

SALT CO
January 12, 2025

The Seven Windows in Jesus' House of Prayer
First Window: The Window on Joy

"Our Father in heaven..."
 Matthew 6:9a

WELCOME TO THE SALT CO!

Welcome those who are joining us online.

This is the HUB of Seasoned Adult Ministry. For anyone new...by SEASONED ADULTS we mean:

SEASONED AS IN...

Chronologically-- we've lived a lot of seasons of life

BUT more importantly-

Spiritually--- ...like when sodium and chlorine combined make SALT... by the grace of God, when we receive Christ into our lives we become like THIS [gesture: one hand—two hands—joined together]

We become something beautiful, a *new creation*...transformed and *transforming* for the rest of our lives.

JESUS CALLS US THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

And this is the SALT CO (where we pull off the road to gather, AND share stories about how to faithfully navigate the ever-changing terrain on Route 60+; and Route 60++...and +++...

A place where we:
 Re-fuel

Re-charge
And maybe even...*Re-tool*

At Calvary our mission is to *“Live and Love Like Jesus”*.

For this to happen we must think like Jesus! What? *How is that possible?*
HOLD UP BIBLE. Here's how! We've been given this, God's word speaking to us, to anyone who has ears to hear, eyes to read, hearts open to trusting Him.

Jesus shared a “piece of His mind” with us, so we can actually have the “have the mind of Christ”.

Many of us here at Calvary, last count around 1,000 (!) are doing the 30 Day Reading through Matthew's Gospel. How many here?

Why are we doing this? Because we want to see what God wants to show us, right? Because we know in our bones there is more than meets these sorry eyes of ours. Because we trust that God loves us, has LIFE in mind for us today, as well as forever and deep down we know we only have the first inkling of what He means by “life”! We do this because we want to have hope.

We do this because the world works on us every single day, assaulting us with images that evoke hopelessness. Suzanne and I went to see the movie on the life of Bob Dylan over the break. It portrayed Dylan's own search in his early years in the midst of the chaotic 60's. So many lost-searching souls during that upheaval. We remember those years too.

We were not prepared for the previews! Dark, de-humanizing themes in movies coming soon to our local screens!

There are competing visions all around us for what really matters.

Here are just three:

https://stock.adobe.com/search?k=stock+market&asset_id=641474594

There's the vision of a prosperous, financially secure life. So we watch what happens, maybe moment by moment at Stock Market

<https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/jauan-jennings-of-the-san-francisco-49ers-and-starling-news-photo/2192551487?adppopup=true>

Then there's the vision of gladiatorial combat at the games. Screens everywhere capture every move, up close!

<https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-house-chamber-is-seen-during-a-roll-call-vote-for-the-news-photo/1745436234?adppopup=true>

Not to mention all that is happening in Washington. Our news channels will be lit up big time with scenes like this one.

People all around us, our own kids and grandkids are in hot pursuit of visions of "happiness". Thing is, we're Seasoned Adults, we've been around some of those other blocks, haven't we? Now we can feel it, there's no more time to waste. *Let's get to it.* The real of it. Let's see what Jesus sees!

We're not the only ones. Jesus' followers were aching too. Think about it. They lived under the thumb of Roman tyranny. These followers had watched Jesus up close. They had a deep sense He was the One. One day one of them asked him,

Lord, teach us to pray

Think about this a moment; *"Lord Jesus Messiah, Son of God, Word made flesh, with God before the beginning, Alpha and Omega, in Whom all things hold together, in Whom one Day all things will be 'summed up', healer, teacher... how do You pray?"*

His response is our next series that will lead us to Easter. Jesus answers this question with an invitation to come see what He sees through, and here is the theme that will bring us to Palm Sunday:

The Seven Windows in Jesus' House of Prayer.

Ready for the “royal tour”?

We are going to enter with Jesus into His house where there are seven magnificent windows.

Riff on taking a tour at Chartres Cathedral with a British tour guide who made that cathedral his focus of study.

He had every section of every window committed to memory- hundreds of them. We were told the entire story of the Bible is depicted in that church so that people who could not read or write could learn, literally enter into the Story and know it by heart. So, they could see what God wants all of us to see.

So, you and I are invited into Jesus’ house of prayer to see what He sees in His prayer. There are seven windows that open onto “Joy, Beauty, New Creation, Sufficiency, Freedom, Courage and Deliverance”.

We’ll be using the version of the Lord’s Prayer we have in Matthew’s Gospel. Those of us who are doing the readings in Matthew read this this last week. To help us get ready for this tour and at the same time for our reading this month here is an excellent introduction to the first half of Matthew’s Gospel put together by the [Bible Project](https://www.bibleproject.com/). This is a little over eight minutes. Have a look. Here’s *why* we want to take this tour!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dv4-n6OYGI>

Jesus brings us to the first window in His house of prayer. He says,

“Pray in this way: Our Father in heaven.”

Not God in heaven. FATHER in heaven.

Before His arrest Jesus told His questioning, fearful followers in the Upper Room not to worry, that in His Father’s house there are many rooms, that He was going to prepare a place for them. He said, **“You know the way to that place.”** Thomas did not understand what Jesus was talking about. Jesus famously said,

“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Jesus did not say, “No one comes to God except through Me.” He said, no one comes to the Father except through Me.

Father is not a name. It’s a role. It’s a relationship word. My name is Dick. That’s my name. I am also a father, but only because I have a daughter, Julia.

God is Father because God has a Son. We know that Jesus is the Son because He has a Father.

Jesus talks about God as Father more often than any other writer in our New Testaments. In Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke most of the time, the word for “father” is Ab, or Abba. Jesus prays to Abba in the Garden of Gethsemane. Notice the doubled consonant. *It’s a personal, inside the family way of speaking.* A term of endearment. Children speak this way to their pappas and mammas. It’s also the way someone shows respect to an older man, to call him “abba”.

The very first thing Jesus wants us to see is that God is “our Father.” What sort of Father is God? This is very important because many have very mixed bag experiences with their earthly fathers. I wrote my dissertation on fathering and the challenges father wounded people face in addressing God as “our Father”.

Two things:

First, it is true that our relationships with our earthly fathers can color how we understand our relationship with God. Maybe this is one reason some are “atheists” or “agnostics”- they base what they believe about God on what they endured in their families. Thing is that the god they reject is not who Jesus shows us through this first window.

Second, it is equally true, maybe truer, that the relationship Jesus invites us into with God as our Father can influence how we relate to our earthly fathers, and mothers for that matter.

Jesus wants us to see what our Father in heaven is like. It's why He told the world-famous story of the father and his two sons. The younger insults his dad by asking for his inheritance and heads off to dissipate all he has and is. But then, in a distant land, he "comes to himself." He makes a plan to come home as a hired hand. Describe this father searching in the distance, waiting, hoping. Then, look! There! He spies the familiar shape coming over the horizon. He doesn't care what anyone thinks about an older man running through the village. His eyes are on his lost boy. He wraps him up in his arms, calls for a robe, sandals for his bruised bare feet. He calls for a party, ***"For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!"*** The son—expecting rejection is instead greeted with GLAD TO BE TOGETHER JOY ...

As many of you will remember from our study of Joy Switch...Neuroscience researchers conclude that the one word that best describes what the human brain thrives on is... joy.

Dr. Alan Schore defined JOY as

JOY: the relational experience of seeing another person's face and body language express that they are GLAD TO BE WITH YOU.

He described joy as the *"sparkle you see in someone's eyes that says 'I'm glad to be with you!'"*

This is the father in Jesus' parable.

God our Father is glad to be with us. With you! Every time you say, "Dear God", or just "God!", or "OUR FATHER", from what Jesus is showing you and me through this first window you can picture what it's like from the Father God's side, "I am SO glad to be with you! Look, everyone, it's Susan, it's Bob, it's Jim, it's YOU!!"

Dallas Willard describes God as the most joyful being in the universe.

God is the most joyful Being in the universe.

Dallas Willard

Jesus bears witness to the joy that exists between Father and Son. Jesus was born among us, lived with us, died and rose for us so that we could enter into His joy.

Notice, He is *our* Father. Not just “my” Father. Jesus also wants to help us see that God our Father draws you and me, and all sorts of other people, near and far, no matter their background, personality, color of their skin, education, income, AGE, politics (!), into life together as His children, as His agents in the work of the Kingdom of God. More on this further in on the tour...

This first window in Jesus’ house of prayer reveals that our Father is in heaven. The Greek here reads literally, “Our Father, the One in the heavens”. Heaven is where God is. Where God reigns, where what God wants done is done. Remember what happened at His baptism? The heavens “opened” and descended on Him ‘like a dove’. The heavens have never closed since!

Heaven is not far away- not beyond our solar system or galaxy somewhere. It is as near as what we call “sky” over our heads. It is nearer than that. It is near heaven that you and I breathe in our lungs (the word for the “birds of the air” in Matt. 6:26 is also translated as “heaven”). Heaven keeps you and me alive. When God’s people act like God’s people we get a peek into what it will be like one Day. We’re getting a little glimpse just now as God’s people step into helping in a thousand different ways those who have lost so much in these fires.

More about heaven through the Third Window. In this First Window Jesus wants us to see our Father in heaven is always near us.

So this first window invites us into our Father’s great joy.

Let’s talk:

TABLE TALK

1. Share your name. When did you first hear about or memorize the Lord’s Prayer? How does this prayer help you?
2. Do you know people who have rejected God? How might what Jesus wants to show us through this first window help them?

3. What do you think Jesus wants to show you personally about God through this first window? Is it hard to imagine that God is the most joyful being in the universe?

Reflection on Jesus coming into the temple one day. Looking around. Then returning with a whip! Turning over tables of money changers. People all over the courtyard heard Him. Quite a scene. He was heard saying, ***“It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a den of robbers.”*** (Matthew 21:12-13). Jesus was insisting, passionately that the temple be a “house of prayer”. Interesting that the apostle Paul says that *our bodies* are temples of the Spirit of God (I Cor. 6:19). Your body, your life, and mine, once THIS has taken place, are being remodeled. Jesus wants to disrupt things. Our houses, our lives being re-made. Re-constructed. Re-purposed. New windows, more windows! What’s blocking the view of OUR FATHER that he wants us to see? What is He re-arranging? What needs to be removed? Old habits. Patterns. New ones coming... His Spirit will insist on your house, which is now His house, be a house of prayer!

WALK THE TALK

1. Take the tour every day. Walk s-l-o-w-l-y. Outdoors if possible. Jesus’ house is all of creation!!
2. At the end of this month our young adults are doing something unprecedented - putting on a conference! They are passionate to see 18–30-year-olds in the Conejo Valley and beyond become awake to their identity, purpose and belonging according to Jesus. They've asked us to partner with them in opportunities to serve at the conference such as assisting with registration check-in and food hospitality. The conference is the evening of Friday January 1 and morning/afternoon of Saturday February 1. If interested let me (Pastor Dick) know and I will get you in touch with Pastor Sarah Smith."
3. Stay tuned to how you can help with the long recovery efforts after these devastating fires. We have a long road ahead... Why we need to pray as our Lord showed us...

Pray the Lord's Prayer together. A different translation each time. In a different position or posture each time. This time, standing, hands out if you want to...

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation.

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.