

The spice that money can't buy

A Jewish story

Key ideas: the importance of the Sabbath, faith as a special ingredient in life.

A Roman Emperor once visited the house of a very poor Jewish family. To his surprise he found them laughing and singing, as if they were at a feast, even though there was not much food on the table. The Jews invited the Emperor to join them and soon he was eating some of the most delicious food he had ever tasted.

When he returned to the palace, the Emperor summoned his cooks and described what he had eaten. He ordered them to prepare a similar meal but, try as they might, it never tasted the same as the food he had eaten in that poverty stricken house.

Eventually, in desperation, he sent for the head of the Jewish family and asked him what was in the food that he had missed out. 'There is an ingredient that with all your wealth you cannot buy,' replied the Jew. 'It is the finest spice there is. When it is added it changes even a snack into a banquet.'

'Tell me what it is and I shall buy it,' ordered the Emperor.

'I'm afraid not,' answered the Jew. 'It's called Shabbat.'