

Tasting with All Five Senses

I like coffee. I agree with Thomas Jefferson, who called java "the favorite drink of the civilized world." But sometimes civilization can get barbaric, if not downright bizarre.

I'm referring to coffee-tastings held in the back rooms of fashionable specialty shops in big-city America. Connoisseurs hover over tiny cups and evaluate the "bloom," the fizz released when steaming water hits fresh grounds. Next, they shove their schnozzes below the brim and snort up the delicate bouquet. Finally, they take a slurp to determine if the nectar is baked or earthy, fruity or green.

They call this experience "cupping," a multi-sensory interaction with burnt, crushed, and water-logged berries. Not a bad idea; even a Biblical one.

"Oh taste," urges Psalm 34.8, "and see that the Lord is good." But our poverty-stricken English verb limits this wide-ranging wallowing in the sacred to one-fifth of our palate of perception. The Hebrew verb has the idea of judging, of discernment. Job claims that what the tongue should do with food parallels what the ear does with words (Job 12.11). Barzillai claims to have lost much of the sweetness of life because he's grown too old to "taste what I eat or what I drink" (2 Samuel 19.35). Mrs. Far-Above-Rubies savors her savvy business dealings when she "senses that her gain is good" (Proverbs 31.18).

With the sort of unabashed incarnation that so embarrassed the ancient Gnostics, Scripture exhorts believers to feast their eyes on the fizz of God's glory as his living water hits the ground-up, ground-down, down-and-dirty stuff of our lives and sets it blooming with praise. The Bible invites us to shove our noses right down into the Lord's compassion and inhale the heady aroma of the Spirit's presence. The Word urges us to quaff great gulps in long, satisfying slurps as our tongues and hearts rejoice in the goodness of God.

So let the brew of Christ's joy warm and wake you today. Feel the power percolate and embolden with body the thin stuff of everyday life. Take the dare tossed down by the psalmist. "Oh cup and see that the Lord is good."

Double-Shot Venti, Please!
Doug