

Series: A Place for You

September 17, 2017

## **Title: The King's Banquet**

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**Text: Isaiah 25:6-8**

### **The King's Banquet**

#### **Something to Celebrate!**

Banquet: the very word suggests a celebration. We celebrate a wedding with a reception. We celebrate a birthday with a special dinner. Good food has a special way of bringing us together and giving us time to focus on that special thing that is happening.

In Bible times kings used banquets as the occasion to make an important announcement, to enact a new policy or to start a new project. In fact, when a king held a banquet it was expected that he would do a wonderful thing.

Queen Esther invited the king to not one, but two banquets in order to secure his protection for her people. Jesus described God's final rescue of the world as a great wedding feast. David wrote that the LORD prepared a table for him in the presence of his enemies.

A banquet means that we have something to celebrate!

#### **The King's Banquet:**

Just after describing God as a shelter from the storm, Isaiah says:

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*Isaiah 25:6 NIV*

*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.*

The great King of the entire world is going to host the greatest of all banquets for the greatest of all celebrations. The guest list will not be limited to one ethnic group; it includes "all peoples." The food will be beyond compare: the best of the best. What else would you expect from the King of kings and the Lord of lords?

## **A Place for You:**

What does it mean to be a church? We saw last week that it means to be the place where people discover that God is their refuge and shelter in all of life's storms. But the church is much more than a shelter. Even more importantly, we are privileged to serve the first course, as it were, of God's great banquet.

Our mission is to be "A Place for You." It doesn't matter whether you are part of the church family or are a newcomer. There is a seat at the table for you. And think of it: there are hundreds of people in our community, our families, our places of work and play, who may not even know that they're invited. We get to be the ones who extend the invitation and welcome them to the Lord's banquet! We're the ones who announce that there is always "A place for you."

## **Death Destroyed**

### **The greatest wonder:**

A great banquet means a great wonder to be revealed. So what is it that the Lord of the entire world will do when dinner is served?

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*Isaiah 25:7-8a NIV*

*On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever.*

Isaiah had explained in the previous chapter that the entire world was "consumed by a curse." It lay heavy on the land, like a smothering shroud. Nothing was exempt from its power.

This is the world that you and I know. Our world is, as Paul puts it, "subjected to frustration" and held captive by the forces of death and decay. But Isaiah promises that it will not always be so. God has prepared the greatest wonder of all for His Creation: the death of death. Instead of living in a world where even at our greatest banquets all we can say is: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (1 Corinthians 15:32 NIV), we can say with Paul:

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*1 Corinthians 15:54b-55 NIV*

*...then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?"*

This is the awesome wonder that God planned from long ago, and that He will bring to pass at His banquet table.

**No more tears:**

Think of the celebration that will be! Isaiah writes:

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*Isaiah 25:8b NIV*

*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.*

No more tears!

John puts it this way:

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*Revelation 21:4-5a NIV*

*"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."*

*He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"*

The King is on His throne, seated in His great banquet hall with people from every corner of the world and from every point in time. The banquet is served. The King rises from His throne to perform the greatest wonder of all. With a word He abolishes the curse of death forever, and wipes away every tear, every loss, every twinge of pain from His Creation!

**A Song of Salvation**

## **Water to wine:**

The death of death: sounds great, but that isn't my reality. This world is just as broken now as it was in Isaiah's time. Are these promises just empty words? Are we as a church offering nothing more than a fantasy?

Jesus provided an answer to that question at a wedding reception in a little village named Cana, just down the road from His home town. Half way through the banquet the worst thing possible happened: the wine ran out.

Jesus' mother tried to get Him to help out. His answer: "Why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come." (John 2:4 NIV) The King was in the house, but it wasn't time for the main course. Still, His mother wouldn't give up easily. She told the house servants to just "do whatever he tells you."

Jesus pointed to six large stone jars that were used for ceremonial washing. He told the servants to fill them with water, then told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." (John 2:8 NIV)

They did what He said, the master of the banquet lifted his cup, and when he put it down he announced:

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*John 2:10 NIV*

*Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."*

## **A taste of things to come:**

The only people who actually knew what happened that day were the obedient servants, Jesus' mother and His disciples. John says that this was the first time Jesus revealed His glory. He had just provided a taste of things to come.

You see, they had caught a glimpse of the King and the King's banquet. They had seen the Lord reverse the curse that enshrouds all peoples. That day Jesus had prevented a bride's tears and a bridegroom's shame. It was a foretaste of the day when He will wipe away all tears and remove all shame from His creation.

Isn't that what God wants us to do as a church? We're to be the place where God turns water into wine. We offer the hope that no matter what your past, God can bless your future. That's what it means to be a Place for You.

In a few weeks we will be kicking off a capital campaign to make our house a more welcoming place. It will involve practical improvements like new carpet, new pews and new technology. These upgrades will help make our church building a place that can welcome a whole new generation, and help them discover that the King is already in the House, ready to turn their water into wine.

That's what it means to be a Place for you!