

**Isaiah 25:6-9 “The Easter Feast” March 31 & April 1, 2018**  
**St. Paul’s Lutheran church – New Ulm, MN**

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***Isaiah 25:6-9***

**On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines.<sup>7</sup> On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations;<sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people’s disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. <sup>9</sup>In that day they will say, “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.”**

***Introduction***

What’s for dinner today? Ham and baked potatoes? Chicken? Tacos? Cheerios? I’ll bet that there would be a wide variety of things consumed by us today for Easter dinner. In Isaiah 25 God picks up on the concept of food. Because he made us and because our Lord Jesus is one of us, He knows food has a strong appeal to us. We need to eat. We like to eat. So God pictures a fine banquet ....Let’s call it ..

***“THE EASTER FEAST.”***

***1. A Fine Feast***

For our Easter Feast through the Prophet Isaiah God takes us out to dinner to a mountain-top restaurant. ***“On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples.”*** The mountain is Mt. Zion. This is the name given to one of the rocky ridges in ancient Israel. The name eventually became an alias for Jerusalem. In the Old Testament quite often Mt. Zion is used to refer to God’s Church – all believers in Christ on earth and in heaven. It is this symbolic or figurative use that is applied in Isaiah 25. Holy Christian Church is God’s mountain-top restaurant.

God says through the prophet, ***“On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine - the best of meats and the finest of wines.”*** God pictures prime-cut steaks or prime-rib, and \$100-a-bottle wines. In case you don’t like red meat or drink wine, please mentally cooperate.

Put this in the setting of ancient Israel. Some people were in exile in Babylon. Others were in ruins in Judah. There wasn’t much reason for peace, hope, and joy. So for them this is an appealing picture. At the same time God is using it to assure his people that he will give people vital things they need. He’s laying out a smorgasbord of love, assurance, peace, hope, joy, inner strength, and meaning for living. He’s providing spiritual power bars and feel-good food for the soul. He lays out the same smorgasbord for us today.

These are things that people try to get in many different directions - success, wealth, popularity, appearance, relationships, recreation, education, pleasure, drugs, etc. Some of these things are nice – some necessary. But none of these things can fully satisfy the taste, the yearning for love, inner peace, hope, joy, and meaning for life. Sometimes people try so hard but end up with so little. It’s like having the taste for a prime-cut, juicy steak and trying to satisfy it with a soy burger. To dine only on these things will leave a person spiritually malnourished and eternally dead of spiritual starvation.

But what man, money and worldly things can’t do to satisfy us, God can. In this life, through His Church, God lays before us prime rib and porterhouse steaks on the platter of the gospel. In the good news of

Jesus Christ, God serves us his love – a love so deep that he damned his own Son rather than us who deserved. In the gospel God serves up peace – the peace of forgiveness that we have with God through Christ’s perfect life, his death on the cross, and his resurrection through which God says, “You are forgiven.” Through the gospel God serves us hope – the hope that all things work for our good and the hope that one day we will be with God in heaven. Through the gospel God gives us reason to live – we are here to serve and glorify God because he served and saved us from sin’s curse – death and hell. Through the gospel God gives us power and his Holy Spirit works in our hearts enabling us to believe in him and do his will.

This is the Easter Feast. God says that this is **“a feast of rich foods for all peoples.”** This is for you and for others. This is yours and theirs through faith.

## **2. The Shroud Is Removed**

But you can’t eat what you can’t see or what you don’t know is there. You can be hungry. There can be food in the frig, but if you don’t open it and look in, you will never enjoy it. This was true of many of the Jews to whom Isaiah initially wrote.

The same is true of God’s Easter Feast. If you don’t know about or you can’t see it, you can’t even begin to enjoy it. The fact is that a shroud or covering of spiritual ignorance keeps people from seeing the feast God has prepared for people on his mountain. This shroud is caused by sin. Most people in the world today still live under this shroud. Christ is their Savior, but they don’t know or see him. Forgiveness is there, but they don’t have it by faith. Peace is there but it isn’t part of their lives. Hope is here but they don’t enjoy it. Christ, God’s Son, shines as the Light of the world. But the shroud of ignorance and unbelief keep people from this life-giving Light. If the shroud is not removed one lives in spiritual darkness, dies, and is damned forever. We were all born under this shroud.

Isaiah wrote, **“...he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations...”** God has removed this covering from us. God sent his Spirit into our hearts through baptism and the light-giving gospel. God enabled us to see him not only as a holy God, but as a loving Father who saved us through his Son sacrificed for us. Now, on a continual basis God gives us power to live in faith and to show love for him and for one another.

But even as we Christians live our lives, this shroud can begin to cover us again. If we neglect worship and the Word, if we become nonchalant in respect to sin, if we become unresponsive to God’s Word, then the shroud of ignorance, unbelief and sin can begin to cover us. As a result we begin to spiritually hunger and thirst but can’t see or forget the feast God has laid out for us in the Gospel. This is why we, God’s people want to use God’s Word faithfully on our own and with our fellow Christians in our church so that the shroud, once, removed, does not return. We want to continue to eat from God’s Easter Feast.

One of the things that adds layers to the shroud is death.

## **3. Death is Swallowed Up**

Many of us have been at the bedside of a loved one’s who is dying. We have been at the side of the casket ready to be lowered into the grave. While we Christians know are loved ones will be or are with Jesus, there’s still a dark side to death. We’ve lost a loved one. There’s sadness. We mourn. Death creates a shroud.

If death is still around, how can we enjoy the feast God lays out for us through his church, his mountain-top restaurant? Isaiah indicates that God has taken care of this too. He wrote, ***“He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.”***

“Swallowing up death” – now that’s pretty graphic. One summer I fish-sat for some friends for a couple of weeks. They had piranha. The piranha ate gold fish. My first day on the job I put the gold fish in the piranha tank and waited for the flying of fins and flesh as the razor-sharp piranha teeth tore their prey. But my sadistic anticipation went unsatisfied. In one gulp the piranha swallowed the goldfish. In but a moment it was over.

In but a moment Christ swallowed up death. It was a moment early on that first day of the week following Jesus crucifixion. At that moment Christ came to life. With the jaws of eternal life, he swallowed up death. As St. Paul wrote, ***“Death no longer has mastery over him (Rom 6:9).”***

Unless Jesus comes in our lifetime, we too will have to deal with death. But because of Jesus and his death and resurrection, when we die we will have life with Jesus. At the moment of our death our soul will leave our body and go to be with Jesus in heaven where we will feast on his perfect love, peace, joy, hope and harmony that exist in the presence of God. And when Jesus returns in glory on the last day, he will swallow up death for our bodies as he raises our bodies and glorifies us together with all who have died in the Lord. This is why St. Paul wrote, ***“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that that is written will come true, ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’”*** On that day God will feed us with an Easter Feast in his Church in heaven.

#### ***4. Rejoice & Be Glad***

Isn’t this reason to rejoice and be glad? God thinks so. So he moved Isaiah to write, ***“In that day they will say, ‘Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.’”***

When we feast with God on his mountain in eternity, we will behold God’s glory, enjoy perfect peace, have complete contentment, be fully free from sin, and have life to the fullest. Then we will say, “We trusted him and he didn’t let us down.” We will rejoice and be glad to perfection. But while we have to wait to have and be these things to perfection, we already have these blessings and opportunities now. God has saved us. We have spiritual life. We have peace. Our sins are forgiven. We have spiritual power. Jesus has swallowed up death and will do it for us. We eat from God’s Easter Feast.

Therefore rejoice and be glad. Live every day to the glory of God. Even though there may be things that make you sad, rejoice in your hearts. God loves you and is with you and in you. Rejoice in worship. Rejoice as you witness to others. Remember that God’s Easter Feast is for ***all peoples ... All nations.*** Rejoice and be glad.

What’s for dinner today? Whatever it is, enjoy it! But certainly enjoy the Easter Feast God has given you!