



A Beautiful Scene on a Beautiful Mountain

Considering a Message from Isaiah 25:6-9
For the Week of November 4th, 2018

The church has observed the Feast of All Saints since the mid 300s AD. On this specially appointed day, the church recalls the memory of all the faithful departed and the triumph of Christ over all false gods. Though we recall the saints who have departed from the troubles of this life—a life of difficulty and hardship described by Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1-12)—it is not a day of sorrow or sadness, but rather a day of joy and celebration. Jesus' words, after all, from in His Sermon on the Mount declares us "Blessed" or "Happy" in spite of the difficulties we face. This is a "Blessedness" or "Happiness" that comes from knowing the eternal blessings God gives to His people. We celebrate the fact that those who have departed in the faith are living and even now communing with us around the throne of the Lamb in Heaven. Though we may mourn and miss those who have departed, we rejoice in knowing that they are enjoying the great feast of Heaven (Is 25:6-9) and that we too will join them there; for we, too, are saints because of the salvation shared with us through the work of the Lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ (Rev 7:10). The Hymn selections for the day are also designed to point us to the joys of heaven. Also, the celebration of the Lord's Supper also gives us an opportunity to join together with "angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven" in a glorious meal where God provides for His people and draws them all to Himself.

Opening Prayer: We thank You Heavenly Father for bringing us together. Send Your Holy Spirit to help us grow in faith and love, especially as we gather together with our fellow Christians. Give us joy in knowing the treasures that you have waiting for Your people in Heaven. As we live our lives here on earth keep us heavenly minded and focused on our eternal future with You. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

CONNECT to Each Other

Take a few moments to greet each other—especially anyone who might be new or unfamiliar to the people in your group. Introduce yourselves again if anyone is unfamiliar with anyone else, give an interesting factoid about yourself that not many people know...

1. Can you recall an especially enjoyable picnic, banquet, or family meal that you've experienced? What was it that made it so great? **ANSWERS WILL VARY/SUBJECTIVE—EVERYONE WILL HAVE SOMETHING THAT THEY CAN THINK OF... AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF DIFFERENT THINGS THAT WOULD MAKE IT GREAT...I.E. THE PEOPLE YOU ARE WITH, THE FOOD, THE RELAXATION, THE ENTERTAINMENT, ETC..**

CONNECT to the Word—Read the Bible text together (also consider its context): **Isaiah 25:6-9**

2. What is your favorite part of this description of what God's Saints enjoy in Heaven? Explain why it is your favorite...**ANSWERS WILL VARY/SUBJECTIVE—PERHAPS IT'S THE GOURMET FOOD OR WINE, OR HOW SIN, DEATH, SADNESS, OR PAIN ARE ALL GONE, OR BEING WITH GOD IN HIS PRESENCE, OR SIMPLY THE HAPPINESS AND JOY THAT WILL BE THERE!**
3. These verses speak of an elaborate, rich feast in Heaven! In this world, if we enjoyed such things constantly, our health might be at risk. Will things like cholesterol, hyper-tension, obesity, and diabetes be ongoing problems in heaven? **OF COURSE NOT! NO BAD OR HARMFUL THINGS WILL TOUCH US IN HEAVEN. "THERE ALL THAT COULD HARM US WILL BE ABSENT AS OUR REDEEMED AND GLORIFIED AND INDESTRUCTIBLE BODIES WILL LIVE IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE. THERE, JOYS WILL NEVER END."**

4. Are you confident that this Heavenly feast is in your future? Why or Why Not? Explain... **WE KNOW THAT WE DON'T DESERVE THAT HEAVENLY FEAST.... BUT WE ALSO SHOULD HAVE CONFIDENCE AND CERTAINTY THAT THIS IS IN OUR FUTURE BECAUSE IT DOESN'T DEPEND ON US, IT DEPENDS ON CHRIST, WHOSE WORK IS ALREADY TOTALLY FINISHED—PROVEN BY THE RESURRECTION. "THE LORD MAKES SURE TO FEED US WITH THE GOSPEL HERE BELOW. HE MAKES US READY FOR THE BANQUET BY WASHING US IN BAPTISM AND HE CONTINUALLY NOURISHES THAT BAPTISM FAITH BY SPEAKING HIS WORD TO US AND GIVING US THE SACRAMENT OF HIS SON'S BODY AND BLOOD FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS."**
5. There is much that we do not know or understand about the world to come—just as there is much we do not understand about God. But what promise is held out for those in heaven in verse 7? **"BY NATURE WE ARE ENFOLDED IN A COVERING. WE LIVE HERE IN A DEEP, FOGGY VALLEY, WHERE OUR SINS HAVE BLINDED US TO THE TRUTH." BUT GOD REMOVES THAT VEIL—THAT SHROUD OF SIN—AND ALL THE SADNESS AND DESPAIR THAT COMES WITH IT—IS TAKEN AWAY BY GOD! WHAT PEACE THIS GIVES US!**
6. Here in this world we experience sadness, fear, and discouragement. But what does God promise for those in heaven in verse 8? **"NOW ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP, ALL CRYING HAS ENDED. JESUS HAS REMOVED THE PAIN AND SORROW WHICH CAUSED OUR TEARS TO FLOW. HE PLACES BEFORE US INSTEAD THE GOSPEL OF HIS LIFE, DEATH AND RESURRECTION FOR US." NOTHING BAD CAN TOUCH US! HOW HAPPY AND JOYFUL THIS MAKES US!**



CONNECT to Life

7. How does God prepare you NOW for the feast that is to come in Heaven? **"UNTIL THAT DAY, COME AND PARTAKE OF THE RICH FEAST HE PLACES BEFORE – HIS WORD AND SACRAMENTS BRINGING TO US JESUS AND ALL HIS GIFTS. BEING WELL FED HERE, ONE DAY IN HEAVEN WE WILL FEAST HIS SIDE, AND WILL NEVER LEAVE."** GATHERING AROUND WORD AND SACRAMENTS TOGETHER ENCOURAGING EACH OTHER FOR THAT FUTURE DAY! THE MEANS OF GRACE ARE AWESOME!
8. How did the hymns, other lessons, parts of the service, etc. fit together with the Sermon message and overall theme for the day? **VARIOUS ANSWERS—OBVIOUSLY THE WHOLE SERVICE IS DESIGNED TO BE A COHESIVE UNIT/SINGLE THEME.**

CONNECT in Prayer—*In closing & throughout the week!*

- PLEASE OFFER PRAYERS of Thanks that God has prepared such Heavenly Mansions and this glorious feast for His Saints. PRAY that he may always keep us focused and prepared to enter there.
- PRAY for the ongoing work of our Building Project and for those working on our project.
- PRAY for our newborn babies (Congrats to Mike & Annie Moldstad as their son Noah was born on Thursday!) and for the other expecting mothers of our church.
- PRAY that God may guide us at Mt. Olive as we search for a new School Principal and Teacher in our Call Meeting and as Calls are being extended. PRAY for all who currently hold calls to serve in our church and school.
- PRAY that God may guide and direct our country during this week of elections. That He might work through all our elected officials for the good of His people and to the benefit of His kingdom.
- PRAY for Missionaries here in America and throughout the World that our church and Evangelical Lutheran Synod support. And for God to bless the work of our Synod Officials and Boards.
- PRAY for any other special requests or needs of the people in your group!

