

Happy Easter to each of you. I'm really glad you're here today.

Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the grave. When Jesus was alive on this earth, he spent three years teaching and modeling the word, will, and mind of God. Some of his teachings we love. Some of them stretch us. All of them show us what God is really like—and how life actually works best.

The resurrection of Jesus is so significant because it validates everything he said, everything he claimed, and everything he promised. I love Easter so much because the resurrection proves Jesus is trustworthy.

Today I want to look at four fascinating Easter verses with you. What makes these Easter verses so fascinating is that they were written over 700 years before the first Easter actually happened.

These verses are some of the earliest Easter verses on record. And they teach us that *God has made promises—and kept them*. If you want to follow along in your Bibles, the promise is found in Isaiah 25.

**[Transition]** - The promise of Easter starts with a promise of a feast. I love this. When the Bible wants to describe joy, celebration, and life at its fullest—it talks about feasts. Look at verse 6 with me.

Isaiah 25:6 says, "*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.*"

### **1. Easter promises a feast (v. 6-8a)**

The Mountain Isaiah refers to is not so much a geographical one, as it is a spiritual one. It refers to the place where God's presence and favor rests. In part it refers to Jerusalem, but it's more about what Jerusalem represents—The place of God's presence, God's people, God's promise. Christians understand, "On this mountain," to refer ultimately to the events of Easter—the crucifixion and the resurrection. Events meant to silence Jesus forever actually end up having the opposite effect.

Isaiah describes a future abundant banquet prepared by God Himself—The Lord Almighty. And he holds nothing back...the finest aged wines, and prime meats. And the wording makes it clear this is not a one and done party. This will be a permanent, everlasting victory celebration.<sup>1</sup>

**[Illustration]** - Think about the best meal you've ever had—maybe a holiday, a wedding, or a family gathering. Now imagine that moment—but without time constraints, or any stress, without any conflict, without anything or anyone missing. That's what Isaiah is giving us here.

**[Transition]** - Now, why such a huge feast of fine foods and the best wine? Isaiah indicates three specific things are being celebrated.

### **This feast celebrates three things:**

#### **a. First, it's a celebration of victory over death.**

Verse 7 into the first part of verse 8 says, *"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 speaks of death as a universal enemy. Every one of us has felt that moment—at a funeral...or late at night...when the reality of death gets uncomfortably close...and we're not sure what to do with it.

This means on Easter, Jesus didn't just survive death, he defeated it!! He walked into it...broke it...and walked out the other side. This promise doesn't mean we won't face death in this life. It means when we die, we no longer have to fear what comes after.

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<sup>1</sup> John Peter Lange et al., [A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Isaiah](#) (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 280.

**[Illustration]** - Studies tell us that fear of death is very common. Of course, intensity varies from mild, occasional anxious thoughts about death, to moderate or more severe fears that disrupt daily life. Research indicates this is all tied to our awareness of our mortality.

Sometimes these fears compel people to engage in all sorts of avoidance behaviors like:

- Skipping doctor visits
- Avoiding needed scans and screenings, or necessary medical procedures.
- Others avoid travel, or extreme sports.

Most people don't talk about it—but deep down, the fear of death is always there. It shows up in quiet ways—avoidance, anxiety, or just trying not to think about it.

But this promised feast is a celebration that death, and the fear of it has been defeated once and for all. This victory feast celebrates that sin and evil in the world along with all its consequences *will not have the final word*.

Remember, Easter means God has made promises—and kept them. Easter is God announcing: the game is over. Death doesn't win, it doesn't have the final say. The Bible says those who trust in Jesus will live, even though they die, and our eternities will be in the presence of Jesus.

**[Transition]** - But that's not all this feast celebrates. It celebrates the comfort Easter promises. Notice the second half of verse 8, "*The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces.*"

### **b. It's a celebration of promised comfort (v. 8b)**

Some 700 years before the very first Easter, Isaiah foretold the promise of coming comfort. Then, years after the first Easter, in the book of Revelation Chapter 21 records the future ultimate fulfillment of this promise when it says, "*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and*

*be their God. 4 '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."*

That is not simply some sort of poetic symbolism—This is a promise. One day, the brokenness of this world will be healed. Relationships will be restored. Love will be reunited. This is an amazing promise we can all look forward to.

But this promise comfort isn't simply a future thing. It has a present-day fulfillment too. This promise means the God of Easter meets you in the middle of your grief right now. That includes the tears no one else sees... the ones you've learned to carry quietly.

When Isaiah says God will wipe away every tear, it's not simply distant—it's personal. It's the picture of a loving parent sitting close, gently wiping tears from a child's face.

Christianity never diminishes or downplays grief. It gives us full permission to mourn while reminding us God is with us in the middle of our grief. He's comforting us, strengthening us, and reminding us that the separation is not forever. One day God will reunite and restore all things, and this Easter promise will be fully realized.

**[Transition]** - Easter means God has made promises—and kept them. So far we've seen this promised feast celebrates the death of death, and the coming comfort. But there is one more really important thing. And this last one...might be the most personal of all. This feast is a celebration of shame removed. The second half of verse 8 says, *"he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.*

### **c. It's a celebration of shame removed.**

Easter's promise is deeply personal. At Easter God not only defeated death, promised ultimate comfort; he removes our shame.

**[Illustration]** - Shame attacks our whole self—body, mind, spirit. It's more toxic than guilt because it's nebulous and vague. Shame doesn't just say, "I did something bad." It says, "I am bad." Shame is that voice that shows up at 2 a.m. reminding you of what you wish you could undo...and then

tells you that moment defines you. And it's exhausting...because no matter how much you try to move forward, shame keeps pulling you back.

Shame often leads to hiding pain, withdrawal, and vicious cycles. Research consistently identifies shame as a driver of widespread suffering. It's so toxic to our souls.

- It erodes self-respect and self-confidence.
- Shame fuels a number of mental health disorders like depression and anxiety.
- Shame damages relationships and fosters isolation—people hide out of fear of judgement.
- Shame is often the driver for destructive coping strategies.<sup>2</sup>

This promise of removed shame is absolutely key to our renewal and restoration. It's a burden that is uninvited into our lives, but plagues us beyond our imagination. But God promises complete removal of all our shame, the legitimate shame we have from our sin, and the illegitimate shame introduced into our lives from others. God promises to remove it all.

Now, I want you to notice, each of these promises of Easter are declared to be done, done and done. Isaiah ends this section with that phrase, "The Lord has spoken." In other words, so be it God! We started our Easter celebration with that very truth—So be it God." *When God says something... it's not a possibility—it's a certainty.*

**[Transition]** -There's one more promise I want you to see. God promises all those who embrace these promises of Easter will rejoice because their God has made promises—and kept them! Look at verse 9. *"9 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."*

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<sup>2</sup> Webmd.com; scientificamerican.com; Clearviewtreatment.com; Promises.com.

## **2. Easter promises a grateful celebration. (v. 9)**

This is the response of those who have trusted in him to be their deliverer. They feel the relief of being free of sin and its consequences. They have experienced the freedom of resting in person and work of Jesus. They recognize the promise and real hope they have for the future, because of Jesus' victory over death and the conquering result of the resurrection.

And all of this is not simple something we look forward to in the future, we can live into it now. It will be finalized in the future, but it's available now.

God has given us his Spirit to be present in us and to empower us to navigate all the peaks and valleys of our lives. His presence, power, and strength in us gives us the ability to experience joy in the midst of challenge and struggle. He gives us the ability to have a peace despite circumstances. Let the celebration begin!

Because of Easter: Death is defeated, comfort is coming, and your shame doesn't get the last word. So what does this mean for you?

### **Implications Applications:**

1. Easter means the feast has already started—and you're invited.

The empty tomb is God's invitation to the table full of God's blessings and strength that are available today. And this isn't a party you have to earn your way into. It's more like being handed a ticket you could never afford—but it has your name on it.

2. Easter means shame and death no longer have the final word.

I remind folks who are grieving at memorials I do, that for those who trust and follow Jesus, death is not the end—it's a transition into

the presence of the one who made you, knows you, and loves you best.

When you open your heart to Jesus to be your forgiver and leader, you no longer have to fear death. You no longer have to feel the anxiety of what's going to happen to you when you die.

3. Easter means our God has made promises—and kept them. So trusting in him is never in vain. It means our hope is a hope anchored in a risen, living, and active Savior.

**Closing:**

“There’s a story about a man who received an invitation in the mail to a private event. It was beautifully designed—heavy paper, elegant lettering. It invited him to a formal banquet—an incredible meal, a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The strange thing was... he was convinced it had been sent to the wrong person. He looked at his life and thought, ‘This can’t be for me. They must not know who I am... what I’ve done... where I’ve been.’ So he set it aside.

But days went by, and he couldn’t shake it. Finally, he called the number on the invitation and said, ‘I think there’s been a mistake.’ And the person on the other end said, ‘No mistake. We know exactly who you are. That’s why you were invited.’

And that’s what Easter is. It’s not God accidentally inviting the wrong people. It’s not for people who have it all together. It’s for people who know they don’t.

The feast Isaiah talked about—the victory over death, the wiping away of tears, the removal of shame—it’s not for perfect people. It’s for invited people.

Some of you have been holding that invitation at a distance. And today... you are invited. Not because of what you've done—but because of what Jesus has done. The question isn't whether the invitation is real. The question is... will you accept it?"

**[Translation]** - So, the question becomes...what do you do with all this?

You can open your heart to Jesus and say something like this...

*Jesus, I open my heart to you today. I need your forgiveness and I need your leadership in my life. Thank you for giving your life in my place on the cross. Thank you that you are alive and I trust you with my life today.*