

Read: Isaiah 25:6-9

Death and Tears Are Gone

Isaiah 25:6,8

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...
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.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Can you see it in your mind? You step into the banquet hall, and the aroma of your favorite foods fills the air. The meal is ready, the drinks are being poured, and dessert (triple chocolate cake with chocolate frosting?) is fresh from the oven. The sound of happy conversation, of laughter, and of joyful praise mingles together. You take a step forward and see your place at the table—reserved there, by name, just for you. And then comes a voice, a familiar voice, the voice of Jesus: “Sit friend, I’ve prepared everything.” And so the feasting begins.

That’s one of the ways the Bible pictures heaven—a great feast, a feast unlike any other. There are people from every place and of every language; every believer in Jesus is gathered together. There’s only the finest food and drink, the tastiest meal to enjoy. And our Savior Jesus is there—the host who’s prepared it all.

But there’s something else that’s special about this feast—something we can’t fully understand: *the joy of the feast never ends.*

Sure, we experience happy times in life—birthday parties, family get-togethers, celebrations, graduations. But all of these come to an end. The laughter dies out. The smiles fade. The games stop. Eventually everyone goes home. And on top of this, there are plenty of outright sad times in life too! Times when we’re sick, when our feelings are hurt, or when we miss people we love. Times of pain. Times of loneliness. Times of tears.

But when the Bible talks about heaven, it talks about *joy that never ends*. It talks about Jesus wiping every tear from our eyes. It talks about rejoicing and celebrating and praising that never stops and never gets old. Yes, it talks about *life with God forever!*

How can this be? Only because of Easter! You see, when Jesus rose from the dead, he didn't just come back to life—he defeated death, he destroyed it, he swallowed it up forever! And not just death, but all pain and tears and sadness, yours and mine too! That's the story of Easter. Because Jesus lives, you and I will one day live with him. Because Jesus lives, all our sicknesses, all our hurts, all our loneliness, all our tears—yes, all our pain will end. Because Jesus lives, our place at heaven's feast is prepared, ready and waiting for us.

Now that's a reason to rejoice and be glad!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What is your favorite food you'd like to enjoy in heaven?!
- What will happen to sadness and pain when we're in heaven?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why do you think the Bible calls heaven a "banquet" instead of just a simple meal? What's the difference?
- Think of the best party you've ever experienced. What made it so great? How will heaven compare to that?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- We all have hurts, we all feel pain, we all shed tears. Is there a hurt that you especially look forward to leaving behind when you go to heaven?
- What do you think will be the best part of heaven and living forever? Why?

Closing Prayer:

Dear God, we praise you for defeating death, pain, and sadness through Jesus' rising from the dead. Lead us to always trust in your promise to bring us home to heaven. Amen.

Hymn: CW 152:3,5 – I Know that My Redeemer Lives

He lives to bless me with his love;
He lives to plead for me above.
He lives, my hungry soul to feed;
He lives to help in time of need.

He lives to silence all my fears;
He lives to wipe away my tears.
He lives to calm my troubled heart;
He lives all blessings to impart.