

Joy Comes in the Morning

Introduction: I have many things to be thankful but one stands out especially – as of this morning we have X# of submission to participate in our Mosaic Showcase on March 4th! This is a step of faith and now the Lord has given us this chance to bring joy and flourishing to our community! I want to share this joy with you and hope that you'll keep this event in your prayers!

We're in a series called **The Joy of the Lord is our Strength** and today we are going to look at "Joy Comes in the Morning" and focuses primarily on **Ps. 30**, a psalm of praise and thanksgiving by David:

- This psalm is "sandwiched" by David's pledge to thank and praise God for His deliverance and contains in the middle a clarion call to all God's people to rejoice:

"¹ I will exalt you, Lord, for you rescued me ... ⁴Sing to the Lord, all you godly ones! Praise his holy name ... ¹² that I might sing praises to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever!"

- As David recalls some messy & sticky circumstances when he's at the very edge of despair, he uses a **pattern of reversal** in this "poetic testimony" to

make sure the listeners feel the full impact of God's acts of deliverance:

- ***"I cried to you ... you restored"*** (v.2)
- ***"his anger lasts only a moment ... his favor lasts a lifetime"*** (v. 5)
- ***"Weeping ... joy"*** (v. 5)
- ***"Your favour ... you turned away"*** (v. 7)
- ***"my mourning ... joyful dancing ... clothes of mourning ... clothed me with joy"*** (v. 11)

David's life is traumatized by three joy-killers which many of us also encounter today:

Relational Conflict: Dishonour, disgrace, guilt and shame caused by "defeat, downfall, or demise."

*"... you rescued me. You refused to let **my enemies triumph over me.**"* (v. 1) – David's enemies were trying to "gloat, take pleasure or rejoice" over his misfortune and miseries. Like David, many of us are struggling with relational conflict.

Health Challenges: Distress and depression generated by illness.

“I cried to you for help, and you restored ***my health***.”
(v. 2) – illness and/or brokenness in spirit and emotional traumas.¹

Death Threats: Dread and despair produced by physical dangers.

“You brought me up from ***the grave***, O Lord. You kept me from ***falling into the pit of death***.” (v. 3) Physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual abuses make people vulnerable to loss of life.

How about you? Are you dealing with similar challenges?
And how have you handled them?

Lucky Girl Syndrome, also called “LGS,” has been trending on TikTok to kick off 2023. The trend encourages people to believe and say out loud that everything works out for them—claiming that the act of doing so will cause good things to happen.

Apparently many young people, for example, practice “the law of attraction” to change their fortunes - positive thoughts bring positive results and vice versa.

¹ Being healed by God can refer to restoration from any situation of crisis (cf. Ps. 147:3; see Robert Davidson, *The Vitality of Worship*, p. 104.)

² Cf. Marianne Meye Thompson, “Reflections on Joy in the Bible” in Miroslav Volf and Justin E. Crisp (Editors), *Joy and Human Flourishing*, pp. 21ff.

“Joy comes from the ongoing, internal work of the Holy Spirit. You might not be happy at the moment—in fact, you might be suffering, grieving or feeling downright

David’s different experiences of God’s rescue have taught him that ...

- it is the joy of the Lord that sustains his soul in the midst of affliction,
- and it deepens his faith in the thick of trouble while anticipating God’s deliverance.

Joy is not the absence of difficulty, hardship, or struggle; joy focuses on the purpose of God in “the dark night of the soul” because weeping doesn’t have the final say, God does.

Joy grasps the truth that God is at work even in most trying circumstances, whether one is aware or unaware of it:

**God does His best work in the worst places
and shows His amazing grace in the worst time.²**

How does David learn this lesson of joy?

Authentic worship grounded upon a relational knowledge of God leads to a process of life realignment with His will.

ornery—but you can maintain your joy in the experiential knowledge that God is always at work, knowing He can sustain you through the most difficult life and ministry challenges.” (Gary Reinecke, “Establishing and Maintaining Well-being in 2023: Focus on Emotional Health,” <https://mailchi.mp/61ff8940d30c/the-most-important-of-all-christian-coaching-competencies-6258845?e=0180fd3dd0>)

Authentic worship means setting our heart, mind, and soul on knowing God who is the source of our joy.³

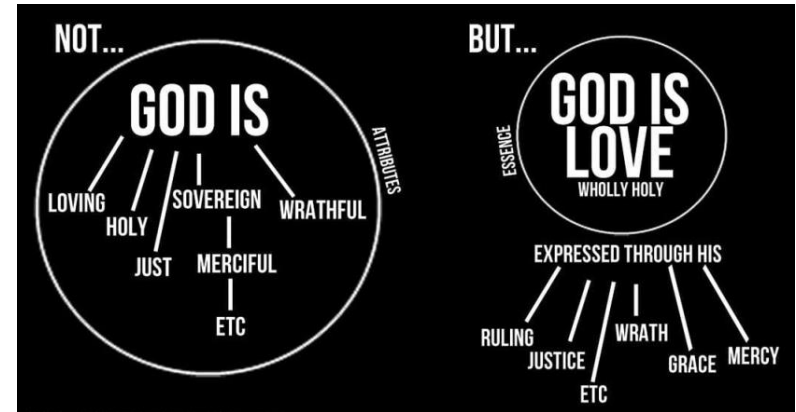
Listen to what David says:

Ps. 30:5 For ***his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime!*** Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.

In this emotionally charged and heart-warming passage David compares and contrasts the momentary trouble of this life with God’s lasting grace and mercy:

- **God’s anger** (“steam coming out of nostrils”/wrath/extreme displeasure) vs. **His favor** (grace/pleasure/good will/acceptance).
- One lasts for **a moment**; the other **a lifetime**.⁴
- One brings weeping/sorrow; the other joy/celebration.

I find this graphics instructive and serve as a corrective to a common misunderstanding about God’s character or essence:⁵



- There are no compartments in the character of God;
- and He doesn’t have multiple personalities.
- God is love and all “attributes” are shaped by and administered out of His extravagant love.

So David’s prayers for deliverance are grounded upon God-being-love:

- God is good and wants the best for His children.
- Love has no fear, because perfect love casts out all fear.⁶

³ Cf. Deut. 6:5; Mk. 12:30. Ronni Kurtz, author and professor of theology, writes: “If we want to set our hearts free to live in the joy that comes from loving the triune God, we must set our minds on knowing him.” (Ronni Kurtz, Why Are There So Many Angry Theologians? https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2023/januaryfebruary/book-awards-kurtz-fruitful-theology-angry-theologians.html?utm_source=Today+in+Christian+History+Newsletter&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_term=213920&utm_content=11898&utm_campaign=email)

⁴ “All joy wants eternity—wants deep, deep eternity,” wrote Friedrich Nietzsche.
⁵ Graphics creds: Bruxy Cavey. “There is no such thing as a generic, vanilla-flavored god. All the gods of the world religions and all the foundational realities of the world’s philosophies have profound and differing implications for who we are, what we can know, how we should behave, and what we can hope for ... the God of the Bible is unique ... **God is personal, God is absolute, God is relational, and God is love.**” (Christopher Watkin, *Biblical Critical Theory*, p. 34; *emphasis ours.*)
⁶ 1 Jn. 4:8, 18.

Now, while both His grace/mercy and wrath/anger are shaped by and express His love, the mentioning of God's anger and His face turning away (v. 7) indicate that David has played a part in whatever messy situation in which he finds himself.

Listen to David's testimony:

^{30:6} When I was ***prosperous [secure and safe]***, I said, "***Nothing can stop me now!***" ⁷ Your favor, O Lord, made me ***as secure as a mountain [established; strong and mighty in power]***. Then ***you turned away from me [hid your face], and I was shattered.***

David confesses that he had made a fatal mistake:

- he'd taken all that God had given him for granted;
- his pride, arrogance, becomes all-important;
- his security and confidence are misplaced;
- he has forgotten about God, becomes self-sufficient,
- and worships the gift instead of the Giver!⁷

David's misstep:

Success = God's Favor

Trouble-Free = Joy

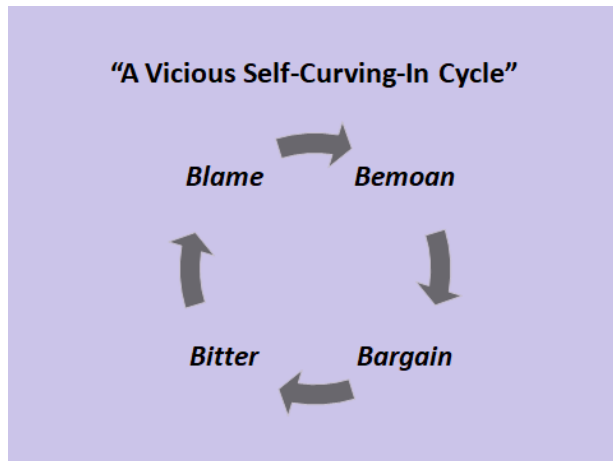
He fails to see the deceit of his own heart and the idolatry of god-substitutes.

When David encounters all the troubles and when God hides His face (i.e., God withdrawing His favours and showing displeasure and there's no joy⁸), ***David's world is shaken and the joy of the Lord turns dimmer and dimmer, fading away – the bigger his head grows, the harder he falls - he has no strength to handle the crisis at hand.***

We all know that if we refuse to deal with deep rooted hard-and-heart issues, we remain stuck in "a vicious bemoan-bargain-bitter-blame cycle."

⁷ Cf. See Moses' warning in Deut. 8:11-20

⁸ Cf. Ps. 13:1; 104:29.



But David doesn't stay stuck; he recognizes that he's at his wits end, in desperation and needing God's deliverance:

^{30:8} **I cried out to you, O Lord. I begged the Lord for mercy,** saying, ⁹“What will you gain if I die, if I sink into the grave? Can my dust praise you? Can it tell of your faithfulness?

¹⁰ **Hear me, Lord, and have mercy on me. Help me, O Lord.**”

David engages in spiritual discipline like prayer & fasting (as wearing clothes of mourning – sackcloth – suggests in v. 11)⁹

- to prepare himself to see the world through God's eyes,
- to think after His thoughts,
- to understand His purpose,

⁹ Sackcloth-wearing is usually combined with fasting (cf. Gen. 37:34; Ps. 35:13; 69:10-11; 2 Sam. 12:16-17); this practice expresses a humbling posture of repentance before God and seeking His mercy and restoration.

- to identify with how the Lord views and responds to his challenging circumstances,
- with the aim to follow His will and instructions.

God's wrath is not malicious or vindictive; He acts in ways consistent with His nature. God's anger – turning His face away as showing His displeasure (.v. 7) - is His discipline for the one He loves.¹⁰ “We are never in greater danger than in the sunshine of prosperity. To be always indulged of God, and never to taste of trouble, is rather a token of God's neglect than of his tender love.” (Struther, cited in Spurgeon.)

David, in humility and humiliation, cries to God - appealing to God's honour and mercy - to lengthen his life.

^{30:11} **You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy,** ¹² that I might sing praises to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, **I will give you thanks forever!**

David's joy is invigorated in the presence of God: in setting aside his self-importance, acknowledging his mistakes, and re-aligning his ways with God's will, “joy comes with the morning” - ***he pledges to thank God forever, i.e., to serve His purpose and to tell of His faithfulness, come what may.***

¹⁰ Prov. 3:12; Heb. 12:6. “We are never in greater danger than in the sunshine of prosperity. To be always indulged of God, and never to taste of trouble, is rather a token of God's neglect than of his tender love.” (Struther, cited in Spurgeon.)

Like David, we can have joy when we worship God with humility and honesty. The joy of the Lord is our strength when we understand that ***our trying circumstances are the training grounds where God's unfolding story of redemption is magnified.***

Even if all is against us, God is for us; for nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Just because there's weeping at night it doesn't mean that God is absent. He is doing deep work in and through tough circumstances; ***the darkest point of the night is the beginning of dawn.***

God never wastes our past because he is preparing us for His kingdom advance.

Conclusion: A while back a famous American evangelist named Billy Sunday (1862-1935) once said:

If you have no joy in your religion,

there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere.

Today, if joy is lacking as a Christ-follower, I encourage to

(1) begin with **Gratitude and Joy Exercise** you can download on our website, <https://cornerstonechurch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Gratitude-and-Joy-Exercise.pdf>;

(2) take an intentional step of worship – practice prayer and fasting; listen to or read the sermon on **Fasting** – you can find that here, <https://cornerstonechurch.ca/sermons/fasting/>; and if you want to learn about fasting, you can access our Fasting Guide Sheet here, <https://cornerstonechurch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Fasting-Guide-Sheet.pdf>.