

**Isaiah 25:1-9(ESV)** <sup>1</sup>O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. <sup>2</sup>For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the foreigners' palace is a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. <sup>3</sup>Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. <sup>4</sup>For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat; for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall, <sup>5</sup>like heat in a dry place. You subdue the noise of the foreigners; as heat by the shade of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is put down. <sup>6</sup>On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. <sup>7</sup>And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. <sup>8</sup>He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. <sup>9</sup>It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

Last December I had the honor and privilege of performing a wedding for my nephew, that I dearly love and his bride who is a gift from God. A mother's prayers worked wonders for Sean and Marie. Both mothers prayed daily for years for a Christian spouse, and that they are for each other. To marry them was one of the major highlights of my life.

Marie, Sean's wife is a professional caterer. This past week I indulged in several of her meals. She has a way of making things taste better than most cooks. Even her sandwiches we ate at lunch tasted exquisite. And the cookies or pumpkin bread she made for our lunches were so warm you had to wait for them to cool down before you could bite into them. Even her coffee outdid Dunkin doughnuts. I call her an angel. My nephew waited 36 years for God to bring this angel into his life. A mother's prayers move the hand of God. I can't wait to return to the farm just to enjoy her cooking.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took bread and broke it. He gave it to the disciples saying, take and eat. This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me. After supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying, this is the cup of

the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Jesus served the bread and Jesus served the wine. It was to be the last time Jesus would drink wine until the day we all drink the wine together. **Matthew 26:29(NIV)** “I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

A word about Holy Communion. Jesus was foretelling the disciples exactly what was about to happen to him. He took the bread and broke it. Jesus body nailed to the cross, bleeding profusely, his flesh broken for you and for me. He took the bread and broke it knowing his own body was about to be nailed, his flesh literally poked with nails or spikes of some sort. Every time I do the words of institution I grimace on the inside when the words are spoken, “this is my body broken for you.” What brought me to faith in Jesus Christ at 10 years of age was seeing the crucifixion on television in the movie called King of Kings. His body was broken because of our sins. Our sins put Jesus on the cross. Making it more personal, your sins put Jesus on the cross, his body broken for you. I also know it takes a great amount of love to die for the likes of us. We are completely unworthy of his perfect and finished work on the cross.

I have a good friend who literally faints at the sight of blood. If a grandchild falls and has a scrap Grandpa can’t look at it or he will faint. Jesus blood was all over the place and I am telling you it is that perfect blood of Jesus that saves you and me for eternity. Jesus spilled blood washes away our sin. **2 Corinthians 5:21(NIV)** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Somehow that perfect blood of Jesus is applied to our lives giving to us the righteousness of Christ which makes us acceptable to God and heaven bound. You have been touched by the blood of Christ. You have been touched by his body. Every time you partake of Holy Communion you experience the body and blood of Christ which means you are literally touched by God. It is a holy moment and I look forward to the day when we have Holy Communion at the altar again.

There was a Holy Communion service that was quite different one time in high school. We had a Lay Witness renewal weekend at our church and lay people from four states came and shared testimonies with us and led us in worship. When it came time for Holy Communion we were told not to come forward until we felt ready. If we were holding a grudge against a fellow member it must be dealt with first. Some people quietly wept when they were asked for forgiveness from another worshipper. You could sense the Presence of God moving people to make things right with one another. I felt a strong inner prompting to go forward. When kneeling at the altar it was as if the Holy Spirit moved me to turn around. I turned my head and looked at all the people. This thought went through my mind. This meal we are eating together makes us all one in Christ. We are truly family, one in Christ, eating the family meal that unites us, the body and blood of Christ. It was the most powerful experience of Holy Communion I have ever had. God's Presence and unity of the body was so strongly sensed. We as Christians in the Lutheran church were truly renewed that weekend by the Presence of Christ.

I know some of you do not participate in Holy Communion when you do not feel it is right for you to do so. You bow your head and receive a blessing instead. There is something in your life not right with God and you want it dealt with so you can take Holy Communion in a worthy manner. **1 Corinthians 11:27-32(NLT)** So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup.

For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died. But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

Please do not take Holy Communion hastily without pondering and acknowledging what a fantastic gift you are receiving, the very grace of God. Please make sure you are taking it in a worthy manner.

Most of you know Isaiah is my favorite prophet. Jeremiah is Pastor Shields and Bob Yarbrough's favorite prophet and like to kid each other about this. The visions that God gave to Isaiah are some of the greatest visions given to any prophet. I firmly believe God showed Isaiah the entire flow of human history more than any other prophet. I say this because Isaiah will talk about the present, then the near future and then the way far out future sometimes all in one sentence. Isaiah saw it all.

Isaiah saw the meal, the feast to come on that great day. Holy Communion is only a foretaste of the feast to come. Jesus calls it the great banquet or the wedding feast. Jesus is the groom, and the church is the bride. Jesus is coming to get us. God the Father will prepare the food and host the meal. The menu has been set. It will be the most glorious gathering we will have ever experienced. Every taste will be out of this world. Every sip will be wine made in heaven. We will all feel completely filled with the love of God. We will all feel whole, healed, the best feelings we have ever felt. The joy of the Lord will abound. The table setting will speak volumes of God's beauty and kindness, all crafted by God. The table itself will be fascinating to say the least. We will hear music that is only uplifting, and every note sings of God. One of the things that means the most to me personally is the fact that everyone of us will enjoy seeing God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is at this meal that we will finally understand that we are all one in Christ. The person you may now not love too much you will feel nothing but love toward that person, God's holy love. We are all so glad to see each other. And this is all God's doing. He saved us. We trusted in God and He saved us and now He will feed us the finest of foods and drink that heaven has made. God will be thrilled to provide it all for you and for me and our loved ones who died knowing Jesus. At that meal there will be no

sadness. It will not be the final supper or the last supper but the first supper of many to come. I cannot express enough how being in the fullness of God's Presence will change us. The joy to come was worth all the pain that Jesus went through on the cross for you and for me. The joy to come for us will make all the trials, tribulations, suffering and more completely worth it. The pandemic, the riots, all the civil unrest, the one world government, the reign of the antichrist, the one world cashless banking system, all that has been prophesied in the Bible will come to pass and then the end comes. And yes, we are heading for that day, faster than ever. The Bible predicts such lawlessness as never before.

Friends God has the end planned. I am grateful to God that God showed Isaiah what will happen after the end of time. Death and sorrow will be no more. Only an abundance of life and joy. The food will taste so good. You will be so glad for the grace of God that saved you for eternity. You will never stop thanking Jesus for being obedient to the point of death death on the cross. We have a sure hope, an eager expectation for what God has guaranteed. God has spoken and God only speaks truth. We trusted in him and God saved us. Alleluia and Amen.