



# TASTE AND SEE

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# Day By Day

## *My eyes fail, looking for my God. (Ps. 69:3)*

A few years ago my daughters introduced me to Ed Sheeran's album, *Divide*.

We were in our van on a road trip when they added his song, "Supermarket Flowers," to the playlist. In the song, Sheeran writes about his mother passing away and the process of cleaning up her place once she is gone - clearing away the supermarket flowers from the windowsill and her day-old tea from a cup. It's a touching song which leads to these lines:

*Oh I'm in pieces, it's tearing me up, but I know  
A heart that's broke is a heart that's been loved*

I remember being moved by how tender and raw the song was. Sheeran opens up an intimate part of his life and lets us in. Beautiful.

We were all quiet in the van as the song came to an end. But, as soon as the next track, "Barcelona," started up, it was clear that Sheeran was taking us in an entirely different direction:

*"Oh, get up, up on the dancefloor tonight  
I've got two left feet and a bottle of red wine  
Making me feel like the beat and the bassline  
Are in my blood . . ."*

To be honest, the shift between the two tracks felt a little jarring - like we were running with Sheeran from a funeral to a dance club. It's the same guy, but two wildly different experiences.

## **I felt a similar kind of whiplash when reading the psalms recently.**

As part of my devotions I read a psalm a day and, about a month ago, I came to Psalm 68. Written by King David, it is a celebration of God's power and his care for his people. From beginning to end, the psalm exalts God as a mighty warrior, culminating in this exaltation in the final verse:

*"You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary;  
the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people." (v. 35)*

I underlined this verse in my Bible that morning, joining David in celebrating God's goodness.

The next day I opened my Bible to Psalm 69 and found a song set to a very different tune. These are David's opening lines:

*"Save me, O God,  
For the waters have come up to my neck.*

.....

*I am worn out calling for help,  
My throat is parched.  
My eyes fail, looking for my God" (vv. 1-3)*

**What a difference a day makes. Yesterday, David was celebrating the awesomeness of God. Today, he is lamenting his absence.**

This whiplash between extremes in Psalm 68 and 69 was surprising at first but, before long, my surprise gave way to appreciation. If I'm honest, I regularly experience both ends of the spectrum David is writing about, and you likely do as well. One day, we are sailing along and sensing God everywhere. The next morning, the waters have come up to our neck (69:1) and we're in danger of drowning.

**What a difference a day makes.**

So what do we do as we find ourselves bouncing between celebration and uncertainty, abundance and abandonment? I think the psalms encourage us to adopt a few helpful postures:

## **Be honest**

It should be obvious by now that the psalms give us permission to be real about the highs and lows we experience in life. We don't have to pretend for God; in fact, we should avoid pretence altogether. The psalms invite us to approach him just as we are.

## **Be patient**

If you're struggling to discern where God is or what he is doing, you're in good

company with David and the rest of the psalmists. Having a bad day - or season! - doesn't mean that something is wrong with you; it means you are human. In these pandemic days, I've been learning to not give my emotional swings more weight than they deserve. Be gentle with yourself.

## Be hopeful

If we keep reading the rest of Psalm 69, we find that David turns to hope in the end. *"The Lord hears the needy and does not despise his captive people"* he writes (69:33). David knows that God will show himself to be strong and loving in the end, even if it does not always feel that way in the middle. We may be waiting, but we wait with hope.

Whatever song you are signing today - whether it is spilling over with praise or plagued by doubt - know that you aren't singing alone. Rather, you are adding your voice to a choir of others who have learned to raise their voices to God in both praise and lament. Sing loud and from the heart.

## Further Reading:

*Psalm 68 and 69*

## Key Verse:

*'Praise be to the Lord, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God who saves.'* (Ps. 68:19-20)

## Calibrating Prayer:

*Father, you know that some days are better than others for me. Some days I am confident of your presence and your power, while other days I shrink back in doubt and fear. I am so thankful that you are the God of all my days, and that I can call to you from both the heights and the depths. Here I am. Be gracious to me.*