

Sermon for October 11, 2026 - Thanksgiving

Isaiah 25:6-9 EHV

Theme: Long for the LORD's Everlasting Thanksgiving Feast

- 1) He prepares His best for you.
- 2) He swallows up your worst.
- 3) We rejoice in His salvation.

⁶On this mountain the LORD of Armies will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich food, a banquet of aged wines, with the best cuts of meat, and with the finest wines. ⁷On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that covers all peoples, the burial cloth stretched over all nations. ⁸He has swallowed up death forever! The LORD God will wipe away the tears from every face. He will take away the shame of his people throughout the earth. For the LORD has spoken. ⁹On that day it will be said, "Look, here is our God! We waited for him, and he saved us! This is the LORD! We waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation!"

I always looked forward to Thanksgiving, especially as a college student. After months of eating school cafeteria meals, the idea of enjoying my Grandma's Alsatian cooking was particularly enticing. More than that, I longed for a break from my studies. I longed to be with family.

Life on this earth for the Christian is like longing for Thanksgiving. Because of sin, loneliness and hardship fill our lives. Because we don't physically perceive God's presence, we feel distant from Him and long to be with Him.

Praise be to God; He wants to be with us too – so much so that He sent His Son into the world to save us from our sins. Yes, God loves us so much that He is planning an everlasting Thanksgiving feast for us to enjoy with Him and each other in paradise.

With Isaiah's prophecy as our guide, let us consider the great things God is preparing for us in Christ, under the theme: **Long for the LORD's Everlasting Thanksgiving Feast.** 1) He prepares His best for you. 2) He swallows up your worst. 3) We rejoice in His salvation.

Part One: He prepares His best for you.

In the chapter right before our text, the LORD warns that He is coming to punish the people of this world for their rejection of Him. He is coming to cleanse His creation of all wickedness. He is coming to save all who wait for Him in faith. We read:

⁶On this mountain the LORD of Armies will prepare for all peoples a banquet of rich food, a banquet of aged wines, with the best cuts of meat, and with the finest wines.

The LORD compares His salvation to a grand feast in which He offers His guests the best of the best. No expense is spared. He wants His guests to enjoy the full richness of His love and rejoice in His mercy.

For whom is this feast intended? All peoples! It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, male or female, young or old – God is preparing this banquet for you. He wants you at His table, not just as a guest for a single meal, but as a child forever. He wants to share with you His unlimited blessings and joy.

Understand, however, that this celebration of salvation is not a “potluck” in which we can contribute something. No, our human “goodness” offers God nothing because, outside of Christ, even *our righteous acts are like a filthy cloth.*ⁱ The only thing we humans could offer God is rotten fruit, for that is all our sinful hearts can produce. This is why the LORD Himself prepares the meal. This is why our salvation must depend on Him alone.

Yes, the LORD Himself is preparing for you His best – everlasting fellowship with Him and all the angels and saints in heaven. He is preparing for you blessings and joy beyond your wildest imagination - a foretaste of which He offers you every time you partake of the Lord's Supper. Just think, in, with, and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion, Jesus offers you the very body and blood He used to win your salvation. Is there any rarer, costlier, or more beneficial food than that? We deserve nothing from God, and yet He feeds us with His best.

Forgiveness, life, and salvation – this is the feast God is preparing for us in Christ Jesus, which we will enjoy fully when He comes again on the Last Day. For in this feast the LORD not only feeds us His best, He also swallows up our worst.

Part Two: He swallows up your worst.

We read:

⁷On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that covers all peoples, the burial cloth stretched over all nations. ⁸He has swallowed up death forever!

What is the shroud that covers all the people? It's our blindness to God and His love. Our lust, pride, greed, and selfishness have separated us from God to such a degree that He says:

There is no one who is righteous, not even one. ¹¹There is no one who understands. There is no one who searches for God. ¹²They all turned away; together they became useless. There is no one who does what is good; there is not even one.ⁱⁱ

Our total sinfulness has separated us from God so completely that we cannot know Him on our own. Outside of Christ, we are spiritually dead in transgressions and sins.ⁱⁱⁱ

But God did not want you separated from Him. That is why He took it upon Himself to save you. How? By sending His Son into the world to live the perfect life you failed to live and die the death your sins had earned. He did this to reconcile you to Himself.

Yes, Jesus drank the cup His Father offered Him, the cup of suffering for the sins of the entire world. And in drinking this cup, He has swallowed death forever.

It is finished: Satan can no longer accuse, and death can no longer hold those Christ has redeemed. It is finished: Jesus has removed the shroud of sin and spiritual death that separated us from God. There is not a person on this earth for whom Christ has not died. He offers His salvation to all.

And when He comes on the Last Day, He will destroy the burial cloth stretched over all the nations. All the dead will be raised, and every eye will see Him. Death will have been swallowed up forever.

Does that mean everyone will go to heaven? Sadly, no. Why not? Because many people prefer what the world offers instead of God. Like the King in our Gospel reading,^{iv} God invites all, but many ignore God's invitation because they either prefer worldly things over God's spiritual blessings,^v or they want to come to God clothed in the pride of their own works, instead of the garments of Christ's righteousness with which the LORD clothes us in Holy Baptism.^{vi} And aren't we tempted to do the same? Don't we often fall? May the LORD have mercy on us all!

And mercy is exactly what the LORD shows us, working repentance and faith in our hearts through the Gospel His messengers proclaim. He not only does this for us, but for a countless multitude of people from every nation on earth.^{vii} The LORD welcomes all repentant believers into His everlasting Thanksgiving feast as His chosen guests. When Christ raises them from their graves on the Last Day, they will shout in joy: *“Death, where is your sting? Grave, where is your victory?... thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”*^{viii}

On that day:

The LORD God will wipe away the tears from every face. He will take away the shame of his people throughout the earth. For the LORD has spoken.

The tears that God will wipe away from our faces are not only the sorrows all people face on this earth because of sin, such as sickness, mental anguish, broken relationships, crime, and death. We believers also sigh in sorrow over the evil done on this earth – the sin and unbelief that surrounds us. With the apostle Paul, we also weep over those who reject the Gospel because of the destruction facing them unless they repent. God will wipe all these tears from our faces as we enter His everlasting paradise. All those sorrows will be swallowed up by joy in God’s faithful love. Christ will forever remove the shame and reproach we suffered from the world for His name’s sake.

And to assure us this will all come to pass, like a signature on a will, God commands Isaiah to write: *“For the LORD has spoken.”*

Understand the comfort of this phrase because everything the LORD says happens. When the LORD spoke: “Let there be light,” there was light.^{ix} When Jesus said, “Lazarus, come out!”, Lazarus came out of the tomb in which he had lain dead for four days.^x God does everything He speaks, which is why we can look forward to the joy that day will bring when God fulfills everything He promises in our sermon text.

Part Three: We rejoice in His salvation.

⁹*On that day it will be said, “Look, here is our God! We waited for him, and he saved us! This is the LORD! We waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation!”*

Oh, the joy we will have on that everlasting Thanksgiving Day when the LORD welcomes us home! Not only will we be happy to see our family of believers from every age and enjoy the best of God's goodness in all holiness, our greatest joy and thanks will be in the LORD himself.

"He saved us," we will confess to one another. Can you imagine that? He saved us – you and me – even though our sins separated us from Him. He saved us – wicked as we were, not even having the desire to be saved until His Spirit worked repentance and faith in our hearts. He saved us, undeserving sinners that we were. Why? Because He is the LORD, love personified,^{xi} who forgives guilt and rebellion and sin.^{xii}

Yes, on that day it will become unmistakable that our faith in Him was not in vain. Despite the raging of the devil, the world, and our sinful natures against our faith in Christ, we wait for Him. Even though we constantly feel like giving up, the LORD sustains our faith through Word and Sacraments. As the LORD puts His promises before our eyes, we wait patiently for His fulfilment. And when that day comes, we will thank Him eternally for saving and sustaining us throughout our earthly lives – delivering us safely from every evil work, home to Himself in heaven.^{xiii}

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, don't just look forward to the earthly Thanksgiving we are celebrating this long weekend. Long for the LORD's everlasting Thanksgiving feast as He prepares His best for you and swallows up your worst in Christ so you can eternally rejoice in His salvation. Every day that passes is a day that brings us closer to this feast. Therefore, we pray: "*Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!*"^{xiv} Amen.

ⁱ Isaiah 64:6 EHV

ⁱⁱ Romans 3:10-12 EHV

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Ephesians 2:1ff

^{iv} Cf. Matthew 22:1-14

^v Cf. Matthew 22:5

^{vi} Cf. Matthew 22:11ff and Galatians 3:26-27

^{vii} Cf. Revelation 7:9

^{viii} 1 Corinthians 15:55, 57 EHV

^{ix} Cf. Genesis 1:3

^x Cf. John 11:43-44

^{xi} Cf. 1 John 4:8

^{xii} Cf. Exodus 34:6-7

^{xiii} Cf. 2 Timothy 4:18

^{xiv} Revelation 22:20 EHV