

## Spitting out Pretzels 2022

This seems to be a repeat topic and is certainly timely for this week and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The content will be the same as it was in the past with a new paragraph or two added for lessons learned this year.

Last year during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, I went out to lunch with friends and ordered French Onion Soup without thinking. I was careful to make sure I ordered unbreaded wings not even aware of what I had done. However, God's Spirit is quick to remind us when we step out of line. I tore into the soup (usually I just eat the cheese of the top anyway) but quickly remembered the bread underneath! Thankfully, I only ate cheese and broth, no bread, or my buddy Arlo would have had bread and onion soup all over him. The wings would have to suffice. Showing my age, I was reminded of the following essay we did 4 years ago back in 2018. Robbie did the same type of "dining mistake" as me, when Robbie told us of spitting out pretzels because he wasn't sure of their ingredients. This oversight on his part was repeated by myself this week with a serving of instant mashed potatoes.

I grabbed a couple of steaks for dinner this week so Andrea would be spared in cooking (well she cooked them anyway). I also grabbed a microwavable serving of

Bob Evan's Garlic Mashed Potatoes. Potatoes, a vegetable, right? How in the dickens does leaven end up in potatoes? After dinner, Andrea checked the label on the packaging and lo and behold they had a leavening product in them! I felt like I gave her the forbidden apple but lesson learned. In examining the "leaven list" hanging on the pantry door, I was amazed at the junk they put into microwavable food. Here's the list in case you don't have one: baking powder, calcium acid phosphate and bicarbonate of soda, baking soda, sodium bicarbonate, yeast, tartrate baking soda, cream of tartar, phosphate baking powder, sodium acid phosphate, ammonium bicarbonate, carbonate of ammonia. Really? I wonder how many of these things found their way into Moses' tent? It's like Dmitri Mendeleev, Louis Pasteur and Marie Curie got together and put together a cookbook. They're all chemists if you didn't guess. Chemistry isn't my favorite subject unless it deals with explosives.

Each year prior to The Feast of Unleavened Bread, we all take to the removal of leavening and products containing leaven from our homes. Our conscious efforts have become a yearly practice as we grow in God's Word. Even to the point of reading food labels so we do not inadvertently make the wrong choice while shopping, even for mashed potatoes. The conscious effort to remove leaven from our lives is commendable (and a responsibility) and the focus is on the sin and a memorial of our deliverance from bondage. We all know that. However, we have

learned through our Bible Studies and the verses from the Old that God tells us 4 times as much to eat unleavened bread over putting out the leavened. Ingesting the Word of God will leave no room for the other.

In pulling back the cheese in the onion soup, the bread reminded me of hidden sin. Failing to read the ingredients on mashed potatoes also opened the door to the enemy slipping one in. He is *that* clever and that's how far our food additives have digressed. Somethings we may simply overlook out of habit. But we learn from our mistakes and shortcomings and it sharpens our awareness of the journey we are on. A constant and continual searching of ourselves while ingesting the Word of God and growing in the likeness of Jesus Christ will help us remove this leaven and bring us to new levels of awareness. All the while, never forgetting the bondage we were delivered from. God has His ways of making the necessary and desired changes in us but we must do our part.

On the positive side, our years together in keeping the Holy Days has produced spiritual growth. Our devotion and diligence to seeking God's Wisdom in His Word will yield continued growth (**Psalm 27:4, 69:32, 119:2, Prov. 8:17, Isa.55:6, Jer. 29:13, Lam. 3:25, Matt. 6:33, 2 Pet. 3:14-18**). Personally, it is awesome to witness the growth in The Lord we have within our fellowship and the new family members He has added. Changes have clearly taken place in all of us. There seems to be a greater awareness and understanding of God's Word.

When Robbie told us back in 2018 of his focus on shopping for a snack, reading all the labels and contents, and inadvertently overlooking a pretzel and spitting it out, I could almost see Our Lord Jesus smile a warm smile. Seeing one of His own demonstrating the love of obedience (**Isa. 1:19**). We didn't get to this level overnight, this has transpired over the last several years of keeping His Sabbaths and Holy Days, fellowship and Bible Study. More importantly it is our growing desire to please God (**1 Thess.2:15, Heb. 11:6, Heb.13:16**). We are told we must love God with all our heart, soul and our might (**Deut. 6:5, Josh. 22:5, Matt. 22:37, Mark 12:30**). It gets easier by the day and each year that passes.

In putting God and His Word and Will for us first, we can begin to grow in the likeness of His Son (**Col. 3:10-13**). Less of self and more of Him. The past 6 ½ years seems to have flown by and the change is noticeable, the growth is evident. We are moving toward fulfilling our Creation Purpose, being obedient to God's Commandments, keeping His Sabbaths and His Holy Days, and we are doing it according to His Word.

We know that He meant it if He said it at least **157** times throughout the Bible to "Keep My Commandments, Obey My Commandments, and do My Commandments" and so on. In fact, Commandments is mentioned in nearly every chapter of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days has become a delight (**Psalms 112:1, Psalm 119:47, 143**). Our keeping them

leads to more wisdom and understanding (**Deut. 4:6, Psalm 49:3, 51:6, 111:10, Prov. 9:10, Isa. 33:6, James 3:17**).

Being aware of the “leaven” in our lives helps us to remember how ever-present sin is all around us. Satan never attacks when we are at our strongest (**1 Pet. 5:8**), much like a lion, he will take out the weakest or the stragglers from the herd.

Equipped with this knowledge, we can stand fast in our faith and stand on the Word of God (**James 4:7**).

As we close the first two Holy Days on this year and await The Pentecost, may we do so with anticipation (and counting for ourselves) with a joyful expectation of the change Our God is working in each and every one of us. We know without any doubt that if we remain faithful and do our part, He will do His. “For your fellowship in the gospel from *the* first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will complete *it* until *the* day of Jesus Christ.”-**Phil. 1:5-6**. The countdown to “First Fruits” has begun.

Whether it be Pretzels, French Onion Soup or Mashed Potatoes, may we all be conscious of recognizing, putting and keeping the “leaven/sin” out of our lives. We cannot be blind to spiritual matters and the wiles of the devil (**Ephesians 6:11**).

More important, we must maintain a steady diet of the Word of God. As we do, we will continue to grow together as a family of God and worship Him in truth and in spirit. “In conclusion, brethren, rejoice! Be perfected; be encouraged; be of the

same mind; be at peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”- **2**

**Corinthians 13:11** (AFV).

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