

Joy Comes in the Morning

Psalm 30:5, Mark 15:22 – 16:8, 1 Cor 15:1-19

Halifax: 12 April 2020, 10:30 AM

Introduction

On Friday, we observed a day of fasting and prayer to plead with God for mercy during the pandemic that the Lord has sent to the whole world.

- We had a special assembly with a special sermon for that occasion.
 - I preached to you from the book of Joel, where Joel calls the people to fast and pray in response to a locust plague that God had sent.
 - There was a very similar situation to ours. Like us, they had all the things that they had been relying on shaken.
 - Things like the good life, leaders, employment, their food supply, and even aspects of their worship were shaken.
 - We saw the powerful encouragements Joel gives us to repent and cry out to God in such times...
 - that God is a gracious God who restores His people, that He pours out His Spirit on them, that He destroys their enemies, and that He fully acquits them.
 - And we saw how for us in these New Testament times, all of the reasons for looking to God are strengthened and more fully revealed through Jesus Christ.

As I was preparing that sermon, I was also considering what I would preach on this morning and the fifth verse of Psalm 30 came to mind...

- **Psalm 30:5: “For His anger is but for a moment, His favour is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.”**
 - Isn't that a verse that is just bursting with hope for us in our affliction?
 - I began to think about how those words describe how God works in the world: “weeping endures for the night, but joy comes in the morning.”
 - The grand event of human history was an event where weeping endured for the night, but joy came in the morning.
 - And that grand event is both the pattern of God's saving work as well as the engine of God's saving work.
- Consider this with me and be filled with hope that though weeping may endure for a night, joy will come in the morning.

I. Let's begin by looking at the grand event of history. Let us see that it is an event in which weeping endured for a night but joy came in the morning.

A. What is the grand event of human history?

1. It is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
 - It is what Paul calls the gospel (the good news) which was preached to us, we have received, in which we stand, and by which we are saved:

- 1 Cor 15:3-4: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...

- This is *the* event that brings about God's saving purpose in the world.

2. Let me read Mark's account of this greatest of all events.

- I will begin reading in Mark 15:22:

Here is the word of God. Mark 15:22 – 16:8:

Mark 15:22 – 16:8: And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. ²³ Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it*. ²⁴ And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them *to determine* what every man should take. ²⁵ Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. ²⁶ And the inscription of His accusation was written above: THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁷ With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. ²⁸ So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors." ²⁹ And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! *You* who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, ³⁰ save Yourself, and come down from the cross!" ³¹ Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. ³² Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him. ³³ Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" ³⁵ Some of those who stood by, when they heard *that*, said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" ³⁶ Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to

take Him down." ³⁷ And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. ³⁸ Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" ⁴⁰ There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, ⁴¹ who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem. ⁴² Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵ So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷ And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where He was laid. ^{16:1} Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ² Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had

risen. ³ And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶ But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen!

He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷ But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” ⁸ So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

May the LORD bless the reading of His holy and infallible Word.

3. Know that this is the story of a real event in human history.

- Jesus truly was crucified and buried and He truly did rise from the dead.
 - It is absurd to object to this by saying that it is not possible.
 - Of course it is not possible. The very point is that this was God working in a way that was beyond human strength to bring about our salvation.
- The whole event of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection is given to us by the testimony of almighty God in the Holy Scriptures.
 - It is not a fable. It is only regarded as such at the peril of those who are cut off from God by unbelief.
 - Neo-orthodoxy has made it into a faith story that is meant to influence and shape us whether it actually happened or not.
 - That is a damnable heresy held by many ministers in our day.
- When Paul referred to it in 1 Cor 15, which we read earlier, it was less than twenty years after the event.
 - He speaks of eyewitness accounts, even of 500 who saw Him at once.
 - Most of these witnesses were still alive when he wrote this...
 - Paul says that he also saw Christ risen, but at a later time. He explains how his work as a minister is worthless if there is no resurrection.
 - Because if there is no resurrection, there is no gospel—and his preaching and everyone’s faith is in vain.
 - Paul and the other apostles would have been absolute fools to lie about this because their ministry brought them much suffering in this world.
 - Unless they believed that there was hope in the world to come, why would they suffer and die for it?
- The story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is the account of the greatest event in all of history.

B. You can see that this greatest of all events is a story of sorrow that turns to joy and of death that becomes life.

1. First, you have (in this story) the Son of God bearing the sorrow of the world.

- There He is, on the cross, cursed, and forsaken by His Father as you hear His cry, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”

- Truly, as Isaiah says, He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
- How could it be that the Son of God should be in such a state?
 - How is it that He appears in human flesh when He is a pure spirit who belongs in glory with the Father?
 - How is it that He who made the world and rules the nations should be a man of sorrows, mocked, crucified, dead, and buried?
 - Isaiah declares that on Him was laid the iniquity of us all—the guilt of our sin—that He (the Son of God!) was led like a lamb to the slaughter.
- Truly, here is the night of weeping beyond all weeping.
 - Not that it was a single night—that is not the point—the point is that there is a season (a night) of weeping first and the morning of joy that dawns afterward.
- 2. Yes! In this greatest of all stories, you see that there is also joy in the morning.
 - The women go to the tomb in the morning (a literal morning *and* an eternal morning) and find that the stone is rolled away.
 - An angel at the tomb announces the wonderful news, saying (16:6): **“Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.”**
 - Death could not keep Him!
 - The grave could not hold Him, even with the burden of all our sins upon Him.
 - The morning has come! He is alive forevermore.
 - **Weeping may have endured for a night, but joy came in the morning.**
- This is the grandest of all events—not only because the Son of God who died was raised again...
 - but also because it is both the pattern and the engine of all of God’s saving work.
 - Let’s look first at how it is the pattern, and then at how it is the engine.

II. See first how God follows the pattern of the grand event in His saving work.

- There is weeping followed by joy, and death followed by life.
 - This is the way He has chosen to work in the world.
- A. God follows this pattern of the grand event in saving the world itself.
 1. First, there is a time of weeping.
 - a. Ours is world where the very beings who were created to enjoy it and to worship God in it are fallen into sin and misery.
 - God made us righteous and holy, but so that we were capable of rebelling against Him, and that we did.
 - Our fall brought the great night of weeping that began when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and continues till the end of this age.
 - b. Who can measure our sorrow?
 - 1) Poor miserable creatures! Ruined by rebellion.

- We who were made in God's image—now marred by sin, now full of selfishness and pride, hatred and war, bitterness and strife, in bondage to our sinful passions and desires.
 - Beautiful beings—now wretched beings.
 - Holy creatures—now wicked and defiled creatures.
 - 2) And being so, we are also estranged from our God.
 - What communion can darkness have with light?
 - What concord can the holy one have with the sons of Belial?
 - We are cut off from our God.
 - 3) What miseries have come upon us!
 - The cursing of the ground, famines, pandemics, wasting storms, suffering, fears without and within, ruin, death, groanings and pain...
 - A sentence of punishment with the devil and his angels in everlasting burnings and torment in body and soul.
- Truly, this world is in the night of weeping.
2. But God has purposed that joy will come in the morning!
- a. He has appointed a day when the whole world will be restored.
 - In that day, a great multitude that He has redeemed and reconciled will be resurrected to serve Him perfectly forever.
 - And even the creation itself will be restored... there will be a new heaven and a new earth and there will be no more curse, no more death, no more famines, and no more disease.
 - b. Jesus came to save the world that was perishing and He will do that!
 - The promise is not that every person will be saved, but that the world will be saved so that it is restored to perfection and filled with people who are restored to perfection.
 - Satan and those who are his will be cast out to destruction, and the world will be fully restored and it will be what God created it to be...
 - A place of beautiful righteousness and happiness.
 - Joy will come on that morning, and it will continue forever.
 - Death will be swallowed by life, this mortal will put on immortality!
- That is what God has planned for the world—a night of weeping followed by a morning of joy.
- He follows the pattern of the grand story of Jesus' death and resurrection.
- B. God also follows the pattern of the grand event in saving the whole church.
- Again and again as He works in His church, we see her brought to sorrow that turns to joy, brought to death and then raised again after the pattern of Jesus.
1. Think of Adam—fallen and ruined, yet God came to him and Eve and promised that He would bring forth a people that would return to Him and destroy Satan his minions.

- Adam and Eve were delivered, and so was their son Abel, but not their son Cain who murdered Abel. After that God gave them another godly son named Seth.
 - God appointed sacrifices for them by which He testified of His provision to atone for their sin... weeping turned to joy...
 - They were given life from the dead—a resurrection.
2. And then there was Noah—a man that God restored to life in the day that God pronounced death upon the whole world for its wickedness.
 - Think of the weeping—the whole world, full of people—under a raging torrent.
 - But joy came in the morning when God delivered Noah and his family. A fresh start with God to fill the earth again!
 3. And then there was Abraham after the earth was scattered at Babel... promised to become a great nation that would bring blessing to all nations through his seed.
 - Yet, there was weeping again when he found that he and his wife were barren and they could not bring forth the son of promise...past the years of childbearing.
 - but joy came when by God, Sarah brought forth a son.
 - And then God called for the death of that son as a sacrifice, but gave him back with a promise of a coming Son that God would provide. Death turned to life.
 4. There was Jacob who was given the promise of blessing,
 - But wept much as he found himself in the place of helplessness and death—over and over—so that he thought all was lost...
 - Yet again and again God delivered him, giving him life.
 5. We can speak of Joseph, driven from his family, the family to which God had promised life...
 - dead in slavery, dead in a prison (the night of weeping), yet then made alive to be the source of life to his family, his family which had the promise of life.
 - Sorrow endured through the long night, but joy came in the morning.
 6. And then the covenant people to whom God promised life began to multiply...
 - And yet they were, as it were, dead in Egypt as slaves, weeping in bondage under the rule of Pharaoh instead of God...
 - Until God turned their tears to joy and brought them out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, giving them ordinances in which He promised forgiveness—and, as it were, life from the dead.
 7. We could tell of much weeping in the desert when they rebelled, when they were without food, when they refused to enter the land of promise...
 - Yet God brought joy again and again and at last they entered the land to live.
 8. Then there was the period of judges...
 - What is it but a succession of one death after another when they turned from God and were delivered into the hands of their enemies—but each death was followed by a resurrection when God restored life to them again.

9. Then there was David, promised the throne from which Christ would come, yet as good as dead when Saul pursued him and drove him to dwell with the Philistines...
 - Yet, God brought him to the promised throne—life from the dead.
 - Until by his sin, he brought a curse to his family so that his own son drove him out and came to kill him—another night of weeping—but deliverance came bringing a new day of joy.
10. Yet, over the centuries, the dynasty of David from whom the salvation of the world was to come fell into greater and greater corruption—
 - The night of weeping came to a climax when the house of David fell, the city of Jerusalem was ruined, and the temple destroyed.
 - It was an exile of death in Babylon—a night of weeping and lamentation, but it was followed by a morning of joy when the people were restored and the city and the temple were built again... there was life from the dead.
11. And then there was the day of Christ—we have already seen His story as the model after which all these other stories are patterned...
 - But we could speak of Israel's rejection of Christ that led to their death—yet there was a morning of rejoicing when God brought new life through the preaching of the apostles.
 - What joy for the church when the remnant returned and the nations began to flood into the church!
12. And so it has been in the history of the church after the apostles.
 - The apostasy under Arius, then of the papacy, now with modern unbelief;
 - Yet again and again, God brings forth life from the dead.
 - His church is raised up to new life and, as we have seen, at the end of the age, He will bring her to perfection.
 - The night of weeping will be turned the new day of joy forever.
 - The night will end and the glorious day will come.

TRANS> So do you see that Christ's death followed by resurrection is the model of how the Lord works in His church through the ages?

- The night of weeping ends and joy comes in the morning.
 - But there is a third way that this pattern is found in the working of God's salvation.
- C. God follows the pattern of the grand event in the way He deals with individual Christians.
1. First, there is conversion, symbolised by baptism in which we come to Christ polluted and dead in our sin (weeping) looking to Him that we might be cleansed and given life.
 - We look to Him for our children, especially when we see death in them, and He gives them life.

- And in our own lives—some of us have had the blessing of looking to Him as far back as we can remember and others of us have come to him later in life, knowing that we were dead in our sin and coming to be made alive in Christ.
 - All of us who believe today can testify that we who were dead in trespasses and sins have been made alive by Jesus Christ, even if it happened before we were born.
 - Conversion is His work, but when it has occurred, it always results in us trusting in God to forgive us and give us new life through His Son who was crucified.
 - We have been brought from the night of weeping to the joy of a new day.
2. And then in our ongoing Christian experience of sanctification and growth.
- Like the great apostle, we find that death is still in us—our remaining corruption—and there are times when it especially rears its ugly head.
 - Perhaps we have been slack in seeking the Lord.
 - Perhaps there is some strong temptation that we have given it to.
 - Perhaps it is the ongoing struggle with some sin that seems like the Philistines with their iron chariots to us...
 - Weeping endures, but then the day of deliverance and joy comes.
3. Likewise, in our service to the Lord there are times when we are heavily tried by afflictions in this world.
- Perhaps there are problems in our family, in our church, in our friendships, perhaps loneliness or rejection, persecution, sickness, loss of work, injury, national calamities, bereavement, personal failure, burdens from a heavy workload—man was born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.
 - All of these bring the night of weeping, but we cry out to the Lord and in time He either delivers us from the affliction or gives us joy in it.
 - The greatest joy comes when He gives us joy in our affliction.
 - This is life from the dead—a kind of resurrection.

TRANS> Yes indeed, the salvation of the world, of the church, and of each individual is modelled after the great story of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

- But now I want show you something more—something very important, and that is:

III. See how the grand event (Jesus' death and resurrection) is not only the pattern, but also the engine of God's saving work in the world.

A. Christ's death and resurrection alone carry the world, the church, and the individual Christian from sorrow to joy and from life to death.

1. It is the engine by which the whole ship is moved from death to life.
 - Without the death, burial, and joyous resurrection of Christ, the ship would not be able to move.
 - It would be as helpless as Franklin's ship frozen in Frobisher Bay.
 - The world, the church, and every one of God's elect would be left to perish in their sin.

2. The whole work of life from the dead depends on Christ.
 - That is why He is called our all in all.
 - That is why His own testimony—what an arrogant boast it would be if He were less than the Son of God—is that “without Me, you can do nothing.”
 - Without Him, you can have no fruit.
 - Without Him, the morning can never come.
- There is no way to get to the glorious day without the engine of His death and resurrection.
- B. But how is this so? How is it that it all depends on Him?
- There are two ways...
1. First, we cannot possibly more from sorrow and death to joy and life because we are justly sentenced to sorrow and death by the justice of God.
 - a. Sorrow and death is what we fully deserve because we are all guilty of rejecting God as our God.
 - We are guilty together as the whole human family that rebelled against God when Adam, who was appointed to speak for us, rebelled.
 - And we are guilty because of our own sins that we have each committed from our conception as those who came from the very womb speaking lies.
 - b. For God to clear us and pardon us without the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ would be to commit a grave injustice.
 - It would be to say that our sin against Him does not matter!
 - That would be a gross lie.
 - He is the judge of the all the earth and always does what is right.
 - He is always holy and righteous and just.
 - If that were not so, all hope would be lost.
 - If He became unjust, nothing could ever be right—ever!
 - c. But in His great mercy, He sent Christ to be punished for our sins.
 - The cause of His sorrow was that all of our iniquities were laid on Him. He bore our transgressions.
 - He was dealt with as if He, the Son of God, had rebelled against His Father—if He had done all the wrongs that we have done.
 - That is why He was a man of sorrows and why He was crucified and rejected and cursed on the cross.
 - That is the reason that He experienced the night of weeping that made this mighty one cry out and sweat blood at Gethsemane.
 - It was this that brought even Him to death.
 - And so it is that by faith in Him, we can be pardoned, completely forgiven.
 - His suffering and death testify that what we did was not okay.
 - His pains as the Son of God shout as loudly as it can be shouted that what we did was completely unacceptable and calls for nothing less than everlasting punishment.

- Yet, it is by that same suffering and death which He bore for us that we can be completely pardoned through Him.
 - We get on that ship that God moves from death to life and from endless sorrow to endless joy by the engine of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.
 - His death was for our sins and His resurrection was God's acceptance of His death for our sins.
 - The fact that He rose again with life when all our sins were laid upon Him assures us that this engine is able to move the world, the whole church, and every individual who comes to Him, from death to life, from endless sorrow to endless joy.
 - Thanks be to God! Thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ who has borne our transgressions that we might have life through Him!
- So you see that there is no way for God, in justice, to bring us from condemnation to forgiveness without the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
 - Without the engine of the great event, there is no way to move us from weeping in condemnation to joy in forgiveness.
 - Now let's look at the second reason the ship cannot move without the engine of Christ's death and resurrection.
- 2. Second, sorrow and death cannot be overcome because of our weakness and inability to transform our hearts and lives.
 - a. You have no strength to transform your life.
 - You set out to do good, but evil is present with you; to love, but you find in yourself a cold, unwilling heart; to put off your sin, but you keep going back to it again and again.
 - Truly you who are accustomed to evil cannot learn to do good; you who love sin cannot begin to hate it and to love righteousness.
 - Though we may be pardoned for our sin, we have no strength to put it off and to put on the new man that is like Christ.
 - We are in bondage to sin, servants to the devil, and cannot be servants to righteousness by our own efforts.
 - b. But Christ is the engine for this also.
 - When we come to Him for life, we are raised with Him to walk in newness of life; the stony heart is taken away and a soft responsive heart is given to us instead.
 - The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us to give us new life...
 - We die with Him and are raised with Him so that the bondage of sin is broken and we are made servants of righteousness so that sin does not have dominion over us... we are made alive in the Spirit.
 - Yes, He is the one who baptises us with the Holy Spirit and nourishes us with His body and blood so that we can walk with God and be blameless.

- Here again, you see that the engine of new life is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- It is because of faith in Him and union with Him that we are able to be transported from death to life, from weeping in our sin to joy in serving our God.

C. But if we have come to Christ, how is it that there is still death and weeping in us?

1. Death and weeping remains because this is how God is pleased to go about delivering us... not all at once.
 - In this He follows the pattern of how He dealt with Christ.
 - The sorrow and the struggle is necessary to put us in the place we need to be so that we will see how much we need Christ to be our Saviour.
2. In this world, we are being prepared for glory.
 - We are being shown by experience that without Christ we can do nothing.
 - We are brought to feel the depth of our depravity and the misery of our condition that we might find our all in Jesus Christ who was crucified and raised again for us.
3. So do not be overly discouraged when you find sorrow and remaining death in you—
 - be only as discouraged as you need to be to despair of your own efforts and find all in Him.

Conclusion: God's whole purpose in all this is that you might come to Him and be reconciled to Him through Jesus who was crucified, buried, and raised to life for us.

- God wants you to see that there is nowhere else to turn.
- Without Him who died and rose, there is only death and sorrow; but by Him, there is life and joy... weeping endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning.
- That will prepare you to live for all eternity, not according to your own wisdom and strength which is the cause of our ruin in this world... but in humble dependence on God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.