

Bread Day!

Inspired by John 6:41-51

The Jenkins cousins murmured about Josie because she had said, “I’m making a new bread recipe that came from my cooking class not the one that came down from great grandma Harriet.” Josie was beaming with pride and excitement. This was her first time to host the **Annual Let’s Make Bread Together’ Day!**

Each year on Harriet’s birthday, the women in the family gathered to honor their matriarch by sharing stories and laughs and making her famous bread from scratch. Harriet had six daughters, and each of her daughters had three daughters, so this was quite the affair. Josie grew up watching her mother move with ease in the kitchen and all the while filling the room with tales of her mother’s kitchen on Bread Day! It was an oral history of much more than yeast and flour papering the walls. It was four generations thick.

Josie had a few favorite tales that were gladly retold time and again upon request. She loved that this day was like a sacred holiday in her family, ranking just below the birth of the Savior, Himself. She loved everything about this event — EXCEPT the bread, itself. She found it boring, lacking taste. She would watch closely as the others dug in with a rousing toast on the first bite. Was she the only one who found the bread to be of underwhelming flavor? It could hardly be classified as flavor at all. In fact, she would describe it more like eating notebook paper.

Last year, the treasured trio of Harriet’s bread basket, her apron, and the beloved bread recipe card was passed down to Josie. It was finally her turn to host! For decades, the transition came quite easily and organically — when the youngest daughter became a mother herself, it was time. Josie had no children and wasn’t sure she ever would. Cousin Sue pitied her and tried to offer consolation saying, “Hun, you must be devastated! Every woman dreams of being a mom some day!” But again, Josie looked at all the women in her family and wondered if she was the only one who didn’t crave motherhood. She didn’t feel like she was unfulfilled — with the exception of finding the perfect bread recipe.

To prepare for her turn at the helm, Josie enrolled in several cooking classes over the course of a year. She explored and experimented finding some wonderfully tasty ways to improve Grandma Harriet's recipe. What better way to honor her than building on her great foundation and bringing an even tastier version to the table!

Josie had Harriet's handwritten recipe card encased in glass to preserve and showcase her legacy. It would be passed around year to year as they all took turns hosting. On the morning of Bread Day, Josie inspected the card. Harriet had perfect penmanship. Every letter was formed flawlessly, as if from a computer rather than an ink pen. There were splatters and smudges on the yellowed card. One corner sported a coffee ring from Harriet's cup that held the card in place while she baked. On the back was a kiss print featuring her iconic posey pink lipstick, and the phrase "Do all things in love."

She was delighted to have preserved it this way, and could hardly wait for her aunts and cousins to see it! She felt honored to make this tradition even more special and tastier than ever! But, the murmurs still came. "Has she forgotten who her mother, grandmother, and great grandmothers are? How dare she say, 'I'm making a new recipe, not the bread that was handed down from Harriet?'" Though they didn't expect her to hear Josie answered and said to them, "Stop murmuring among yourselves. Talk to me. Say it out loud for all to hear. Remember the most important ingredient of Harriet's recipe? — 'To do all things in love.' We have all been taught love and bread making by her example."

Everyone who listens with love and learns with love will be OK with the changes. I am not erasing Harriet from the recipe. I'm still making her bread. Our ancestors have been eating the same bread and honestly, it's not very good. Whoever eats this bread isn't betraying our mothers and grandmothers. Harriet created an experience that she hoped would live on forever. We all look and act in ways she probably wouldn't recognize or understand. But, she would be so proud of the love I put into preparing for this day. Harriet lives on in each of us — you and me.

Now, "Let's make bread together!"

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