

SALT CO.
February 23, 2025

The Fourth Window in Jesus' House of Prayer

The Window on Celebration

"Give us this day our daily bread."

Matthew 6:11

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]

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:

Refresh

Re-fuel

And sometimes even...*Re-tool*

Time with Shawn

His thoughts on Bilbo's response to Gandalf's invitation to an "adventure":
"Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner! I can't think what anybody sees in them."

-What do you think about adventures?

-How can we pray for you?

SALT TALK

So, we're taking Jesus up on His invitation to an "adventure", to come see what He sees through the Seven Windows in His House of Prayer, what we call "The Lord's Prayer".

This is a generous gift the Lord gave us...a piece of His mind= His point of view of what living life on earth in relationship with Our Father in heaven is like.

You can read on the back of your Table Talk sheets a quick review of what we saw through the first three windows.

We come now to the fourth window that opens as we pray, ***"Give us this day our daily bread."***

What can we see through this window?

I got a glimpse one Saturday morning when the doorbell rang. I opened to our friend Jill standing there, a broad smile on her face, holding a VERY LARGE BOWL in her arms. In the bowl were sacks of flour, packets of yeast, a dozen eggs, a box of salt and a rolling pin. Before I could ask, she said, *"Happy Birthday Dick! I'm going to teach you how to bake bread! Because everyone loves the smell of freshly baked bread!"*

It's so true. When I was a student in France, I would make a run first thing in the morning to the boulangerie just a few doors down my street to pick up a still warm from the oven pain complet (whole wheat bread) and take it back to my room. I can still hear the crack of that crust, I can still see that wisp of steam, and best of all, the smell... *Nothing* better than freshly baked bread.

I can't resist saying it: we "knead" bread because we need bread (sorry!)

It's so basic. Our physical lives depend on "daily bread" in whatever form.

There are over 100 different kinds and forms of bread from round, flat, leavened, unleavened, crispy, chewy, sourdough, wheat, white, rye barley, corn (maize), potato, cassava, red bean, lentil, yam, pumpkin, rice. It's called babka in Ukraine, baghir in Morocco, baquette in France, dhebra in India, dorayaki in Japan, lavash in Iran, pita in Greece, scone in the UK, sopa in Paraguay, tandoor in East Africa.

We all need bread.

If you think about it, in a way bread reveals our vulnerable humanity.

There's a story in our bibles about this. Remember Joseph? He had the gift of interpreting dreams. Pharoah had one no one could figure out- first there were seven cows fat and sleek, then there were seven cows ugly and thin. Then the ugly and thin cows ate the fat and sleek cows but remained ugly and thin. Strange. Then there were seven ears of grain, full and good, but then there were seven ears withered and thin blighted by the east wind. The thin ears swallowed up the seven good ones. Bizarre.

Joseph knew what it meant- there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of devastating famine. Joseph proposed a plan to Pharoah: appoint a wise man and set him over the land of Egypt. Then appoint overseers. Take 1/5 of the produce during the seven years of plenty, store this up as a reserve against the seven years of famine.

Pharoah liked his plan. He gave the job to Joseph.

We all know this story, right? It all took place as the dream had shown. When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people came to Pharoah for bread. He sent them to Joseph, ***"Do whatever he says..."***

But there's a twist. It went like this:

“Now there was no food in all the land for the famine was very severe. The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. Joseph collected all the money to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan in exchange for grain that they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh’s house.”

Genesis 47:13-14

When they ran out of money for food they sold their livestock.

Then they sold everything they had left, including *themselves*!

Now watch this...

“So Joseph bought all the land...as for the people, he made slaves of them, from one end of Egypt to another.” (Gen. 47:20-21)

What was true then is still very much true today. Bread is so basic, so elemental, so needed (!) that it can also become a means of control especially over vulnerable people and even whole populations.

From World Vision

1. Food insecurity is increasing at an alarming rate. In 2022 nearly 258 million people across 58 countries experienced crisis-level food insecurity or worse (according to the World Food Programme-WFP).
2. Drivers of hunger: COVID-19’s lingering effects, severe weather events and conflicts are primary factors in 19 countries. Economic shocks surpassed conflict as the main driver in three countries: Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Syria. A spike in gang violence in Haiti escalated food insecurity there.
3. The war in Ukraine continues to have a global impact. The conflict has disrupted food supplies as Ukraine is a major exporter of cereal grains and sunflower oil. The war and increased natural gas prices have disrupted fertilizer production and exports globally, threatening supply, spiking costs, and jeopardizing future harvests.
4. Forty-five million children are dangerously malnourished. These suffer from wasting, also known as acute malnutrition, with over 1

million children dying each year. In 2022, 22% of children under 5 faced stunting.

5. When people are displaced, they can lose access to essential resources like food, clean water, and healthcare, and become more vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. The number of forcibly displaced people including refugees and those internally displaced, reached 110 million at the end of June 2023.

So, what happened in Egypt helps us understand the meaning of “daily bread” provided by the Lord as the Israelites traveled through the wilderness. There was no hoarding allowed, only gathering up for one day at a time, except before sabbath when they were allowed to gather for two days. We could say the Lord had them right where He wanted them!
Humble, human, looking up, asking each day, thanking God each day, for bread for the day.

It’s a hard good word for us because we’re so security minded. We have our 401-k’s, our investments, our financial plans with goals to be sure we have “enough”. Nothing wrong with these things. It’s just that we tend to forget... and forget what many, many around us face every single day, people we may not know personally but our Lord certainly knows them.

We can miss that Jesus has us praying for OUR daily bread. Whose? That would be *all of us!*

Describe here ways CCC addresses hunger issues.

-Samaritan’s Purse- for emergency relief on a global scale

-Buyamba- addressing physical care and needs of the children of Uganda. Includes LIfewater projects to prevent water-born diseases.

-Project Manana in the Dominican Republic has a saying, “Fill a child’s stomach and they will open their mind...” Food for the body, food for the soul...

-Fresh Market- 1.5 million pounds of food distributed locally! Many here could share some stories of the importance of daily bread.

-Fire relief underway through partnerships in the Los Angeles and Pasadena areas.

So, it would seem, this is also a prayer for things to work. Consider that loaf on the center of your table. Think about the farmers, the harvesting machines, the trucks, trains, production facilities, those in sales and management, who own, who run markets who have all had a hand in these loaves of bread on our tables. Wonder bread! I was put in touch with how important good roads are in Haiti! By the time oranges harvested in the mountains make it to the port they're already "juiced"!

Every loaf of bread in any form is wonder bread!

To pray for OUR daily bread then is to pray for so many things to work well enough together, for economies, for governments, foreign relations, for banks, for schools, for healthy food handling practices.

This Fourth Window in Jesus' House of Prayer opens on our loving Father in heaven meeting specific, basic, real, daily human needs.

Jesus demonstrated this when He sat 5,000 (not counting women and children) down in a field. You know this. He took a few loaves of bread and some fish, blessed and broke them, and with his followers' help He fed them all. He did it again for 4,000, again not counting the women and children who DO count. With *baskets* full left over!

What was the message? Recall the first three windows in Jesus' House of Prayer. God is our Father in heaven. We hallow His name as we reflect who God is- like mirrors- out into the world. So, we pray for His good will to be done here. Because the kingdom of God is here! Right here, on earth, in Jesus breaking loaves in fields among thousands of hungry people.

To give them a little foretaste of what it will be like one fine Day.

When we're battling illness, struggling in these aging bodies, wondering where we will find the energy for another day, when we find our attention turning toward "glowing rectangles", we need this bread. For these human bodies, but also bread for these aching souls. We hunger for the bread of

hope, of purpose, of friendship, belonging, of contributing, of knowing that we matter. Of remembering that other people, people we will never meet on this side of the veil... *matter*.

Jesus knows our hunger. It's why He said,

"I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the world is my flesh."

John 6:48-51

It's why that night in the Upper Room, with blinds pulled, door locked against the threatening dark, His followers watched as our Lord lifted up bread to give thanks to the Father, and then He broke it saying, ***"This is My body, broken for you. Take, eat, do this in remembrance of Me..."***

In Matthew's Greek version of "give us this day our daily bread", there is a hint of what Jesus was doing not only that night, but perhaps every time He broke bread with His followers.

He was opening a window for them to get a glimpse of what it will be like.

The Greek translation of Matthew's version of the Fourth Window Prayer can be spread out this way,

"Give us, here and now, the bread of life-which is promised for the Great Tomorrow".

(N.T. Wright, The Lord and His Prayer, p. 41).

What is that "Great Tomorrow"? Picture a banquet. A feast!

Isaiah got a glimpse:

"On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear..."

Isaiah 25:6

At the end of our bibles John saw a vision:

“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out,

***‘Hallelujah!
For the Lord our God,
the Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and exult,
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready;
to her it has been granted to be clothed
with fine linen, bright and pure’-
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.***

And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’

Revelation 19:6-9a

I asked at the start what does this Fourth Window open us onto?

We can see now that this is the Window on Celebration!

Every time you and I break bread, (all of it is wonder bread) we have an opportunity to remember again our true situation, that we are merely human, fragile, vulnerable after all, and to give thanks for our Father’s daily provision. We can remember what Jesus did for us, the gift He has given those who receive Him like we do when we come to His Table. To remember that we are God’s agents on the planet, on this earth where there is great hunger of body and soul. But we are also invited to remember the future, that this meal, this bread we enjoy today, is but a taste, an “hors d’oeuvre” of what’s coming.

There’s the old saying that a Christian is only one beggar helping other beggars where to find food.

So we can give thanks together. And celebrate how greatly loved we all are of God.

TABLE TALK

1. What went into this loaf of bread being here on your table? Who did what for this to be here? What then might it mean then to pray "Give US this day OUR daily bread"?
2. How might praying, "Give us this day our daily bread" influence your thoughts about the source(s) of your security?
3. Read John 4:32-34 and talk together about what Jesus was trying to get across to His followers.

But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

4. How have you experienced a sense of getting "spiritual nourishment" by doing the will of the Father?
5. What do you think about making every time you break bread a time for a "mini-celebration"? What would go into this?
- 6.

WRAP UP

Pick up on Question #4. Explore for a minute the connection between the Jesus offering us the bread of life and our working for others to have daily bread= "living and loving like Jesus". Serving Him is our "soul food". If you ever are feeling like maybe you don't matter, if ever you are feeling down, or dry, or empty, find a need and see what you can do to meet it. See what happens in your soul. Who do you know who could use some "bread" (physical, soulful) today?

Why not make this your "walk the talk" this week?

The Lord's Prayer- The Message

***Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what's best—
 as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You're in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You're ablaze in beauty!
 Yes. Yes. Yes.***

BLESSING