

Pancakes

“Ephraim, he mixes himself among the nations. Ephraim is a pancake not turned over.” Hosea 7:8

Pancakes are a comfort food, and easy to prepare either from a box, or from scratch. The form and content of pancakes has changed over time, but pancakes are still enjoyed and consumed all over the world.

Usually it consists of eggs, flour, salt, and milk mixed together and fried and flipped in a pan, ergo a pan cake. Some use baking powder, some do not.

Perhaps we can learn a lesson from two little boys, flipping our attitude in not the quite the same way they do. A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin 5, and Ryan 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake.

The mother saw the opportunity for a spiritual lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait'."

Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

There is a dessert dish in Austria called Kaiserschmarrn, kind of a sweet raisin pancake with eggs and sugar. Lindsey Vonn, an American Alpine skier, says it is not something she can eat very often, but if she has done well at a race, that can be her celebration treat! Mmm. Might have to try that!

Taylor Swift says that her absolute favorite meal in Nashville is sweet potato pancakes at the Pancake Pantry. And IHOP does very well with the pancakes.

There is something to taking a basic recipe and dressing it up for special occasions. Like the pancake, we can see a spiritual blessing when God puts a little something special in us.

Shrove Tuesday, or Pancake Day for many Christians, is a day to begin spiritual preparation for Easter. It always falls about forty days before Easter Sunday, this year on March 9.

Shrove Tuesday gets its name from the ritual of shriving that Christians used to undergo in the past. In shriving, a person confesses their sins and receives absolution for them. Over 1000 years ago a monk wrote in the Anglo-Saxon Ecclesiastical

Institutes, “In the week immediately before Lent everyone shall go to his confessor and confess his deeds and the confessor shall so shrive him.”

It is also called Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday. On that day Christians are supposed to use up milk, eggs, and fats, and eat less and better both in earthly food and spiritual food matters.

Shrove Tuesday falls the day before Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins the 40 days of spiritual preparation for Easter. The season, and the 40 days, comes from the 40 days of temptation, fasting, and spiritual preparation of Jesus in the wilderness in the period immediately beginning his ministry in Israel.

The pancake has a very long history and featured in cookbooks as far back as 1439. The tradition of tossing or flipping them is almost as old: "And every man and maide doe take their turne, And tosse their Pancakes up for feare they burne." (Pasquil's Palin, 1619).

Flipping pancakes, and flipping us to our spiritual side, is a task God wants for Christians. If we stay too long on the first side, and spend too much time in the sinful world, we may burn, in hell, unless we flip to the spiritual side like a pancake.

In England pancake races are an important part of the Shrove Tuesday celebrations. In a Pancake race, the object of the contest is to get to the finishing line first, carrying a frying pan with a cooked pancake in it and flipping the pancake as you run.

The ingredients for pancakes can be seen to symbolize four points of significance at this time of year:

Eggs ~ Creation

Flour ~ The staff of life

Salt ~ Wholesomeness

Milk ~ Purity

Psalm 38:4 says “Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.” Whether it is pancakes on Pancake Day, or God’s word on Sunday in worship, God wants us to experience the wonderful spiritual heights to which God can take us when we simply take up the fork, slice into the stack of

good things God offers, and have the opportunity to go “mmm mmm good!”

Sally offered to babysit care for the eight-year-old daughter of neighbors. The next morning morning she made a big breakfast of bacon and eggs for her.

"Mom always serves hot pancakes for breakfast," said the eight-year-old.

So Sally hurried back into the kitchen and quickly cooked a plate of hot pancakes, which she offered next. "No, thank you," she said.

"But I thought you said your mother always has hot pancakes for breakfast!" said Sally.

"She does," said the child. "But I don't eat them!"

So, don't be like Ephraim, and turn over for God. Find a devotional time to guide you through Lent. Get back in church. Pray for God's love to be more in your life. And repent, so that a new person may be seen by those you see and those you don't. See you at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner.