

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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First Sunday After Easter, April 24, 2022

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 206, 244:1, 618, 200, 200:7-8.

Lessons: Job 19: 25-26, 1 Peter 2:11-20, John 16:16-23a,

Sermon Text: Isaiah 25:6-6.

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

In Christ the risen Savior, Fellow Redeemed:

A week has passed since the Easter Festival, but we are still celebrating Easter. That's because we don't just celebrate a day called Easter; we celebrate the fact that our Savior rose from the dead. It is not simply a day but a doctrine that gives us such great joy.

The joy we concentrate on in the Easter season is even retroactive! What we mean to say is that the fact of the resurrection already gave joy to the believers in the Old Testament days. Who can forget the words Job spoke in confident faith in the risen Savior! ***"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes - I, and not another."*** Job 19:25-27

So also Isaiah the prophet who wrote the words of our text and who lived about 700 years before Christ was born, wrote by inspiration of the blessed results of Christ's resurrection. The word resurrection is not mentioned in our text, but its blessed results are clearly taught. May the Holy Spirit give his blessings to us as we hear of:

THE BLESSED RESULTS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION HERE AND IN ETERNITY

- 1. A feast of spiritual food in the Gospel;**
- 2. Death swallowed up, tears wiped away, and no more disgrace; and,**
- 3. Praise for the Lord throughout eternity.**

Isaiah prophesied: ***"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."*** In these words the prophet Isaiah is not speaking of a feast of food for the body, but of rich nourishment for the soul. It is picture language he is using to describe the rich message of the Gospel. The mountain on which the Lord Almighty will prepare the rich Gospel feast is called Mt. Zion, for Mt. Zion is the name given to the Church of believers in Christ. The feast, then, described as ***"the best of meats and the finest of wines,"*** is the richness of God's grace in Christ which is offered and given in the Gospel of Christ as proclaimed by the Church.

We speak of this feast of spiritual food in the Gospel as being the blessed result of Christ's resurrection. Let us give some thought to this. It can be stated without any fear of contradiction that without the resurrection of Christ there can be no Gospel. The heart of the Gospel is the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. This is the teaching that we believe that for Jesus' sake our sins are forgiven and we are accounted as righteous in the sight of our holy God. The apostle Paul wrote: ***"For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'" Rom. 1:17*** This faith is the firm belief that Jesus ***"was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."*** Rom. 4:25

Lest we so soon forget what we heard on Easter Sunday, let us hear again what St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: ***"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins."*** I Cor. 15:17 There is

no forgiveness of sins if Christ was not raised from the dead. If there is no forgiveness of sins, there is no Gospel to proclaim.

Positively stated, the rich feast of spiritual food in the Gospel is the direct and blessed result of Christ's resurrection. Everything that the Gospel of Christ promises, everything that the Gospel says to give us joy, is based on the resurrection of our crucified Savior. The Gospel makes it clear that ***"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*** Rom. 8:1 Paul can ask with confidence: ***"Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus who died - more than that who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."*** Rom. 8:34 The Gospel gives us the precious promise of Christ: ***"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."*** John 11:25 The Gospel gives this promise: ***"When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."*** Col. 3:4

Not only is the Gospel a blessed message of sins forgiven and life eternal in heaven, but it is also a power to enlighten the heart and mind so that spiritual ignorance and blindness is removed. Isaiah also spoke of this in the prophecy of our text: ***"On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations."*** Paul said of the unbelieving Jews: ***"Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."*** 2 Cor. 3: 15.16 By nature all people are ignorant and spiritually blind and in darkness as though a veil or shroud or covering were over their heart. But the Gospel of Christ is a powerful Word by which the Holy Spirit removes this shroud and enlightens people with the knowledge of the truth in Christ.

These are the blessed results of Christ's resurrection which are intended for all the peoples of the earth here in time, and which are proclaimed in the Gospel.

For all who believe the Gospel and trust in Jesus, there are also blessed results of his resurrection in eternity. Our text speaks of **death swallowed up, tears wiped away, and no more disgrace.**

2.

Isaiah prophesied of the Lord: ***"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."*** In these words Isaiah prophesied the final victory of the believers in Christ in eternity. When Paul speaks of the risen Christ ruling over all his enemies, he says: ***"The last enemy to be destroyed is death."*** I Cor. 15:26 The apostle also triumphantly says: ***"Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"*** I Cor. 15:54-55

There will be no more death for believers in Christ because sin which resulted in death has been paid for by Christ. Instead of death in hell which we all deserve because of our sins, Christ has won for us eternal life in heaven. We do not deserve it and we cannot earn it by our works, ***"but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*** Rom. 6:23

There, in that blessed life in eternity, our text says, ***"the sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces."*** Our eyes often fill with tears here on this earth because of our sins of which we are ashamed, because of family troubles, and because of troubles in the church. Besides that, we live in a world filled with sickness, violence, wars, and death. The longer we live here, the more eager we are for that blessed day when the Lord delivers us from this earth and wipes away all our tears. John heard these words which he recorded in Revelation: ***"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 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. 21:3.4

Then it is, as Isaiah foretold, that ***"he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth."*** Here on this earth Christians have to take a lot of insults and persecution. If people hurled insults at Jesus, the holy One, when he was crucified, we can surely expect that unbelievers will insult us for confessing Jesus. In the Old Testament times Isaiah said: ***"Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults."*** Isaiah 51:7. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said to his believing followers: ***"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven ..."*** Matthew 5:11-12. Here on this earth, in the eyes of worldly-minded people, believers in Christ are nothing. They are like the offscourings, the cast-offs, misfits in a worldly society. But, in eternity

they will be disgraced no more. Then, Jesus says, ***“the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”*** Matthew 13:43.

Then also will begin praise for the Lord and it will continue throughout eternity.

3.

Isaiah says: ***“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.’”*** In heaven in eternity there will be nothing but joy. With happy hearts and jubilant voices we will sing the praises of our God in whom we trusted. Here on earth we have been exhorted; ***“Trust in the Lord forever; for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.”*** Is. 26:4 By the grace of God the Holy Spirit has worked faith in our hearts and we have put our trust in the Lord. In heaven we will have never-ending joy because we trusted in the Lord. Then it will truly be evident as the psalmist says: ***“Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God...”*** 146:5

In heaven throughout eternity we will sing the praises of our Lord because he saved us from our sins, from Satan’s power and from eternal damnation in hell. Already here on earth we say with Peter: ***“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”*** I Pet. 1:3-5 Think of the glory of heaven when all the redeemed will join to sing God’s praises! John in the Book of Revelation tells us about it: ***“Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing; ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’”*** Rev. 5:13 The poet describes this praise for the Lord in eternity:

“The heavens shall ring with an anthem more grand
Than ever on earth was recorded;
The blest of the Lord shall receive at his hand
The crown to the victors awarded.
Have mercy upon us, O Jesus!” Amen. (The Lutheran Hymnal 415, v. 7)

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