

Easter Sunday 2020,

“He is Risen” & “He who promises is faithful”

The Lord says, because of this, will you come dine with me?



“There is just one thing, you have to have understood the background to the invitation and on accepting that, I need you to reply” -





Heaven's Eternal Banquet

Jesus and the Word make clear to us that for those of us who accept that Jesus died on the cross to forgive us our sins and that he has been raised to new life for us, we have much to look forward to in his invitation to join him at Heaven's Banquet (The Marriage Feast of the Lamb). A meal like no other, when this world is ended and "the new heavens and earth are complete". Jesus' teaching to the Jews of that day included the heavenly banquet, dinners, food and feasts were at the centre of his teaching. Jesus is planning a huge celebration, a party!

As you sit down to Easter Lunch we would like to offer you a Banquet Menu. It probably won't coincide with your real lunch! And you may want to eat first and contemplate later! Try to imagine Jesus sitting at table with you and picture yourself in a chair close to Jesus, especially if you are having Easter lunch with less company than you would have hoped.

It is a seven course banquet: -

Aperitif

Soup of the Day with bread roll

The Fish Course

Main Course - Lamb

The Dessert Course

The Fruit Course

Coffee & Liqueurs

(Finest New Wines

Rich Red Wines & Spirits)

Gratuities - Thank you, Lord

Amen . Enjoy!

Praying the Royal Banquet:

“But here on this mountain, God-of-the-Angel Armies will throw a feast for all the people of the world, a feast of the finest foods, a feast with vintage wines, a feast of seven courses, a feast lavish with gourmet desserts. And here on this mountain, God will banish the pall of doom hanging over all peoples, the shadow of doom darkening all nations. Yes, he will banish death forever. And God will wipe the tears from every face. He’ll remove every sign of disgrace from his people, wherever they are. Yes! God says so!” Isaiah 25:6 – *The Message*

The invitation to share in the extravagance of God’s love revealed through the outstandingly glorious magnificence of “The Royal Banquet”. Surely we can trace the way he disciplines us using food and drink in his Word?

Aperitif

As we come together to share this Royal Banquet, we take a moment to look at the first piece of food being shared...

“Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” Genesis 2:9 (NRSV)

“On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month: and the leaves on the tree are for the healing of the nations” Revelation 22:2

In Genesis we start in a garden, the Garden of Eden and in Revelation we end in a new garden, the tree of life is in both gardens providing life to all who chose to obey God, its fruit leads to eternal life. God gave us trees that would produce food for us, to be beautiful to look at. God cares that we get the food we need for life. We recognize God’s wonder in the world and the beauty he created. We are drawn to give thanks for the gift of life and to have faith in a God who provides. The tree of life with its fruit has always been there, but Adam and Eve took the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the first garden, eating from this tree began the Fall. Better to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life and live!

Prayer – thank you Lord for the beauty of the world you have created and the food you have provided, for being a God who provides and cares for his children. Forgive us when we fall, help us to embrace Life. Amen

Soup of the Day

“Once when Jacob was cooking some stew Esau came in “Quick, let me have some of that red stew, I’m famished” he said. ... Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew.” Genesis 25 v 29 & 34 NIV or 2 Kings 4; 38-40

Soup is usually eaten with bread in the Bible. The soup itself is a mixture of ingredients represented in the Word too, such as lentils, meat, oil, milk, seeds and spices, flour. Bread is a common food shared in the Bible and as a sign of hospitality and has many references. Jesus claimed to be The Bread of Life, we see him taking the bread at the Last Supper – “here is my body broken for you” and the sharing of the young boy’s loaves to feed the 5,000+. It is a staple for everyday living. He is a staple for everyday living.

A good soup tastes good, has the right balance of ingredients, cooked at the correct temperature for the right amount of time before it is sent out at a feast. Most of us need a recipe book, some guidance/teaching to know how to make a good soup with the right ingredients, good nourishing ones and not bad damaging ones. We have to make ourselves ready for the feast to know what nourishes us and what is damaging (sins), even if more tempting in the short term. A cook needs a recipe book for the cooking, we need the Word of God to get us ready for the Feast.

Prayer – Lord, help us to prepare for your feast, help us resist the bad ingredients and temptations that come our way daily. Send your Holy Spirit to guide and teach us what will nourish us, - love, kindness, self -control, joy, faithfulness, peace, patience & generosity, to become more like you and be worthy of a place at your table.

The Fish Course

“Or, if your children ask you for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you good children know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him?” - Matthew 7:7-11 NIV

Jesus called out to them. “Friends, have you not caught any fish?” “...then throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.... It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. John 21v5,6 & 11b. NIV

Fish was a part of the staple diet for Galileans and for many who lived by lakes or the sea shore, providing protein and good nutrition. It was considered a good food to have. The young boy at the feeding of the 5,000+ provided his fish to be multiplied. They have a distinctive fish they serve on the shores of Galilee. Several of the disciples were fishermen, familiar with the Lake and fish catches and roasting fish over an open fire, the weather, and when to go out. Jesus accompanied them and provided miraculous catches (Luke 5:8-9). In the last case, Peter saw the holiness of God and his own sinfulness when the catch came in. God the Provider, when we admit our sinfulness and start our first steps of discipleship. Jesus references the generosity of God towards us his children, he knows how to give us good gifts. Jesus talked about us all becoming fishers of men. “Leave your nets and I will make you fishers of men”. The early Christians used an ichthus, the sign of a fish, to mark themselves out as Christians. They can still be seen on the walls of the catacombs in Rome.

Prayer – Heavenly Father, help me to be a true disciple and a fisher of men. **Amen**

The Main Course - Lamb

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29

And they sang in a mighty chorus: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered ...to receive power and riches and strength and honour and glory and blessing”! Revelation 5:12

And in our worship we sometimes say: “Christ Our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for us”. The Jews will have celebrated the Passover just before Easter, in the same way as they were doing at the time of Jesus, when he was crucified and sacrificed for us. They will follow the tradition of the Passover sacrificial lamb and will recount it together. The Old Testament tradition was that a perfect lamb should be sacrificed and shed its blood for forgiveness of their sins and to remind them of the time when God rescued them from Egypt. We see Jesus as the fulfilment of it, the one perfect sacrifice for all made upon the cross, his blood shed for us. A personal sacrifice for you and me. In Revelation we see the worship of the redeemed in heaven, the slain Lamb now upon his throne in heaven and being surrounded by his people singing a new song of praise in heaven and worshipping him, the angels joining in.

Prayer – Father we thank you that you sent Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice meaning that we have total access to you. We thank you for shedding your blood for us on that cross. You are now seated on high praying for us, may our worship be a sacrifice offering to you in all that we do and say in our ministry here. **Amen**

The Dessert Course

There are so many delicious desserts we could mention at a banquet and, one in Israel. Michele Guinness, former vicar's wife, writes much about the heavenly party in her book, but also of the Jewish joy of celebrating with food and partying. So, with many gourmet desserts mentioned in the Bible as being on the menu we are not restricted but we'll just mention one.... Bread & Butter Pudding.

Bread and Butter Pudding

Jesus said: "I tell you the truth. Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world"

John 6:25-51 NLT "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never go thirsty"

In the same way that nursing infants cry for milk, you must intensely crave the pure spiritual milk of God's Word. For this "milk" will cause you to grow into maturity, fully nourished and strong for life – especially now that you have had a taste of the goodness of the Lord Jehovah and have experienced his kindness. 1 Peter 2:2-3 Passion Translation

As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby. 1 Peter 2:2

"Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know how to refuse evil, and choose the good" Isaiah 7:15

All the ingredients of our pudding – bread, butter, milk are physically and spiritually nourishing. Bread means many things to Christians. It is the staple food on which God's people have fed physically since the earliest days (and been fed..manna) and spiritually the Bread of Life, God's Word is that on which we feed and are strengthened in our walk of faith. Above all, Jesus said "I am the Bread of Life". He sanctified bread as the most powerful symbol of his own body at the Last Supper and he invites us "to be in Him and He in us" in this way. There are many references to butter and honey as being a part of the biblical diet. Honey to provide sweetness. New believers need the milk of God's Word to grow in faith and continue to be nourished to maturity.

Prayer – Thank you God that you nourish us daily with our own baked bread but more so with the Bread of Life. May we grow in our faith as we feed on you. May all creation have the nourishment it needs. Amen

The Fruit Course

"Yes, I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing.. You didn't choose me, I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit..."

John 15:5, 16 NLT

"In that day each of you will invite his neighbour to sit under his vine and fig-tree" declares the Lord Almighty.

Zech 3:10

The Bible abounds with images of fruit of all kinds, they signify abundance and luxury and desirable things. Every man owning his own fig tree and vine was a symbol of the good things in life belonging to him, prosperity and contentment. In Greek the word for "fruit" refers to the natural product of a living thing. Paul used "fruit" to help us understand the product of the Holy Spirit, who lives in every believer... love, joy, peace etc. As we grow, so will the fruit inside us, helping us to become Christlike.

Prayer – Lord Jesus, You are the Vine and we are the branches. Help us to stay connected to you each day. Shape us and nourish us through your Holy Spirit and keep us rooted in your love, so that we may always be fruitful in your service and for your glory. **Amen**

Coffee & Liquors

When you arrive, you may use the money to buy any kind of food you want – cattle, sheep, goats, wine or other alcoholic drink. Then feast there in the presence of the Lord your God and celebrate with your household”

Deuteronomy 14:26 NLT

He called the bridegroom over and said to him, “Every host serves his best wine first until everyone has had a cup or two, then he serves the wine of poor quality. But you my friend have reserved the most exquisite wine until now!”

John 2:10 TPT

As we get to the end of the banquet, we reflect on all God’s provision to us. Also, what our generous and loving Father has prepared for us when we enter the Kingdom. We look forward to the celebration of joy and fun. A time of plenty and abundance, where streams of living water flow and the world will be healed – so that all who come will be whole in themselves and with God. This will be the time when we can share in the Banquet that God has prepared for us; one that our meals and festivities on earth point towards.

Prayer – Lord, thank you for all you have given us, help us to share it and use it for your glory. Help us to live both in the world today, whilst looking forward to your Royal Banquet. You have poured out the Holy Spirit into our hearts to bear precious fruit to grow in us. Help us as we journey on to see the foods you so generously give us as steps to your Banquet that we may share fellowship at your Holy Table throughout Eternity. **Amen**

Finest New Wines

Rich Red Wines & Spirits.....

**You may like to extend your banquet by reflecting on the Wines & Spirits – New Wine?
Holy Spirit? Fruit of the Vine?**

Thank you, Lord for your generous invitation