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Trinity Lutheran Church  
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**One Party Is Almost Over – The Other Party Is Just Beginning**

God's PEACE is ALWAYS YOURS in Jesus.

Hear the Word of God from Isaiah 25,

“On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a fest of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats, and the finest of wines.

On this mountain, the Lord will remove the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever.”

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

Whenever we hear the phrase: “The Party’s Over”, it can mean different things to different people. It can mean: “It’s 2 am, and I’ve got to go to work in 6 hours.” It can mean, you’re all out of eats and drinks, so everyone’s leaving.” But the phrase: “The Party’s Over” can also mean: “The curtain has gone down. Sionora baby! The fat lady has sung. The Might Casey has struck out! Or, it’s all over, but the crying.”

In Isaiah 24 – right before our text – we see one of the clearest: ‘end-of-the-world’ descriptions in the entire Bible. So, if you are an earthling, listen closely to what Isaiah 24 says is going to happen to ‘The Late, Great, Planet Earth’. Isaiah 24 says, ***“The Lord will lay waste the earth...and scatter its’ inhabitants. ‘The earth will be completely laid waste and plundered,’ says the Lord. ‘It will be the same for priest and people, master and servant, mistress and maid, buyer and seller, borrower and lender, debtor and creditor. The earth will dry up and wither....for it is defiled by the people. They have disobeyed God’s commands. They have violated his statutes. They have broken His everlasting covenant of love. Therefore, a curse will consume the earth. Its’ people (referring to the earthly unbelievers) must bear their guilt. Therefore, the earth’s inhabitants are destroyed, and very few are left (Notice: There are a few survivors. We’ll get back to that.) Those making-merry will groan. The partiers will be silenced. The noise of the revelers will stop. All joy will turn to gloom. All rejoicing will be banished from the earth. The floodgates of heaven will be opened. The foundations of the earth will be shaken. And the earth will be broken apart, so heavy upon it is the guilt of its’ rebellion. It will fall, never to rise again.”***

HOLY BUCKETS! That’s what the Bible means by: ‘The Party’s Over’. There is no chapter of the Bible that is more frightening than Isaiah 24. The Bible says that this world is withering, perishing, fading away, and reserved for judgment. The writing is on the wall: “The world’s party will soon be over.” This is why every earthling needs to pay attention to what the Lord is about to say next.

In the devastation of Isaiah 24 – that is going to hit planet earth – Isaiah also describes the earth’s survivors – yes, there will be survivors – with these words:

***“The Godly raise their voices. They shout for joy. From the West they rejoice in the Lord’s salvation. In the East they give glory to the Lord. From the ends of the earth we hear singing: “Glory to the Righteous One!”*** So how do some survive the devastation? And why are they celebrating? Here’s how and why. The survivors have been saved by the blood of the Lamb. And they’re celebrating for the wedding feast of the Lamb has come! The destruction of those who hate the Lord, also spells redemption of God’s down-trodden, mocked, and persecuted people who love Him.

After hearing that “The Party’s Over” for those who have no time, space, or love for their Savior; now, low and behold, we find out that: ‘Another Party’s Just Beginning’, for the forgiven and redeemed children of God. Isaiah 25 says, “***On this mountain, the Lord of Hosts will prepare a feast.***” Cosmic judgement, gives way to cosmic celebrating for God’s children. Fasting gives way to Feasting. Crying gives way to rejoicing! Dying gives way to living! But all of these gifts are only received by those who love the Lord, because He first loved us, and gave His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. The rest of the earthlings have blown off Jesus, and His gifts, and will now live in the eternal poverty they requested. God’s people will feast on the finest of meats and the finest of wines, as we sing the new song of salvation. We will, as the Bible says, “***Take the cup of salvation, and call on the Name of the Lord.***” Why will we celebrate so much? For, ‘***On this mountain, the Lord will swallow up death forever.***’

In fact, the party has already begun for all who take God up on the deal that— although we truly deserve death – we are forgiven and risen from the dead through the blood of the Lamb. That’s what we celebrate when we gather in God’s house: both, that there’s nothing dead about our Savior: Matthew 28, “***Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen just as He said.***” And we celebrate what Jesus’ resurrection means for us. Jesus said in Luke 14, “***Because I live, you will live also!***” And in John 5 He promises us, “***Whoever believes in the Son already has eternal life, and will not be condemned. He has already crossed over from death unto life.***” And for those of you who prefer to worship at St. Mattress, let me remind you that there’s nothing boring about the death of death, and rising from the dead, to live forever! Christianity is the only religion, philosophy, or belief system based on an empty tomb. You might say, “*But how can we be so sure, Pastor?*” Here’s how. Even though resurrections may be hard to pull off, they’re not hard to ‘prove’ at all. Dr. Craig Parton, an attorney in California says: “*If the eyewitnesses have Jesus dead at Point A – and they do. And if the eyewitness have Jesus alive again at Point B, sometime after Point A – and they do; then Jesus Christ has risen from the dead for our salvation, even if your brain and mine can’t figure out how in the world he pulled it off.*” As soon as Jesus checked out of His grave, the never-ending party for all of the survivors who trust in Jesus as their Savior, began. And the theme of our celebrating will forever be: “***Death has been swallowed up in Christ’s victory!***”

Far from the party being over for the people of God, it's just beginning. And make no mistake about it – JESUS IS THE “LIFE” OF THIS PARTY. In Revelation 1, God gave John the disciple, a ‘sneak peak’ into the party that's already going on in heaven. When John gazed into heaven, He saw the full-blown glory of our Resurrected Savior, and the vision was so great that it knocked John's feet out from under him, and he fell to the ground as though dead. But then Jesus – the “LIFE” of the party – put his hand on John, and said, ***“Do not be afraid! I was dead; but, behold, I am alive forever!”***

And let me assure you: Jesus knows how to throw a party! Isaiah 25, ***“On this mountain, the Lord will prepare a feast of rich fare – the finest of meats – forget about Prime Rib – we will be rejoicing over the enfleshed Christ in all of His glory. And the finest of wines – forget about the best vintage you ever tasted, we will rejoice over the wine of gladness that flowed from Immanuel's sacred veins for our forgiveness,”***

Which leads us to a critical question: Who's Invited To The Feast? Notice the word “ALL” in Isaiah 25, ***“The Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for ALL peoples. On this mountain He will remove the shroud that enfolds ALL nations. And He will wipe away the tears from ALL faces.”*** So ALL are invited to the heavenly party. The problem is that “MANY” of the “ALL” are refusing the Lord's invitation. Unbelief is basically saying: *“Thanks, but no thanks!”* to God. Everyone is included in God's party, before anyone is excluded, by their own refusal to be a part of the party, by rejecting Jesus, Who died to give everyone a place at the party.

But how can any of us gain access into the party, when Isaiah 64 says, ***“All of our righteousness is like filthy rags”***? Isaiah 59 declares, ***“Your sins will separate you from your Lord.”*** And Revelation 22 says, ***“Nothing sinful will ever enter heaven.”*** Here's how: Jesus' forgiveness is your ‘access’ into the party. His cross is your backstage pass into heaven. When Jesus cried out on the cross, ***“It is Finished”*** and bowed his head in death, the curtain in the temple was ripped in two from top to bottom, from heaven to earth, indicating that Jesus' blood has given us full access into the presence of God, and to the Wedding Feast in His kingdom which has no end! The only ones who won't be at the party are those who refuse to be Jesus' forgiven bride!

What about party gifts! This is a “NO GIFTS PLEASE” event. I’ll never forget when I was a kid, my family received an invitation to a wedding or anniversary, and the invite said, NO GIFTS PLEASE. And I said to mom, “WHO DOESN’T WANT TO RECEIVE GIFTS?” And I remember my mom telling me: “IT MEANS THEY WANT CASH!” And I remember saying to mom, ‘THAT’S AWESOME!’ So let me say to you, whenever you remember your pastor, just remember NO GIFTS PLEASE!

But for the Marriage Feast in heaven, that Jesus is throwing for us, this TRULY is a NO GIFTS PLEASE event. We bring nothing. Isaiah 25, “*The Lord of hosts will prepare a feast of rich faire....the Lord of hosts will swallow up death forever.... The Lord of hosts will wipe away all tears.... The Lord of hosts will remove the disgrace of His people forever.*” The Lord does it all. In fact, Luke 12 adds an important detail that should ‘knock your socks off’, ‘cause your head to start spinning’ and even get you to ‘start talking to yourself in the stag line’. Luke 12 adds, “*And Jesus will dress Himself to serve us.*” Now this doesn’t mean we won’t serve and worship Jesus in heaven. We will. But in His amazing grace and love, our Bridegroom will also, and above all, serve us, His bride, in Heaven. Who can fathom such love?

In Matthew 22, Jesus says ‘*At the time of the banquet He sent out His servants to tell those who had been invited, “Come, for everything is prepared!*’ The bread of life, Jesus, has already been baked in the oven of God’s wrath on the cross, for all to eat and live forever. The wine of Jesus’ blood has already been poured from Immanuel’s veins, for sinners to drink, and live forever. The finest of meats – *And The Word Became Flesh* – has been roasted in the fire of God’s wrath for our salvation. Now, Jesus promises in John 6, “*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*” And NO GIFTS PLEASE, because our God puts everything on the table. And all of His gifts forgiveness, life, paradise, a place in the father family and home forever, all of these gifts have been purchased not with gold or silver, but with spitting, mocking, whipping, nailing, bleeding, sweating, crying, convulsing, damning, and dying. And now, Jesus lives to give all of the gifts on the table. And what awesome gifts: “*A feast of rich faire, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats and the finest of wines.*” >>> *This IS My body given for you! This IS My blood, shed for you – through which we receive forgiveness, healing, and life forever, in the paradise of God!*” Page 5

This is why we come to worship? We come to receive gifts from our Bridegroom. So when your kids complain they don't want to go to worship, you should say, "*Oh, so you don't like to receive gifts? Well this should make Christmas shopping really easy this year.*" And see if that changes their attitude.

Finally, as with any party, there is an RSVP! Our Lord is so passionate about our coming, that He even gives us the words to respond with in Isaiah 25:9, "***And in that day, they will say, "Surely this is our God! We trusted in Him, and He saved us!"***"

Have you ever noticed how family and friends will often get 'family and friends' to help them throw a party? Since you and I are already the forgiven Bride of Jesus, and the Father's sons and daughters, the Lord asks us to help Him throw this '*Party To End All Parties*', by giving out invitations to ALL people everywhere, by letting them know they're included in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Our part in the party, other than 'being there', is to take as many people to the party with us as possible. Those who refuse to give out invitations are party poopers, and may risk losing their place at the party, if their refusal to confess Jesus, extinguishes their faith in Him.

Why invite others? Here's why: The Party To End All Parties has begun. It began on Good Friday, and Easter morn, when Jesus, "*swallowed up death forever.*" Paul gets the celebration going, when He teaches us to mouth off at death, and pokes fun at it in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15, "***Where, O Death, is your sting? Where, O Grave, is your victory? Thanks be to God He gives us the victory through Jesus Christ, our Lord.***"

So, '***Come To The Feast, Even Now, Because Everything Is Ready!***' Come joyfully! Come expectantly! Come Triumphantly to the Feast of the Lord's Supper, which is a foretaste or appetizer of the Feast that is to come in all of its' fullness in heaven! For the celebration of Christ's forgiving death, and His victorious resurrection has already begun – and with the final trumpet call, it will be brought to complete fullness at the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom with an endless....and I mean endless.... Hallelujah, sung by those in heaven, as we hear in Revelation 5, "***You are worthy, because you were slain, and with Your blood You purchased people for God, from every tribe, language, people, and nation.***" So get ready to party, start enjoying the party in worship, and get ready to party forever in Jesus. Amen.