

Easter Dinner

- May God's grace and abundant peace be yours, sisters/brothers in Christ, fellow Christians, who've come worship today on glorious res festival called Easter, greatest celebration of Christianity, day Savior Jesus Christ rose from dead, defeated death, opened gates to heaven. This day isn't re bunnies, baskets, candies, colored eggs. This is day of Christ's victory over death. And, **"Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57).**
- So, fellow Easter Sunday worshipers, what having for Easter dinner today? What's on menu? Easter is day when lot people get with fam for beautiful Easter dinner. Maybe after church, going someone's house for lovely meal at beautiful table with del food. Or maybe, going out to eat at restaurant, for Easter brunch – buffet, with all kinds variety of choices. What having for Easter dinner?
- As cont Isa sermon series, Scr reading think about is 1st PDW read, Isa 25. Here Isa, in sense, talks re Easter dinner. **Vs. 6.** This is Easter dinner Lord has prepared, for you/me; at this meal, has very best. Phrases, **"rich food, aged wine, best of meats, finest of wines,"** all mean this feast has very best, highest quality delicacies you could imagine. This is God's Easter dinner; and by raising Jesus from dead, God sets this Easter dinner before you. Look what you've got:
 - Tray of forgiveness. Through death/res of Christ, all sins forgiven forever. Paul in 1 Cor: **"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is future; you are still in your sins...But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead" (15:17, 20).** Tray of forgiveness.
 - Platter of peace. **"Therefore since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1).** Peace with God means have God who loves, cares for, never leave us. Platter of peace.
 - Hefty helping of victory. When **"It is finished!" (Jn 19:30),** meant won victory over devil. Now lives, reigns forever on high forever. His victory is ours. Hefty helping of victory.
 - Please pass me pan of Jesus' presence. Before ascending, risen Lord: **"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mt 28:20).** Jesus always present with us.
 - Here's main course; at this Easter dinner God sets before us our future res from dead. **"Because I live, you also will live" (Jn 14:19).** So today we feast on truth that someday we'll rise from dead, live forever with Jesus in heaven. What an Easter dinner God prepares for us today!
- Maybe today if go to fancy Easter dinner, you'll sit at beautiful table covered with lovely linen tablecloth. Tablecloth makes table stand out in dignity, elegance. Growing up, mom stopped using when bros/I used as napkin. Now with 3 kids under 8, our table hasn't seen tablecloth in years.
- Isa talks re tablecloth, of sorts: **vs. 7.** Instead of elegant covering for table, this sheet is grim burial shroud that covers world. In our culture, when person dies, covered in casket, urn; other cultures, wrapped up, covered in burial shroud. What Isa saying here: without res of Jesus from dead, we and whole world (like tablecloth on table) would be covered up with the **vs. 7** – a burial shroud, that we couldn't get out from under; trapped beneath it, with eternal death destiny.
- But, **vs. 7-8a.** Swallow up death! You parents of high schoolers/college students ever notice: man, your kids can eat a lot! Can pack away food! You can heap up plate for them, turn head for moment, next thing know, tapping shoulder looking for seconds. Swallow it down; gone. Here, God says, he's swallowed up death forever; now gone. By rising from dead, Jesus has taken burial shroud of death, swallowed it whole; now gone forever. Doesn't mean we're not going to die; means: death now gateway to heaven. On GF we saw Jesus go into death. Today on Easter, see him come out on other side. Rips off burial shroud that covered him. Because we're connected to Christ through baptismal faith, Jesus rips off burial shroud covering us, as well. We've been uncovered, released from power of death; look forward to great day of res when Jesus will bring us through death into eternal life. At this Easter dinner Jesus takes off tablecloth of death covering us, swallows it whole.

- Apostle Paul, in great res ch of Bible, 1 Cor 15, quotes this passage: **“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written”** (in our Isa passage!) **“will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory’”** (1 Cor 15:54). And since Jesus is victorious, we are joyous. **Vs. 8b.** Maybe you’ve been shedding tears lately: of frustration, sadness, anxiety. Whatever heartaches have filled your eyes with tears, let res of Jesus fill your heart with joy. You have home in heaven, waiting for you, prepared for you, by your risen Savior: **“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am”** (Jn 14:3). In heaven, no more tears. There (this is Rev’s picture of heaven): **“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away”** (Rev 21:4). Let Jesus’ res from dead, and his promise of everlasting life in heaven, dry your tears, fill you with joy.
- Easter dinner with family is time of joy. Today, if getting together with fam for Easter dinner, don’t forget to bow head, pray prayer thanksgiving, not only for the del food, but also for joy you have in Jesus’ victory over sin/death. As you eat your Easter dinner, remember God of your salvation; say with Isa, **vs. 9.** Let these joyous words be on your lips, today and always, as you recount God’s grace to you, and return high thanks to him.
- So, what having for Easter dinner? Grandma’s famous glazed ham? Mom’s mouthwatering scalloped potatoes? Your favorite restaurant’s all-you-can-eat Sunday brunch? What’s on your menu for today? Know what: truth be told, on day like today, I’d be content with PBJ on stale bread, because today’s not about the food. Today’s day of Jesus’ victory over sin, death, Satan, hell. And today God makes the meal – an eternal Easter dinner. *“Then let us feast this Easter Day on Christ, the bread of heaven... Christ alone our souls will feed; he is our meat and drink indeed; faith looks upon no other! Alleluia!”* (CWS 720:7).

Isaiah 25:6-9

⁶ 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. ⁷ On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; ⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.”