

The Good Gift of God

Psalm 34:8

'Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!'

We were having breakfast in a rather posh restaurant of a New Forest hotel. A man with a nasty cold sat down at a table near to us. He ordered grapefruit to start with, maybe hoping it would clear his head. The only sugar on the table was the rock variety. He asked for caster sugar. It was brought to him in a glass and silver container and he shook it generously over his grapefruit. He took an equally generous mouthful. He immediately put his spoon down and stopped eating. He beckoned to the headwaiter. "I asked for caster sugar," he said. "This"- he pointed to the silver shaker - "is salt." He pointed at the grapefruit: "and it's on here." Without a word the aghast headwaiter picked up the offending fruit and sugar-shaker and headed for the kitchen. He returned with fresh fruit and an apology (of sorts): "I'm very sorry, sir, the staff were somewhat over-enthusiastic at filling things."

Making what is already sharp completely unpalatable is the way many people believe God behaves towards the human race. They think that God is heartless because he doesn't protect us from the suffering and tribulations of the world as he should if he were a proper God of love. And as if life with all its evil (which he gave us in the first place) is not bad enough, he makes it even worse by allowing the earth to explode in our faces, cover us with water or shake us to death.

Alas, there have also been some Christian teachers who seem to put salt where there should be sugar by making life harder for their congregations through their doctrines. They have presented a picture of a changeable, wrathful God who is a killjoy demanding a life of deprivation, or who really doesn't want us unless we shape up to his standards.

But Psalm 34 was written by David, who should know a thing or two about God, and he shouts out, "Taste and see. God is good!" David wrote this passionate psalm of praise after God had rescued him from death. Life may be tough, he cries, but God will see us through. Peter repeats his words in his first epistle ([1 Peter 2:3](#)). And his reason? God is good, and we can put our whole trust in him because he has rescued us from our old dead lives and given us new life, with living, sustaining hope and faith, and an assured future in glorious everlasting life, so that we can have joy even when life is hard. When it is tough, God, by his power, keeps us safe. All this he has accomplished for us through the life and death and resurrection of his own Son Jesus Christ, the unblemished Lamb, given for us out of God's own goodness.

And Jesus himself cried to the crowds that followed him, "Come to me." He offers rest, not life with hard labour to those who are wearied by heavy burdens or the taste of bitterness of life, and he hasn't changed. Let us thank God for his goodness and graciousness in the gift of Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, and sees us through all that life throws at us and keeps us safe and secure, even in the most difficult times.