

TASTE & SEE



HONEY

There are many steps that must take place before we can actually taste the honey just as there are many steps in our growth and understanding as Christ followers. Seeds must be planted and nurtured in the right circumstances. Our vulnerability must be known and considered. We must grow stronger in anticipation, preparation to give life. We then bloom with beauty and a pleasant aroma and can help to bring more life to the world. God has made it so that that life, the sweetness that we are meant to be can be made even sweeter, even more life-giving.

Of those steps, which are you?

Who are those that have nurtured you in your times of growth? That have been there for you in your vulnerable moments?

What are you doing in your life to continue to grow?





HORSERADISH

The spiritual experience of our lives is always a journey from slavery to freedom. And the tendency on that journey is to forget the bondage, to ignore the bitterness, to “stay positive.” Yet the scriptures are absolutely full of the entire spectrum of experience, slavery AND freedom, bondage AND release, death AND life. Read the Psalms, look at Jesus’ teaching, and read about the journey of the Israelites through the desert. You’ll never find the scriptures advising us to ignore those bitter experiences. In fact, when we do ignore them, we do not learn from them. When we do not learn from them, we are doomed to repeat them.

When you taste the horseradish and intentionally re-experience the bitterness that goes with it, are you uncomfortable?

As that taste lingers, think of the ways in your spiritual journey that you are uncomfortable.

What are those for you?

Do you embrace the bitter moments? Or turn and run from them?

Now think of the ways that God has for you to grow,
to move forward.



TASTE & SEE



FIGS

As you eat the fig, chew slowly. You might find that the taste of the lingering horseradish is overcome by the sweetness of the fig. In the combination of these two flavors, the bitterness is overcome by the sweet, we experience how God's goodness encompasses all that we experience.

Once the horseradish flavor disappears and you can truly enjoy the fig on its own, taste the depth of the fruit. It's a complex flavor, much like the grape or the olive where qualities of the soil and even rainwater are maintained in the fruit itself.

Can you identify the ways that God has moved, simple or complex, you from bondage (horseradish) to freedom (fig)?

What are the deep promises of God in your life?

Are you bearing fruit for God's kingdom in season? Or all the time?



TASTE & SEE



BREAD – PART 1

When two people broke bread together and shared it, it was taken as a bond. Legal proceedings would end with the sharing of bread. Business deals would be closed over a loaf of the baker's finest. Blessings would be shared among friends and sealed with the breaking and passing of the bread. You see, once you accepted the bread from the other, you were acknowledging that they were sharing God's blessing and providence with you. You're not only extending a tasty morsel, but sharing together in God's desire for all people to be provided for. Even before the crucifixion, the passing of bread was a deeply spiritual act.

So in John 13, when Judas does not accept the bread from Jesus, that bond is not shared. In an act of deep offense, the betrayal begins.

Share bread with someone today. Take a piece and break it and give it to a good friend. Eat it together with joy and gladness in your hearts and celebrate one another. If you have an argument or falling out with someone this week, find some bread and then find them. Don't let words or disagreements block you from God's blessing of the sharing of your lives. Break bread with an instructor this week to show your loyalty and gratitude to their willingness to be here and to participate in life with you this week. Break bread with a mentor, with a stranger, with a sibling, with anyone as a sign that you have been blessed with enough to share with another and as a sign that God's blessings are for them, too.





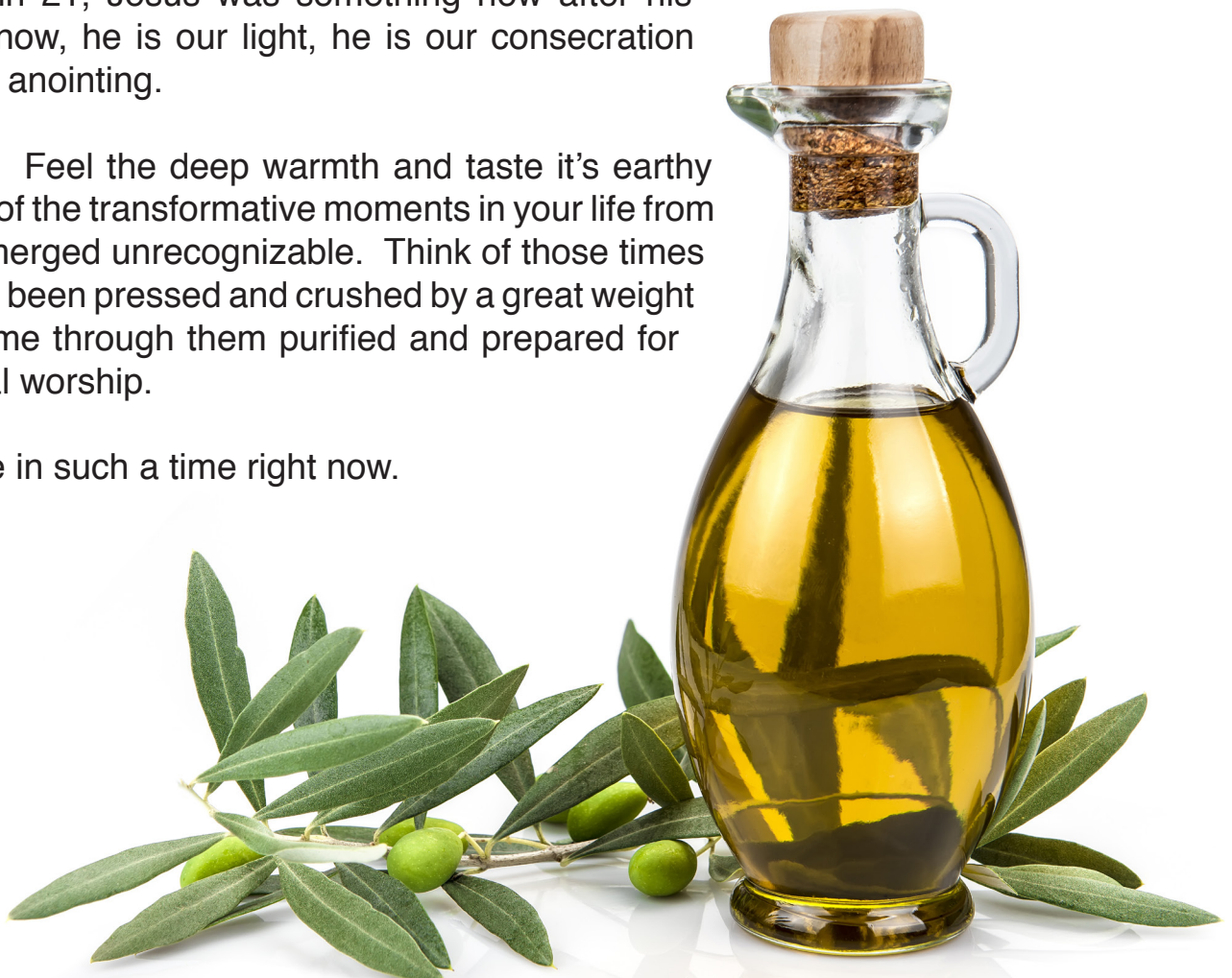
BREAD/OLIVE OIL – PART 2

The olive is a bitter fruit on its own. If you were to take an olive and squeeze it as hard as you can, you would not get olive oil, contrary to popular assumption. You would get a bitter white sap. To get olive oil, the olives must be pressed, not by fingers but by a substantial weight. Only then are the valuable oils within released.

The metaphor in olive oil holds truth still for those who practice the Jewish faith. They have been pressed beyond identification, crushed beyond recognition and still, they are ready for worship. Christ carries the metaphor even further on our behalf. Through the crucifixion, he wasn't even recognized by those that saw him next. Seen as a gardener at the tomb and as a stranger on the road to Emmaus and as a random dude on the beach in John 21, Jesus was something new after his death. And now, he is our light, he is our consecration and he is our anointing.

Taste the oil. Feel the deep warmth and taste its earthy flavor. Think of the transformative moments in your life from which you emerged unrecognizable. Think of those times that you have been pressed and crushed by a great weight and have come through them purified and prepared for deep and real worship.

Maybe you're in such a time right now.



TASTE & SEE



SALT

Jesus said that we, disciples, are the salt of the earth. Looking back at what salt symbolized, how do those words describe your life as a disciple.

How do you express hospitality?

How are you an antiseptic? That is, how do you fight infection or illness in the world?

How durable are you as a disciple?

Is “fidelity,” or faithfulness, a word that describes you?

Are you pure in your spiritual journey? In your obedience, in your explorations, in your following?



TASTE & SEE



SPARKLING GRAPE JUICE

When Israel leaves Mt. Sinai after God's big appearance (considered to be the 1st Pentecost) of the Promised Land. They send spies into the land (Numbers 13) to check it out. Twelve spies go in and even though God promised them that this land would be theirs, only two of the spies come back with any sort of optimism. Joshua and Caleb return to the Israelite camp eager to take God up on his promises. The other ten return with the worst of news. There are stories of giants and great armies and fortresses and the ten spies are enough to convince Moses and the elders to retreat. (This is why Israel is banished to the desert for forty years and why Moses isn't permitted to enter the Promised Land at the end of his life, you can read more in Numbers 15:20-35.) BEFORE all that happens, however, some of the spies come out of the land with a massive grape cluster. This thing is so big that two men have to hang it on a pole and carry it between them. (Numbers 13:23) It's the size of a person.

Even though they are banished from the Promised Land for an entire generation, this massive bunch of grapes is so significant and symbolic to them. Let's start at the end of the process for a clearer understanding of the significance.



Wine = celebration¹. Thus Jesus turns the water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Like the metaphor of the bread, Jesus says that his blood is the wine. His blood is our celebration, our ticket to the great party that God has for his kingdom.

This is the last flavor you'll experience in these stations. Note the lightness, the fruitiness and the flavor of the sparkling grape juice. It's refreshing and rejuvenating. It's life-giving.

Is your salvation, your relationship with Christ like this? Is it life-giving? Is it celebratory? Is it something that is appealing and pleasing to your friends and family? Is it something that draws others toward you, and toward Christ?

¹For the sake of open discussion, let's remember that while we hold our own Salvationist perspective on alcohol for our own reasons, it is not the only perspective and it is certainly not the only "right" perspective. In fact, if a life abstains from alcohol but does not actively pursue holiness, abstinence is merely a dietary decision. Likewise, it is not our place to judge a life that partakes responsibly while seeking holy living. Holy living and alcohol are not mutually exclusive, they are simply held separate in the covenant that we, as Salvationists, have chosen to embrace.