

Have You Tasted My Jesus?

2 Timothy 4:1-8

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

How many of you ever read Dr. Seuss' Green Eggs and Ham, I'm sure that if you have you remember that it is a long repetitious children's poem that ends this way:

For about the 20th time Sam-I-Am asks:

“You do not like green eggs and ham?”

To which his friend replies:

“I do not like them, Sam-I-am.”

Sam-I-am: “Could you, would you, with a goat?”

Friend: “I would not, could not. with a goat!”

Sam-I-am: “Would you, could you, on a boat?”

And in frustration the friend continues:

“I could not, would not, on a boat.

I will not, will not, with a goat.

I will not eat them in the rain. I will not eat them on a train.

Not in the dark! Not in a tree! Not in a car! You let me be!

I do not like them in a box. I do not like them with a fox.

I will not eat them in a house. I do not like them with a mouse.

I do not like them here or there.

I do not like them ANYWHERE!

I do not like green eggs and ham!

I do not like them, Sam-I-am.”

Sam-I-am: “You do not like them. SO you say. Try them! Try them! And you may. Try them and you may I say.”

Friend: “Sam! If you will let me be,

I will try them. You will see.
Say! I like green eggs and ham! I do!! I like them, Sam-I-am!
And I would eat them in a boat!
And I would eat them with a goat...
And I will eat them in the rain.
And in the dark. And on a train.
And in a car. And in a tree. They are so good so good you see!
So I will eat them in a box. And I will eat them with a fox.
And I will eat them in a house.
And I will eat them with a mouse.
And I will eat them here and there.
Say! I will eat them ANYWHERE!
I do so like green eggs and ham!
Thank you! Thank you, Sam-I-am.”

As a parent, I’ve read that story many times to my kids, and my granddaughter. They never seemed to grow tired of it as they grew up. But I did! It was always a fairly boring story. Over and over and over again Sam-I-Am repeated the same phrase again and again. The only difference in his appeals was that he would change one or two words each time he tried to convince his friend to try “green eggs and ham.”

Now, hold that thought.

In II Timothy 4, Paul is writing to his protégé – Timothy – who’s a preacher in Ephesus. Paul is in Prison and will soon be executed for his preaching. And he’s willing to die this way because - as he reminds Timothy – their message is critical for the world. There’s going to come a day when Jesus will come again and when He comes, He “will judge the living and the dead.” 2 Timothy 4:1

Timothy’s job was essential, because the fate of 100’s of people depended on his faithfulness. People would either go to heaven or hell, depending on how faithfully Timothy did his job - and Paul was commanding Timothy to stand in the gap.

An atheist once told William Booth (founder of the Salvation Army) "If I believed what you Christians say you believe about a coming judgment - and that impenitent rejecters of Christ will be lost - I would crawl on my bare knees on crushed glass all over London, warning men, night and day, to flee for refuge from the coming day of wrath!"

Timothy’s job – and our job – is to realize how critical our message about Jesus is. Jesus is coming again... and only those who belong to Him are promised heaven. Everyone else faces an eternity of regret.

And we hold within our hands, the mission to use every method we can think of to talk our friends and relatives into coming to Jesus. But how can we talk

to them about Christ? What can we do that will make us capable of getting them to come to Christ?

Well, we could learn a few things from – Sam-I-Am.

While “Green Eggs and Ham” is a children’s book, Sam-I-Am uses many of the same principles we can use to convince people to “try” our Jesus.

I. Realize that you’re going to encounter rejection.

A. There are going to be times – no matter what you do – the people you care about will just say no! But why?

1. Why wouldn’t Sam-I-Am’s friend taste the green eggs and ham?

2. (The Eggs are GREEN)

3. Had he ever really tasted Green eggs and Ham? NO

4. But they couldn’t be normal!

5. They were Green... they couldn’t possibly taste good!

6. I HEARD ABOUT a man whose younger brother had come to live with his family for a few weeks. The man had come downstairs and told his kids he was going to make omelets for them that morning.

7. Then he offered his younger brother an omelet... “NO” his brother replied.

8. So the preacher shrugged his shoulders and went into the kitchen to cook omelets for his kids. After a few moments, his brother came into the kitchen and sheepishly asked: “What’s an omelet?”

9. He’d never tasted an omelet before... but it had a strange name.

10. It couldn’t possibly taste good!

B. That’s why many people reject Christ.

1. They’ve never really “tasted” Him.

2. But He’s “different”. He’s not like you and me.

3. He’s the Son of God. He’s risen from the dead. He’s sinless.

4. And – in order to be a Christian - you have to belong to this Jesus.

5. You’ve got to believe that He’s the Son of God, repent of your sins, confess Jesus as your Lord and Master, be buried in the waters of baptism and rise up to live a new life.

6. This Jesus is not “normal” ... He can’t possibly taste good!

7. And so, repeatedly, they’ll turn us down when we talk to them about Jesus and the church.

C. Paul tells Timothy: A time is going to come when people “...will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” 2 Timothy 4:4

1. People are going to turn you and I down a lot when we try to talk to them, but get used to it, it's part of the deal.
2. But we should never give up presenting people we care about with the simple message: Taste my Jesus...

II. Which leads to my 2nd point - keep it simple.

A. "Green Eggs and Ham" was a book written by Dr. Seuss to challenge himself.

1. He wanted to see how many simple one-syllable words he could use to tell a story.
2. Of the 50 words in this poem... 49 have only ONE syllable (Boat, Goat, Tree, etc. – the only multi-syllable word was "anyway")

B. And in this simple story, has only one message: "taste my eggs and ham... just try them and you'll see they taste good." Sam-I-Am kept it simple.

1. And our message is simple: "Taste Jesus... try Him!!! and you'll see He tastes good."
2. Or as Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51
3. Taste Jesus, try him. That's our message.

C. Nothing else matters except getting people to taste our Jesus.

1. Every year at the University of Chicago Divinity School, they stage a picnic lunch where they invite in some great theological mind to lecture while the students and faculty of the University eat their lunches.

One year they invited Dr. Paul Tillich, who spoke for 2 1/2 hours. And in his speech, he "proved" that the resurrection of Jesus was false. He quoted scholar after scholar and book after book. He concluded that since there was no such thing as the historical resurrection, and he maintained that the church teaching on a risen Jesus was just so much groundless emotional mumbo-jumbo, Then he then asked if there were any questions.

2. After about 30 seconds, an old, dark skinned preacher stood up in the back of the crowd. "Docta Tillich, I got one question,"
3. He reached into his sack lunch and pulled out an apple and took a bite. "My question is a simple question," He took another bite. "Now, I ain't never read them books you read..." another bite... and I can't recite the Scriptures in the original Greek"...another

bite ... "I don't know nothin' about Niebuhr and Heidegger"... He finished the apple and then said "All I wanna know Mr. Tillich – was this apple I ate - was it bitter or sweet?"

4. Dr. Tillich paused for a moment and answered in a scholarly tone: "I cannot possibly answer that question, for I haven't tasted your apple." The white-haired preacher dropped the core of his apple into his crumpled paper bag, looked up at Dr. Tillich and said calmly,
 5. "Neither, sir, have you tasted my Jesus."
- D. There are all kinds of "scholars" out there who have rejected God's truths for the myths of modern theology and heretical scholars.
1. These are the "experts" you'll often see on "The Discovery Channel" and the "History Channel"
 2. And many Christians hear these "experts" and think to themselves
 - a. • I can't read the Bible in the original Greek/Hebrew
 - b. • I haven't read all the great commentaries on Scripture.
 - c. And I'm not a great theologian.
 - d. But then neither were Peter, James and John.
- E. They didn't appeal to "scholarship" when talking to people about Jesus, they simply told folks how Jesus tasted to them.
1. John writes in I John 1:1
"That which was from the beginning,
which we have heard,
which we have seen with our eyes,
which we have looked at and our hands have touched—
this we proclaim concerning the Word of life."
- F. John's saying: We've tasted of Jesus! And He tastes really good."
1. And when he preached, John invited people to taste this same Jesus that he had.
 2. So, 1st we need to realize we're going to face rejection.
 3. 2nd we need to remember to keep it simple.

III. And 3rd – we need to stay "on message"

- A. Sam-I-Am never strayed from his objective – try my eggs and ham.
1. He kept repeating his offer... over and over and over again
 2. He stayed on message.
 3. Now, there are times when Christians get "off message."
 4. They try to sell their friends on something OTHER than Jesus.

5. We must make that their central focus.
 6. Taste Jesus... and everything else will be ok.
 7. Most objections that people have is about the church, or people, not about Jesus.
- B. Now, just because we need to keep our message simple, doesn't mean we can't get creative.
1. Sam-I-Am kept changing his approach:
 2. He always tried something different to get his friend to taste his green eggs and ham.
 3. He tried suggesting different places: in a house, on a train, in a tree, in a car

Have you tasted my Jesus? Back in the 1800's a skeptic promised a famous British preacher named Maclaren that he would attend his church for 4 Sundays. Maclaren told the skeptic that during those sermons he'd present reasons why he should believe in Jesus.

The skeptic was true to his word and showed up each Sunday - listening intently to the sermons. After the fourth message he stepped forward to become a Christian

Maclaren was delighted but he couldn't resist the impulse to ask which of the four sermons brought about this decision.

The skeptic replied, "Your sermons, sir, were helpful, but they were not what finally persuaded me." He said that after church one Sunday as he was helping an elderly lady on a slippery walk, she looked up into his face and said, "I wonder if you know my Savior, Jesus Christ. He is everything in the world to me. I would like you to know Him too."

That's what the world and the non churched need to hear.