. And we know the top of the ark behind the veil was certainly a picture of Eden. In front of the veil the priests would place the bread of the presence. That’s what David ate before he wrote, “Taste and see: the Lord is Good.”

In the temple the Israelites would sacrifice. Modern Americans don’t understand sacrifice. In ritual sacrifice a worshiper recognizes that life has been given. All food is life: plant life or animal life. Americans just kill life, consume life, and usually don’t say “thank you.”

But in Sacrifice, a worshiper acknowledges that the life which has been taken has also been given, or even fore-given by God. In Israel, they would often eat the sacrifices in the presence of the Lord, with the Lord, as an act of communion. “Taste and see that the Lord is Good.”

The premiere sacrifice, the first sacrifice commanded by God, was the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. No one could explain it, but all were commanded to taste it and see it, and trust that God is Good. And they all knew the weird command in Exodus 12. The bones of the Passover lamb must never be broken.

Jesus is our Passover lamb and on Passover he took the bread, saying “This is my body given to you. This is the covenant in my blood. Take and eat. Take and drink.” In the morning he was crucified on a tree in a garden. We took his life and he gave his life.

Particularly in the West for the last 400 years we’ve been preoccupied with understanding how it works. Our explanations of how the cross works, are called “theories of the atonement” and that’s what they are: *theories*.

See, the Lord never seemed interested in telling us exactly how his death and resurrection worked, or why it was good for us. Yet he seemed terribly concerned that we would taste and see that he is Good. Not just Good for something... but

- Good like deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza is good when your lost and starving
- Good like roasted lamb with bitter herbs and dark red wine and fresh-baked bread.
- “This is my body. This is my blood. Eat it.”
- “You can’t explain it. You can’t work it. You must eat it and know, I am Good.”

Taste and see... Why would we not taste and see?

Well maybe we’re afraid of losing control. Maybe we don’t know what the Good truly is? That was Adam’s problem. He was alone in the presence of the Good—alone for he had no knowledge of the Good—he didn’t know God is Good.

That’s was Adam’s problem; I think it’s our problem.

When my boys were little if you asked them “Hey Jon and Coleman, what’s good, what do you like, what do you want?”

They’d say, “Hot Wheels, Hot Wheels, Hot Wheels. Hot Wheels are good.”



You could get Hot Wheels for 97 cents apiece at the Safeway in Golden. And so, I used to just love gettin' the boys Hot Wheels. At the time, I was so wealthy that I could literally afford all of the Hot Wheels on isle three in the toy section at Safeway.

Honestly it was no problem... and yet sometimes when the boys would whine, "Daddy Daddy, I want a Hot Wheel," I wouldn't get them a Hot Wheel. If they cried and said "You don't love me, cause you're not getting me a Hot Wheel..." then I really wouldn't get them a Hot Wheel... for a long time.

And if you're a parent, you know why. I didn't want to be good for something like kale. I didn't want my boys to think of me like kale, but like deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza. I didn't want them to think that I was just good for Hot Wheels. I wanted them to taste and see that I was good... and the good in their Hot Wheels.

I knew that spoiled kids were miserable kids, for spoiled kids get what they want, and find that they no longer can want what they get. Spoiled kids crucify the giver for want of the gift and then everything dies. Spoiled kids are like little pirates for whom the wine loses its taste and every kiss becomes a threat, rather than a blessing. Spoiled kids don't know that it's the Love of the Giver in the gift that is the Good that makes the gift good. They can no longer taste and no longer see that the Good is Love.

And so, I would say "no," and I'd take them on a little journey through the desert—so one day they could taste and see me.

Understand? For them, I want to be good for nothing... just good. So even if I were a baby in a manger, or a naked man nailed to a tree, or a 90 year-old codger confined to a bed in a nursing home who couldn't afford one Hot Wheel, my boys would still come sit with me, in my presence, not because I was good for something, but just because I was good.

You see, that's the way I feel about them. They're good for nothing, just good—even when they're whining in the grocery store. Believe me, it was far easier to buy them a Hot Wheel, than to say "no," and suffer the pain. But I wouldn't "work for them" and ironically, that's when I really went to work for them and in them.

This is hard to explain, but there's something in me that actually wants to suffer for my kids and even die for them—and show them I would die for them—not because I should, but because I want to. It's not like kale; it's more like deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza.

- It's Love—And it's not just good for something, it's good for nothing, just good.
- It's Love—And it's not me; it's the Good in me; it's the will of God in me.
- It's Love—I can't boast in it; I can only be grateful for it.

People boast about eating kale, because nobody really likes kale. Nobody boasts about eating deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza, but if you boast about your love, you probably don't love Love; you've taken love, crucified love, and think love is your own decision. God is Love; Love can be terrifying, but taste and see: Love is Good and the Good is Love.

Well David continues his song. We don't have time to talk about all of it, but let's at least read it. Verse 8, "taste and see," and then:

**9 Oh, fear the Lord, you his saints,**

- for those who fear him have no lack!**  
10 **The young lions suffer want and hunger;**  
**but those who seek the Lord lack no good [thing].** “Thing” is supplied by the translator.
- 11 **Come, O children, listen to me;**  
**I will teach you the fear of the Lord.**  
12 **What man is there who desires life**  
**and loves many days, that he may see good?**  
13 **Keep your tongue from evil**  
**and your lips from speaking deceit.**  
14 **Turn away from evil and do good;**  
**seek peace and pursue it.**
- 15 **The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous [plural]**  
**and his ears toward their cry.**  
16 **The face of the Lord is against those who do evil,**  
**to cut off the memory of them from the earth.**  
17 **When [they]<sup>ix</sup> cry for help, the Lord hears**  
**and delivers them out of all their troubles [tsarah: affliction].**  
18 **The Lord is near to the brokenhearted**  
**and saves the crushed in spirit.**
- 19 **Many are the afflictions [ra: “evils” suffered] of the righteous [singular],**  
**but the Lord delivers him out of them all.**

So the Lord delivers this righteous one from all these troubles, through the many afflictions, the many evils that he suffers.

- 20 **He keeps all his bones;**  
**not one of them is broken.**  
21 **Evil (Affliction) will slay the wicked,**  
**and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.**

Affliction slays wickedness and delivers righteousness.

- 22 **The Lord redeems the life of his servants;**  
**none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.**

I think translators struggle with Psalm 34 because David sings about the troubles of all, but also the righteousness of One—the poor man who cries to the Lord; the righteous one, who seems to suffer the many afflictions of all.

Verse 20: “He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.”

David isn’t singing about himself. In Psalm 51 David sings that God has broken his bones. He’s not singing about himself and his own righteousness.

John the beloved tells us that David is singing about Jesus: John 19:34. He tells us that when they crucified Jesus on the tree in the garden, they didn’t break his legs, “that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”

Jesus is our Passover lamb, body broken and blood-shed. You see, he is the Good in us. He is Love in us. He is our righteousness.

*"...our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption,"* writes Paul.

"I am the resurrection and the life," said Jesus.<sup>x</sup> So, taste and see that he is Good... in you.

I spent Monday and Tuesday with my mom in a nursing home in New Mexico. Her husband is dead. Her children live in three different states. Her grandchildren live in three or four different countries. Her strength is gone. Her hearing is gone. Her mind is going. She sits and stares at a wall and do you know what she wants? She wants Love. She wants communion, she wants God... like a lost and hungry boy wants pizza.

It would be easy to think it's not working, but maybe it's all working just according to plan. Maybe we take this confusing journey through all these afflictions to develop an appetite for Love... free Love... Relentless Love—that is Amazing Grace. God is Good and the Good is Love and Love is Life. Eternal life. Hebrews 2:9: By the Grace of God Jesus "tastes death for everyone." He dies with us, that we would live life eternal with him.

Soon, mom may feel forsaken, and have to surrender all good things. And then the Good in her, Jesus in her, will speak with her, and through her saying, "Father, into your hands I surrender our spirit."

She'll breathe out and God will breathe her in. And in a moment in the twinkling of an eye absolutely everything will be...deep dish Italian sausage pan pizza. She will know the Good and Love the Good in freedom, everywhere and everywhen. Every Hot Wheel will be good. Even leafy greens like kale will taste good. All her all her sorrow will turn into joy, and her sins will become the ecstasy of God's grace. She will be constantly filled with God, and always desiring God like an endless, non-stop, all you can eat Pizza Hut buffet.

God isn't just good for everything... he's not just good for healthy living, and a just society, and avoiding alcoholism. God is good for nothing, just Good. And God is the good in everything and the good in you

I can't explain all your troubles and afflictions. I struggle to understand why God would subject all creation to futility and sin. I don't entirely understand why he would put two naked people in a garden with an evil talking snake and this terrible tree. I do wonder why he would allow us to get so lost and confused and hungry.

But I do know that he wants all of us to taste and see that he is Good.

## Communion

So on the night he was betrayed, on Passover, he took the bread and broke it saying "This is my body given to you." And he took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood."

Eat and drink. Taste and see that the Lord is Good.

## Benediction

So God in heaven we thank you. Father, son, and holy spirit we thank you that you are Good. And I thank you that we do love you. And we will love you. Lord God you were the good in the deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza at Pizza Hut that night. And you have been the good in every deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza that I'd ever eaten, I just hadn't really tasted it before. You are the good, even in the kale. You're good and you're good for us. And Lord God I know that everyone in this room loves you, even if they don't know that it's you. I didn't know it was you in the pizza, I didn't know it was you in the sunset, I didn't know it was you in the flowers, but I thank you that you're showing me and I thank you that you're showing each of us just how deep—we could never reach the bottom—you're showing us how deep your goodness goes. For you revealed your heart on a tree in a garden.

And so, Lord God, I thank you that you are Good. And I thank you that you are so good that we will love you with all of our heart, all of our mind, all of our soul, all of our strength because of what you have done in Jesus. Amen.

Do you know why people get so offended at the idea that God just might save everyone?

I think it's because we all think that loving God is like eating kale.

They're proud of the fact that they ate their kale, and offended at the idea that others didn't eat their kale and still might get to eat deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza.

They don't understand; they haven't seen, and they haven't tasted... God is the deep-dish Italian sausage pan pizza.

God is Love... and love is not the curse, it's the blessing. God is Love and there's plenty of pizza for all.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> David Bentley Hart [The Beauty of the Infinite](#), (Eerdmans, 2003), p.16

<sup>ii</sup> *Yom* (translated "day") clearly does not simply refer to 24 hours as we measure time. In just the first two chapter it refers, at least, to 12 hours, possibly 24 hours, and all six days as one day. And clearly a "day" from God's perspective can be a "thousand years" and 14 billion years from our perspective can be an instant from the standpoint of the Big Bang or Light.

<sup>iii</sup> Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19, Matthew 19:17

<sup>iv</sup> This is my literal translation of Genesis 2:16-17, based on Young's Literal Translation and the Lexham Hebrew Interlinear.

<sup>v</sup> *Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;*

*The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*

-Elizabeth Barrett Browning

<sup>vi</sup> *Jesus made himself the Bread of Life  
to make sure we understand what he is saying  
to satisfy our hunger for him  
to satisfy our love for him.  
Even that is not enough for him  
so he makes himself the hungry one  
so we can satisfy his hunger for our love.  
And by doing to the poor what we are doing  
we are satisfying his hunger for our love.*

- Mother Teresa, *Words to Love By* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1983), p. 76.

<sup>vii</sup> John 1:5 “The Light shines in the darkness...”

<sup>viii</sup> Dale Eben shared the following as a word that he received from the Lord—a word he shared at the Livingstone Service at Lookout Mountain Community Church:

*O my beloved, my precious bride, do you see me?  
It is my face you see in front of you. . . .  
My face in the warm sun,  
My face in the ice storm.....  
My face in the cool stream,  
My face in the whelming flood.....  
My face in the fireplace,  
My face in the forest fire.....  
My face in the sunrise,  
My face in the midnight sky.....*

*Yes, it is even.....*

*My face in the celebrity,  
My face in the orphan.....  
My face in the victim,  
My face in the perpetrator.....  
My face in the love-starved,  
My face in the prostitute.....  
My face in the betrayed,  
My face in the traitor.....  
My face in those you judge,  
My face in the mirror.*

*For my Grace is sufficient for all of these,  
My Power strong enough to go anywhere,  
My Love deep enough to redeem ALL.*

*I bled a river on the cross for the ENTIRE world,  
And I rose again to bring ALL to Myself.*

<sup>ix</sup> “The righteous” Is supplied by the translator.

<sup>x</sup> John 11:25