

Series: It's a Seussical Life: Discovering Creative Ways to Live as God's Kids

Sermon #6: "Eat them! Eat them! Here they are!"

Book: *Green Eggs and Ham*

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

Theme: Being persistent in inviting others to receive Jesus

Text: "Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy!" -Psalm 34:8

"Let's not get tired of doing good, because in time we'll have a harvest if we don't give up."
-Galatians 6:9

Sermon Blurb: "How do you know that you don't like it if you haven't tried it?" We've all heard that question from our parents, and maybe others, and perhaps we've even *asked* the question. Give it a try...you may like it! After all, what is now our favorite at one time was brand new! This Sunday were using Seuss' *Green Eggs and Ham* to get excited about inviting others to give Jesus a try. Nervous about sharing about your faith? Come see how you can become more like Sam-I-Am!

Gathering Song: Hymn Sing

Welcome: Pastor David

Worship Set: Sanctify

Forever Reign

How Great Is Our God?

You Are Good

Worship prayer: Andrew

Book Reading: *Green Eggs and Ham* -Kay

Kids to Kid's Church

Missions Moment: Fall Craft Sale supporting missions -Amanda L.

Prayers: Andrew

Offering: *O Taste and See* -Sanctify

Message: "Eat them! Eat them! Here they are!" -Pastor David

10:50

PP#1: It's a Seussical Life: Discovering Creative Ways to Live as God's Kids

"Eat them! Eat them! Here they are!"

"Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy!" -
Psalm 34:8

It's a Seussical Life: Discovering Creative Ways to Live as God's Kids. "Eat them! Eat them! Here they are!" Psalm 34:8, "Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy!"

PP#2: *A picture of REAL green eggs and ham, along with the ones from the book.*

OK, I bet you can guess where I'm going with this message today! *Green Eggs and Ham*: "Eat them! Eat them! Here they are!" Psalm 34:8 "Taste and see how good the Lord is!"

Well, let's start with honesty. Who here tried the green eggs we served at church last month? Really? All they were were normal scrambled eggs with some green food die. OK, who has *never*

tried eating green eggs? Some of you were here last month and chose not to stay for the green eggs. I asked a couple of you on the way out why you were leaving. It's just green die, I said. But they said that it just didn't seem appetizing.

And they're right. Green eggs just kind of put you off, don't they. And what about green ham? All I can think of is rancid meat!

So, this story from Dr. Seuss makes sense to all of us. If someone just came up to me and offered me green eggs and ham, I'm not sure I would try it either.

And Ted Geisel (Dr. Seuss is a pen name) used that constant kid experience. Adults are always coming up to kids with weird, new foods, and saying, "Give this a try! You'll like it!"

PP#3: *Kid making yucky face at food like broccoli, and another kids happy to eat mac-and-cheese.*

But the reality for kids is that they don't usually like the new stuff. Kids like what they already like. It's safe. They know they like it. Adults may be interested in trying new things and love discovering new flavors, and textures, and combinations. But for kids, the percentage of new foods they actually like, is quite low. Therefore, it's just safer to stick with what you know. And on top of that, scientists are discovering that children's palates are different than adult's palates. Foods don't taste the same to adults as they do to kids. That's why for most kids, they like different things as they grow up. Their tastes change. Besides, they just haven't lived long enough yet to have the time it takes to learn to like all those new things. Some things, perhaps. But kids also don't have a strong desire to eat healthy. They want to eat yummy. So, for most kids, suggesting they try kale and quinoa is like asking you to try green eggs and ham.

PP#4: *Image from Green Eggs and Ham where the character makes a yucky face at the green food.*

So, in this delightful story, Dr. Seuss turns the tables on the adults. Sam-I-Am is a very small figure, kid size. And he tries to get the big, adult-looking character to try to taste something that looks weird. Ha! Finally, kids have payback. YOU try something that looks gross!

It's a story that captures the excitement of kids. They want to read a story about big people having to try weird food.

And here is Geisel's genius again. He's using characters and a plot line that makes the kids *want* to read, themselves.

PP#5: *Image of basal reader Fun with Dick and Jane.*

Back in the 1950s, kids were learning to read with the basal reader, *Fun with Dick and Jane*. Anyone here remember that? Yeah? "See Dick. See Dick run. Run, Dick. Run Dick run. Run, run, run." Contrary to the name, it wasn't much *fun* to read with Dick and Jane! It was kind of boring!

So, Ted Geisel, along with his wife and Phyllis Cerf, founded Random House's "Beginner Book" label to publish books that kids age 3-9 would beg to read, and *could* read, all by themselves.

PP#6: *Front covers of Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat, and The Cat in the Hat Comes Back.*

Their first book was *The Cat in the Hat*, 1957. Cerf had compiled a list of 400 words as the basic vocabulary for young readers. Geisel took 200 of those words and wrote *The Cat in the Hat*, adding only 36 other words. So Geisel wrote the entire book with only 236 different words! Kids

loved it! They were reading about this wacky cat and his contraption, all by themselves! No mom reading to them. In fact, the mom—in the story—wasn't even in the house!

A year later, Suess wrote the sequel, *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back*. By that year, 1958, there were only four titles in the “I Can Read” book catalog.

Now, *The Cat in the Hat* had earned Geisel some bragging rights for writing a story using such few words. So, his publisher one day made Geisel a bet. He bet Geisel \$50 that he couldn't write a whole book—a good book that would sell—with no more than 50 words. \$50 for 50 words.

PP#7: *A kid reading Green Eggs and Ham, or just the front cover of Green Eggs and Ham.*

Well, Geisel took that challenge. And he worked for nine months on a story. His result? *Green Eggs and Ham*. If you count the words, you'll find out that Geisel used exactly 50 different words...over and over again! Now, as the story goes, Geisel's publisher never did pay the bet! But Geisel got his due anyway, for *Green Eggs and Ham* became Seuss' #1 selling book of all time.

PP#8: *Front covers for The Cat in the Hat, Yertle the Turtle, Gertrude McFuzz, The Butter Battle Book, Horton Hears a Who, and Green Eggs and Ham.*

Seuss' stories really appeal to kids, with their very different creatures and weird realities. But they also appeal to kids of all ages, because their rhymes and made-up words are used to speak to something not just in the stories, but in our lives as well. And for Christians, we can use Seuss as a way to help us think how God calls us to live differently, in a way that seems strange in our world. In our series, we've learned about how we need to restrain the mess-maker inside us all, how we need to love people and use things, how we are beautiful just the way we are, how we need to see the differences in people as valuable, and how we need to hear and help the small voices of the vulnerable. These are biblical truths that we are called to live into.

PP#9: “Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy!” - Psalm 34:8

And today's story can help us never forget one of the most important callings we have as Jesus followers. It's to invite others to give Jesus a try.

We're like Sam-I-Am. He's a kid-character. You know, kids often do much better at talking about Jesus than many adults. They're not worried about rejection or what the other will think about them. They just say what they feel. Last week at a hospital in Wisconsin there was an 8 year old girl who was going to have surgery. There was another girl in the room next to her, worried about what was wrong with her. The girl having surgery said to the girl next to her, “Don't worry. I've prayed for both of us. I asked Jesus to look after you and make you better, too. You'll be OK. He won't ever leave you.”

Why can't that kind of stuff ever just fall out of our mouths? So honest. So uninhibited. So real. In the story, Sam introduces himself, and the very first thing he does is offer green eggs and ham. “I am Sam. I am Sam. Sam I am.” “Would you like green eggs and ham?”

Sam's got something he wants everyone else to try. He is so excited about it. It is wonderful, he thinks. So he wastes no time. “Hi. I'm David. Would you like to taste and see how good the Lord is?”

PP#10: *Early image of Sam-I-Am offering green eggs and ham to the big person, who grimaces.*

Now, most of us aren't that forward, because of that little line in between the first two things that Sam says. In between is the thought that crosses the mind of the big person. "That Sam-I-am! That Sam-I-am! I do not like that Sam-I-am!" "He's too pushy. He's too forward. He's annoying."

We are so concerned about what others may think about us, that we are very careful what we say. Now, this is often a good thing. Others deserve our best responses, and some filtering is healthy. We need to speak with others in helpful ways. But what is not good is when that also means that we don't say what we ought, lest they think less of us.

So, there's a tension...a tension between being careful not to put others off by what we say, but also having the courage to say what we need to, regardless of what it makes others think of us. But that reluctance we have about sharing about our faith, that hesitance, that we need to learn to push through so we do share. We need to be more courageous like Sam-I-Am.

PP#11: *Image of Sam-I-Am looking very happy/excited offering green eggs and ham.*

Now, let's unpack this a bit. Why do you think Sam-I-Am is so eager to share the green eggs and ham? Well, quite simply, it's obvious he's tried them. He loves them. And he thinks his new friend will love it, too.

So, part one. He's tried them. He's not pushing something he knows nothing about. Christians get our excitement about Jesus because we have tried Him ourselves. We have invited Him into our lives, and we have found His healing presence, His transforming power, His tender leading, an amazing blessing in our lives. He changes who we are, and makes us blessed! Isn't Jesus great? Church, that's not rhetorical. Isn't Jesus great? [Yes!] My goodness, church, you need to be much faster on that uptake! That should roll out of you easily, it should be hard for you to hold it back! We look like Sam-I-Am! If you don't, then you need to get in touch with your love for Jesus! Jesus is our first love! You need to let it affect your face!

We've tried Jesus and we've found Him to be just what we need in our lives. He makes all the difference. It's wonderful! And we think Jesus can do the same for everyone else.

PP#12: 2 Corinthians 5:14-20 (CEV)

14 The love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: one died for the sake of all; therefore, all died. 15 He died for the sake of all so that those who are alive should live not for themselves but for the one who died for them and was raised.

16 So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn't how we know Him now. 17 So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

Today we're going to look at 2 Corinthians 5. This is from the middle of Paul's second letter to the Christians in Corinth. They're believers, Jesus followers. They've tried Him, and found Him life-changing. So Paul's talking about this good news.

Chapter 5, verse 14: "The love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: one died for the sake of all; therefore, all died." We've learned that Jesus died for the sake of everyone. Therefore, we have all already died, our death came in Jesus, our death to sin and all that ugliness in us: defeated. Verse 15: "He died for the sake of all so that those who are alive should live not for

themselves but for the one who died for them and was raised.” He gave us our true lives back. Therefore we live not for ourselves, the way we think is best. We know the mess *that* got us into already. We are saved out of that. So now we commit to live for Jesus, to live Jesus’ way. His way is the best way, the full life, the abundant life. The love of Christ controls us.

Verse 16: “So then, from this point on we won’t recognize people by human standards.” We don’t look at people the way we did before. Now we see them through love. The rest of the verse: “Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn’t how we know Him now.” We used to know Jesus just as a person next to us. But now we know Him as our Lord and Savior. Now we know He makes all the difference! Verse 17: “So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!” We aren’t the same anymore. We’re different. Jesus made a difference in our lives! Now we are fully alive. Now the love of Christ controls us. Now we look like Sam-I-Am.

PP#13: *Image of the Grinch, looking miserable (but not evil)*

People are hurting, broken, hardened, drug down by all kinds of problems. And Jesus can change that part that’s hurting on the inside. He can restore their self-image, their sense of value, their hope in what can be. Do you believe that, church? [Yes!]

Then how exciting for us to be able to share with someone that Someone who can make all the difference. We’re not pushing something that doesn’t work. We know it does! We don’t dare hold back! There is life to be unleashed, full life, transformed life! We’re excited!

PP#14: 2 Corinthians 5

18 All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation. 19 In other words, God was reconciling the world to Himself through Christ, by not counting people’s sins against them. He has trusted us with this message of reconciliation.

20 So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ’s representatives, “Be reconciled to God!”

Verse 18: “All of these new things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and who gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” God reconciled us to Him, He restored our relationship with Him, and He has tasked us with offering that to others, too. We offer that restored relationship with God to others through knowing Jesus. Verse 19: “In other words, God was reconciling the world to Himself through Christ, by not counting people’s sins against them. He has trusted us with this message of reconciliation.” God, in Jesus, put away our sins, put away our death, put away what keeps people from coming to Him. And since we’ve experienced Him and know Him, He can trust us to help other people try Him, too.

Verse 20: “So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you [others] through us. We beg you as Christ’s representatives, ‘Be reconciled to God!’”

PP#15: *Collogue of pictures of the different times/ways Sam-I-Am offers green eggs and ham.*

“Would you like green eggs and ham?” “Would you like them here or there?” “Would you? Could you? In a car? Eat them! Eat them! Here they are.” “You do not like them. So you say. Try them! Try them! And you may. Try them and you may, I say.”

Can you hear the urgency? Sam-I-Am is fully invested! Even though the resistant chap keeps refusing, Sam-I-Am does not give up. “Be reconciled to God!”

PP#16: “Eat them! Eat them! Here they are!”

1. Urgency to share Jesus

“We beg you as Christ’s representatives, ‘Be reconciled to God!’” -2 Corinthians 5:20b

Today you’re not hearing anything you don’t already know. Same with Dr. Seuss’ books. They teach us truths we already know. But the stories help us keep them in mind, reflect on them, and try to live them out. I hope I’ve ruined *Green Eggs and Ham* for you. Every time you hear it, a reference to it, or, when you see some kid refusing to eat something on her plate and think in your head “I do not like them, Sam-I-Am,” that the Holy Spirit will call to your mind the urgency of how you need to be excited to share your faith, and then go through with it.

Or every time you say to a child, or anyone really, “How do you know you don’t like it? You haven’t tried it!” I pray the Holy Spirit will remind you to say that kind of thing to someone about Jesus. “Give Jesus a try. It can’t hurt. Who knows, you might even like Him! After all, even your favorite food now was new to you at one point.”

Don’t worry about having all the right words, or making it sound just right. Geisel only used 50 words. You’ve got at least that in you!

PP#16: “Eat them! Eat them! Here they are!”

1. Urgency to share Jesus

2. Persistency and creativity

“Let’s not get tired of doing good, because in time we’ll have a harvest if we don’t give up.”
-Galatians 6:9

The story of *Green Eggs and Ham* goes on and on. Sam-I-Am is determined not to give up. He loves those eggs and ham, and he just knows his new friend will, too. This is an important biblical principle for Christians in sharing about Jesus: persistency! It takes time. Don’t just try once and say you’ve done enough! Keep at it. People need to hear about your faith, your story, what God’s done for you, what He’s doing for you lately. People need to build some trust before they’ll be open to giving Jesus a try.

Heck, even the first step can take many invites. That’s inviting someone to worship. That’s a good step. Did you know that the average first attender has been asked seven times to come to worship? Seven times! We need to become more like Sam-I-Am!

The guy was even getting irritated with him. “Now leave me be!” he kept saying.

Not that I’m saying we should be pushy, but we should be eager. We should not back down from a minor setback. Keep trying. Talk about how God helps you through things. Say things like, “I’ll pray for you” when someone shares a struggle, or “I’ve been through something like that, too, and I don’t know what I would have done if God hadn’t helped me.” “Really? God helped you? How?” The conversation flows. But it requires persistency. Enough, so that when they finally hit a wall, or something changes in their lives, they know they can come and ask you about it. “Sam-I-Am, what did you do when you found yourself always angry around your wife?” “Sam-I-Am, don’t you ever run short of money? How can you keep giving so much away?” “Sam-I-Am, how do you not get so discouraged with the way things are going in our country?”

We are persistent because we have given Jesus a try. We are persistent because we have found Jesus to be real. We are persistent, because we know that He can help them, too. We are persistent because we care about them. We are persistent because one day, they may just try.

Galatians 6:9 encourages us, “Let’s not get tired of doing good, because in time we’ll have a harvest if we don’t give up.”

PP#17: “Eat them! Eat them! Here they are!”

1. Urgency to share Jesus
2. Persistency and creativity
3. Jesus sells Himself

“Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy!” - Psalm 34:8

Finally, we can be urgent and persistent because Jesus sells Himself. Never once in the book does Sam-I-Am describe the attributes of the food, explain it’s color, or say how yummy it tastes. Sometimes we’re reluctant because we think we have to say the right things, or explain it the right, or convincing way. But Jesus doesn’t need us to “sell” Him. We don’t need to “convince” people to like Him. We simply urge people to give Him a try. After all, Jesus is real. “I gave Jesus a try in my life, and He changed my marriage. Things are different now. I’m different now. You should give Him a try. See what He can do for you.”

This is so freeing to me. I don’t have to have the most holy experience of Jesus. I don’t have to be tight with Him all the time. It’s not about me. I can simply say, “Give Him a try, and see for yourself.”

PP#18: *Image of the character LOVING green eggs and ham.*

In the end, that’s what happens in the book. The adult character is finally worn down, and agrees to give it a try, even if just to get Sam-I-Am to leave him alone. “Sam! If you, will let me be, I will try them. You will see.”

But what happens? He likes it! It tastes great! He wants more, and more, and more. Jesus sells Himself! The Holy Spirit does the work for you. You simply say, “Taste and see how good the Lord is!” and let the Lord prove it. It’s not up to you, it’s up to Jesus.

But then, the joy of someone who has tasted and seen that the Lord is good. Ah, there’s the best reason ever for having the courage to share your faith.

PP#19: *Final image, of the character putting his arm around Sam-I-Am’s shoulder.*

“Say! I like green eggs and ham!
 I do! I like them, Sam-I-am!
 And I would eat them in a ... tree.
 They are so good, so good, you see! ...
 “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.*” [Italics added.]
 Amen.

Closing Song: *I Love to Tell the Story*