Once again, I find that I am preaching about something of which I have no personal experience. Not only have I embraced the culture of speed, but I personally get a thrill out of going as fast as possible everywhere I go. This spring I bought a new E-Bike. It has five settings: Off, Eco, Touring, Sport and Turbo. I always ride it in turbo, because why wouldn’t you?

Since I know almost nothing about savoring, I have been asking people throughout the week what they think. I was on a walk with AnnElise Fishel and she exclaimed “The French know how to savor things!” You might remember that AnnElise lived in Paris for a year pursuing her theater degree. She told me that the French work from 9 - 5 and then gather with friends for drinks or go for walks or to café’s. They slowly enjoy their cocktail or their coffee or their companion. They make eye contact and phones do not come out of pockets or bags. Further, many Parisians have FLIP PHONES she told me so why bother? They are not trying to create the perfect Instagram photo, they are connecting with the people and the experiences right in front of them.

What is savoring you might ask? Thank Wikipedia for this definition: **Savoring** is the use of thoughts and actions to increase the intensity, duration, and appreciation of positive experiences and emotions. People savor by being fully and mindfully present in the moment that they are in. People savor by anticipating the things to come. People savor the past by reminiscing about events, experiences and relationships.

Savor by being present in the moment. As you participated in the Craisin Meditation, you fully engaged with the flavor and the texture of the craisen. You fully tasted the craisen. What is it like to fully taste your food daily? What about starting by preparing your food? Some here grow food, and then you harvest it and then wash it and chop it and prepare it. I’m amazed at how long it sometimes takes to prepare food. Sometimes it can take hours, and then it is consumed in 10 minutes! What if we savored our food, enjoyed it at a table, were fully present to it and to our dining companions? Savoring the present moment could be paying attention on a walk. Is the breeze blowing? What are the clouds like? Where is the light coming from? Savoring the present moment can be being fully present in a conversation, no matter if you are having it with a colleague, a family member or a stranger. Facing them, listening carefully, not giving a thought to what you might say next.

I think we can also savor difficult experiences as well. Most of you know that my dog died last Saturday. I was completely present before, during and after her death. I did not look at anything but her and I used the time to tell her all of the things that I appreciated her for and all of the things that I loved about her. I held her while she died and carried her
home. I dug the hole to bury her and then covered her with dirt. I planted a couple of bulbs and cried a lot. Even though this was a sad situation to savor, I can acknowledge the joy that she brought to my life as well as acknowledge that all life comes to an end. We can be present in and savor all of the moments of our lives.

Savor by anticipating things to come. What things are you looking forward to? When our friend Wayne died, his wife said that Wayne would always encourage everyone to have an adventure ahead of them. Always have an adventure before you! My grandchildren arrived last night. I have been excited anticipating their visit. I have been savoring in advance how much I will enjoy their presence. Most of us who are grandparents would say that it is easy to savor the grandchildren than it was to savor the children. I think that is partly because we have a lot less responsibility, and we realize that we get to enjoy the whole thing all over again, so we are really going to pay attention this time! I'm savoring our upcoming camping trip and our all family trip to Disneyland. I can imagine the silliness and the fun we are going to have and can get a lot of joy out of anticipation.

We can savor the past by reminiscing. Our youth just returned last night from their mission trip to Baltimore. I know that they have made a lifetime of memories and they will be telling you about it on August 11th. If you follow Instagram you might have seen Lara putting out a fire in a barbecue, with Rowan and Matthew running from room to room to find fire extinguishers, as the first two didn’t work. I’ve been on enough mission trips in my time to know that what seems like a crisis in the moment will soon be savored as a really awesome experience. “Remember the time we ran all over the church looking for fire extinguishers? Wasn’t that amazing?” They will look over their photos of this experience and savor every moment, and suddenly how hot and humid it was won’t matter anymore. They will savor the bus rides, what they learned about segregation, the games they played with children, the meal flops, and the late night chats held in whispers. Savoring the experience will shape our youth into the caring, justice loving adults they are becoming.

Our scriptures today remind us to savor the large and small experiences of our lives. Paul is writing to the people at Philippi from prison, most likely from Rome. He is savoring the kindness that the church members have shown him while he is in prison. It seems as though they have sent him some gifts. At one point if you were incarcerated, you only received meals if someone sent food to you. It was not provided. Paul also describes how he tries to be content in every circumstance, whether hungry or full. Can you imagine savoring both of these types of experiences? He is savoring and the church community has risen up together to meet his needs.

In our reading from Psalm 34, the Psalmist David reminds us to “Taste and See that the Lord is Good.” The context in which this Psalm is written is 1 Samuel 21. David is meeting up with the priest Ahimelech who is deeply afraid. David is fleeing King Saul who wants to kill him. He has approached Ahimelech without his armies. He wants provisions Ahimelech is fearful, perhaps having heard rumors of the breach between Saul and David and does not want to put himself and the other priests in jeopardy by getting in the middle of any conflict. David, sensing this, lies to Ahimelech to expedite his and his men's need for sustenance and to immediately be on their way: “I'm on a secret mission for the king” he says. The lie works for David, but this will, though unintended by him, result in terrible tragedy for the priests. Ahimelech is willing to feed them with it only if they are ritually pure. Reassured, Ahimelech gives them the bread. And they eat it. As you continue to read the chapter, you see how David continues to be utterly afraid. He flees the country and
pretends to be a mad man. It is utterly amazing to me that Psalm 34 arose out of this situation. In the midst of our deepest fears, how do we savor God?

It seems slowing down and paying attention is key. Carl Honore in his book *In Praise of Slowness*, when reflecting on a slow paced life in an Italian town wonders why we now do everything at a break-neck speed? Why are we always in such a rush? Is it possible to slow down? The author says that fast is busy, controlling, aggressive, stressed and impatient. Slow is calm, careful, intuitive, unhurried and patient. The paradox he says is that Slow is not always slow. Performing a task in a slow manner often yields faster results. As I mentioned we are engaged in the culture of speed.

I don’t know how many of you shopped the Amazon Prime sale this week. If you followed the news people who work for Amazon distribution centers walked off the job in places like Germany and Minnesota. They weren't necessarily striking over wages which are low, but instead over the speed at which they have to operate. Their movements have to beat the pace of the machines that bring them the goods to wrap and send. If they don't keep up, the machines tell them their productivity is down. People get fired for falling behind. If the machine tells you that you have been slow three times, you are usually fired on the fourth. They were striking, with no union support, to oppose inhumane working conditions. They are humans, not robots. We who are Prime Members love our free two day shipping. Other retailers are forced to follow suit to stay competitive in our capitalistic economy. The culture of speed is making us ill.

As this is our summer of Self Care, I encourage you to savor large and small things throughout your day. Slow things down. Savor the experiences and the people in front of you. Taste things thoroughly. Notice the breeze. Pay attention to the light in the trees. Enjoy the moments. Taste and see that the Lord is Good.

Amen.