

The Banquet

Uncle Zeph, short for Zephirin, is a friend to many in the small community of Liberty Bayou. He is the patriarch of our family, employer to many in Liberty, and plays a mean fiddle at zydeco socials. Zeph is a friendly man known for his legendary Louisiana outdoor cooking and his ready hand to help folks.

He and Aunt Katy grew up together in the bayou, paddling the swamp and fishing. Over the years, he built a marina, a family campground, a church campground, as well as providing airboat tours and flatboat fishing tours. Uncle Zeph's airboats and those of his neighbors, form the Liberty Rescue Service, which helps locate lost paddlers and fishermen in the swamp. The swamp with its beautiful cypress trees and low hanging Spanish moss is pretty, but it's not a place you want to be lost in, day or night. Many frightening creatures live in the swamp.

About a week ago, Zeph announced to his family and friends that he was going to throw a low country boil on September first at the church campground. He called it his lagniappe, a creole word meaning extra, unexpected, or a small gift. Mouths began to water because Zeph's etouffée, jambalaya, red beans and rice, crawdad boils, and his highly prized pralines and beignets served with chicory coffee were the best to be had.

Excitement was in the air as the food was prepared, the picnic tables were washed and clean, and the giant plastic bibs that were needed when eating creole food, were at the ready. Right on time, it was almost four o'clock. Zeph and his family sat down in the rocking chairs for a break from their hard work. They didn't mind all the preparations because they wanted to give the very best.

Five o'clock and not a car in sight. Maybe traffic is heavy. Five-thirty and no one at all. Zeph got up to check on the food and called out to Thomy "to get on the line to those invited and find out when they would be arriving." After a few calls, Thomy came back with the list of reasons, they were really excuses, of why people will not be coming tonight:

Someone's airboat is out of commission and he needs to get it going again.

The blue crab are heavy in the nets, and this means big money.

Another is standing in as a fiddle player at a Fais do-do. (A party.)

And another just filled his new swimming pool and the grandkids are coming over.

Zeph stood still for a few minutes and then said, "We gave of ourselves for their nourishment, refreshment, and entertainment and they did not regard it as something to be had." Then he stood on a table and yelled to all those in the family campground to come to his supper. He stood at the front of the pavilion, welcoming them and giving each person a protective bib to wear. They gave thanks, blessed the food, and enjoyed themselves into the night. As they sat around the campfire, Zeph realized that this supper was like the story told in Luke 14:15-24. Over a cup of chicory coffee, he told them the story of people that had been invited to a lavish banquet, but gave excuses not to go, not realizing what they were missing out on. The guests asked for more Bible stories and before the party ended, four children and eighteen adults came to know Jesus as their Savior.

Word got around the next day that a celebration of all celebrations was enjoyed by strangers and folks that were not of the bayou. Those that chose not to attend missed more than good food and entertainment, they missed the moving of the Holy Spirit in the camp.

God says that He will not always keep inviting you to Him and His banquet. Open the door today, let Him in and feast with Him for eternity.

Revelation 3:20: Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.