

Hope Christian Church
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Sermon Series: *Easter*



He Will Swallow Up Death Forever

Resurrection Sunday

Isaiah 25:6-9 (ESV)

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸ *He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.*

⁹ *It will be said on that day,
"Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."*

Introduction

The resurrection of Jesus was part of God's wonderful design which he planned before the foundation of the world.¹ God announced this plan in advance so that we could recognize it as it was unfolding. This morning I'd like you to see one of the places that God announced this. We find this passage in the writings of the prophet Isaiah. I pray we'll see the **promise**, the **problem**, the **provision**, and then the **praise**.

The Promise

In the Bible, images of feasting, with abundant food and wine, are symbolic of the fullness of God's kingdom and all the promised blessings of a coming day when God will remove from the earth all his enemies. Feasting is almost always symbolic of God's favor and blessing. Food appears frequently in connection to God's goodness.

Feasting together is a sign of commonality, friendship, and love. Jesus feasted with his disciples on the night before his crucifixion. All over the world people who love and enjoy one another eat together. We feasted together this morning on a wonderful breakfast. Probably all of you are planning on feasting together this afternoon with the people you love. Feasting signifies joy, friendship, love, and celebration.

The opening scenes in the Bible take place in a Garden with God instructing man regarding the fruit he can and cannot eat. The Bible ends with a scene at the Tree of Life, which all the redeemed are granted permission to eat of its fruit. The fruit is symbolic of all the blessings God promises to those who obey him. God holds out the promise of "fullness of joy" and "everlasting pleasures" (Ps 16:11) for everyone who will trust him. Heaven is a place of abundance and celebration where the goodness of God's love overflows to his children. The psalmist, David, praises God for this wonderful truth.

(Psalms 36:8 ESV)

⁸ *They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.*

¹ Eph 1:4-6; Acts 2:23; 4:28; Rev 13:8; 17:8.

Yahweh Makes a Feast

God has good plans for his people.² The passage before us this morning pictures the feasting that God promises for those who love him. It is a promised, future feast which the **LORD** of hosts himself will prepare. **Yahweh** will host this wonderful feast. Yahweh is the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. He is the one true God who created all things and chose to reveal himself to the world through the nation of Israel, i.e. the descendants of Jacob.

It is a feast of **rich food and well-aged wine**. It includes the tastiest of foods which deeply satisfy, "**full of marrow**." And God is pictured as a generous host who brings out and serves the best of all that he has. It is staggering that the Bible so often pictures God as serving his people, as we see in this verse (Is 25:6). God is the one who "**makes a feast**."

It's like God is throwing a party. This is intended to cause you to desire to draw near to him. God is not a stoic kill-joy hovering above just waiting for an opportunity to squash all enthusiasm, excitement, or celebration. No. He is not. He is a God who has grand plans of an expansive celebration where he shares all of his goodness with those who love him.

A Feast for All Peoples

Notice that he intends this celebration to be global (Is 25:6). This feast he will prepare will be laid out **for all peoples**, that is people from every nation and tribe. God intends that no nation be left out of this feast. It will include both Jews and Gentiles. It is a table laid for persons from all ethnicities. God's redemptive plan to save is not limited to the nation of Israel alone. His redemptive plan includes persons from "every tribe, language, people, and nation."³

The Problem

But there is a problem preventing the party. A problem stands in the way of fulfilling that future feast which God has planned.⁴ He states that he will prepare a feast **on this mountain**, which in the context of the passage (and in the broader use of the term in the book of Isaiah) we know to refer to mount Jerusalem.⁵ Jerusalem sits atop a 2,474 foot mountain.

(Isaiah 25:7-8 ESV)

*⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.*

*⁸ He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,*

² See Isaiah 25:1.

³ Rev. 5:9

⁴ Is 25:1.

⁵ I.e. Mt. Zion (see Is 1:27; 2:2-3; Heb 12:22)

*and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.*

But before the feast can be spread out, another thing already spread out must first be removed. Something else is present *on this mountain* which must first be taken away. Before the food can be laid down, something else must be taken up. Before man can swallow down food and wine, on this mountain, God must, on this mountain, swallow up something else.

A Global Problem

God explains that this problem is a global problem. There is a **covering cast over all peoples**. There is a **veil spread over all nations**. There is a veil or a covering over all peoples and all nations. This is not a localized problem for Israel alone. The whole of humanity has a common problem. Whatever this veil is, it spans the globe, effecting all people groups and all nations. All peoples and nations lie under its power and dominion.

This global problem must be removed before this feast can be fulfilled. So God promises that he will **swallow up** this covering, this veil. God himself will take away that thing which prevents the feasting. He will swallow it up.

Death is the Problem

But what is it? What is this veil? What is this covering? It is death. Death dominates the mountain and therefore must be removed before true celebration can take place. God promises to **wipe away tears from all the faces** of his people. There can be no true celebration when tears are present? Who can enjoy the fullness of feasting when the reality of death could rob us of that joy? Death has a way of destroying appetite. Death must be destroyed before the feast can be enjoyed. Fullness of feasting cannot be enjoyed unless the threat of death is removed. This is exactly what God promises to do in this passage. He promises to swallow up death forever. Death is the curse that lies across all peoples.

Whence Cometh Death?

The Bible teaches that curse of death entered this world through the sin of Adam and Eve. Before they sinned, death was not part of this world. But because they sinned, death has now spread to all people, **death is now a global problem**.

(Romans 5:12 ESV)

*¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin,
and so death spread to all men because all sinned—*

When Adam sinned, by disobeying God by eating the fruit he had forbidden, death entered the world. God had previously warned Adam that if he disobeyed him then he would die. Adam chose to sin and disobey God. Thus, Adam chose death. When Adam sinned, death came into the world as a consequence of his sin.

Adam fell under the condemnation of sin. That curse of condemnation (of death) then spread to all of Adam's descendants. All of us—every human being on the planet—are descended from Adam, and we all have sinned. Therefore we all stand together—the whole human race—condemned under the cruse of death, because we have all sinned. ***Thus death is a global problem.***

God Plans to Destroy Death

This passage in Isaiah 25, vs. 7 and 8, tells us that God intends to swallow up death forever. God intends to rid the earth of death. If death is to be destroyed, then sin must also be destroyed, since death entered the world through sin. Sin is the highway that leads to death. If you want to destroy the destination of death, then you must cut off the highway of sin. Death is like a giant, immovable mountain of rock that stands in the way of enjoying the feast with God the he has planned for those who love him. In order for the feast to be laid out, the mountain must be leveled and rock of death removed.

How do you destroy a mountain? You must cut down into the rock and blow it up from the inside out.

Play video

How do you move a mountain? You blow it up.



The Provision

God had to make provision for life and salvation. He had to make provision to undo the curse of death. In order for God to destroy death, he had to do it from the inside. Someone had to enter into death and blow it up from the inside. ***The only way to do that, is to cause someone to die who has never sinned, for death has no hold over one who has never sinned.***

Jesus never sinned.

This is the testimony of those who lived with him and walked with him.

(1 John 3:5 ESV)

⁵ *You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.*

(1 Peter 2:22 ESV)

²² *He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.*

(2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV)

²¹ *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin...*

(Hebrews 4:15 ESV)

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Jesus' closet friends and followers claimed he never sinned. This was Jesus' testimony about himself.

John 8:29 (ESV)

"...for I always do the things that are pleasing to the [the Father]."

Standing in a crowd in Jerusalem, Jesus said,

(John 8:46 ESV)

⁴⁶ Which one of you convicts me of sin?

This today would be the equivalent of a presidential candidate posting a dare on FaceBook saying, "I will withdraw from my candidacy if anyone can dig up any dirt on me." No one was able to dig up any dirt on Jesus. No one.

Even Jesus' enemies couldn't find any sin in him. Both Pilate and Herod agreed that Jesus was innocent.

Luke 23:4, 14-15 (ESV)

⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."

¹⁴ "... I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us..."

Not only did Pilate and Herod agree that he was innocent, so did the centurion who stood by overseeing the crucifixion.

(Luke 23:47 ESV)

⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!"

Jesus is the only sinless person in the whole of human history. If ever there was one person who did not deserve to die, it is Jesus. Jesus was completely innocent. He was sinless. And yet **Jesus died**. But he didn't die for the reasons you may think.

Jesus Died: A Sinless Savior Surrendered to Death

Sinless people don't die. Unless they want to. Jesus is a sinless Savior who **surrendered to death**. Jesus was crucified by the Romans who were expert in inventing cruel methods of

killing people. But Jesus did not die primarily because the Romans were expert at killing, but because Jesus was expert in obeying. Jesus died because he was obeying the will of his Father.⁶ Remember his prayer in the Garden, "Father, can this cup pass from me? Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done" (Mt 26:39). Jesus died because he *chose* to die.

(Matthew 27:50 ESV)

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

Jesus *yielded* up his spirit. This means it was his decision to give up his life. He *surrendered* to death, he was not *conquered* by death.

(John 10:17-18 ESV)

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.

Why would God the Father will that his innocent son die? Because through his death, he intended to swallow up death forever. God willed that his innocent son die, so that he could destroy the global grip of death. God willed that a sinless Savior should die because he knew that death could not keep him dead.

Jesus was Resurrected

Death has no hold over a sinless person, and so God raised Jesus up from the dead.

(Acts 2:24 ESV)

²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

The way to swallow up death forever, is by destroying it from the inside. When Jesus died he was buried in a tomb carved out of the rock. He went down deep into the immovable rock of death and then destroyed its grip, because he was sinless. The sinless innocence of Jesus lying deep within the rock of death was like spiritual dynamite ready to explode death's global grip.

The Praise

This is why we praise Jesus. When Jesus was resurrected on that Sunday morning, he abolished death. He blew it up from the inside out. God did this through the incredible power of his amazing grace,

(2 Timothy 1:10 ESV)

⁶ Is 53:10; Jn 5:30; 6:38; Lk 22:42.

¹⁰ ...which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

Jesus abolished death when he was raised to life. Through his death and then his subsequent resurrection, Jesus destroyed the power of death. It is through the resurrection of Jesus that God has swallowed up death forever.

(1 Corinthians 15:54-57 ESV)

⁵⁴ *When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:*

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

⁵⁵ *"O death, where is your victory?*

O death, where is your sting?"

⁵⁶ *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.* ⁵⁷ *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Victory over death only comes through Jesus because Jesus is the only sinless person who ever died, and then was resurrected. Jesus went down into death with a perishable, mortal human body. However, because he was sinless, death could not hold him. So God raised him up imperishable and immortal. Jesus has been raised up to an indestructible life.⁷ He will never die again.

(Romans 6:9 ESV)

⁹ *We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.*

Listen to Jesus' words to John,

(Revelation 1:17-18 ESV)

¹⁷ *"Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."*

If you put your faith in Jesus, then there is no need to fear death, for death has no power over Jesus. If you are united with Christ by faith, then death has no power over you either. This is the power of Jesus through his resurrection from the dead.

Now we see why the resurrection of Jesus is such wonderful news. Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we have great reason to praise God. Jesus is the one for whom the world has been waiting. Jesus is the promised one through whom God would swallow up death forever.

Isaiah 25:9 (ESV)

⁷ Heb 7:16.

⁹ *It will be said on that day,
"Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the Lord; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."*

Jesus is the one we've been waiting for. Jesus is one who was dead, but is now alive forevermore. Jesus is one who is sinless and yet who died. Jesus is the only person whom death could not keep dead. Jesus is our salvation.

Jesus was crucified and buried in Jerusalem. Long ago God promised that "*on this mountain I will swallow up death forever.*" When God raised Jesus from the dead, this is exactly what he did, he swallowed up death forever. When Jesus climbed out of his rocky tomb atop mount Jerusalem, God fulfilled his promise to swallow up death forever. Jesus said,

(John 11:25-26 ESV)

²⁵ *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,* ²⁶ *and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

Conclusion

Through the resurrection of Jesus, God has swallowed up death forever. He did this on the Jerusalem mount. Jesus is the one solution to humanity's global problem of death. Through Jesus the veil of death that lay across all peoples and all nations is taken away. When a person turns to Jesus and believes in him, the veil is removed (2 Cor 3:16). Through Jesus we have the hope of eternal life and of having every tear wiped away. Through Jesus we can enjoy the feast of rich food and well-aged wine that God has promised to all who love him.

Are you afraid of death? Then right now ask Jesus to save you from death. In your heart, ask him right now to give you eternal life. Do you want to enjoy the feast the God has planned for all those who love him? Then repent of your sins, turn away from all rebellion against God and surrender your life to Jesus today. Stop resisting him and submit. Come to him with your arms full of all the mess of your life and lay your grief at his feet. Look up to him in faith and cry out, "Help me. Save me." Put your faith in him, for he is mighty to save.