



Joy in the Morning and Forever

By Pastor Haywood A. Robinson, III

*So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy,
and ran to tell his disciples. Matthew 28:8*



From childhood, it's been curious to me that scriptures reckon a day from evening to morning. Quite the opposite of our approach. Take note in Genesis, chapter one. "There was an evening, and there was a morning; one day" (v. 5 CSB). "... Evening came and then morning; the second day" (v.8 CSB). The pattern continues for the third day (v.13), fourth day (v. 19), fifth day (v. 23), and the sixth day (v. 31). Considering the law of first mention, one could conclude that God initiates some of His best work during the night season. The term *night* often implies a loathsome, lonely, dark and difficult time period. Perhaps that has been your experience. However, it also seems to be an ideal environment during which God crafts things of great value, ready to be revealed in the morning.

Could this be an important life-lesson God wants us to draw from Joseph's pit-to-Prime Minister journey, or David's shepherd-to-sovereign saga, or Jesus' crucifixion-to-resurrection event? Perhaps God is training us to rethink the significance, and possible blessing, of the night. Maybe God is aiming to stretch our patience and shape our perspective on life's discomforts. As we might be caused to sulk and sorrow in life's waiting room, the Word of God offers us hope. "Weeping may stay overnight, but there is joy in the morning." (Ps. 30:5b CSB).

All of us reckon with "night-times" – periods of time often marked by unexpected, unbearable struggle, stress, weight, worry, pressure and pain. We can only imagine the emotional toll that Jesus' arrest, trials and execution had on His closest followers over the weekend. The contrast of emotion displayed by Jesus' disciples in response to news of His crucifixion compared to that of His resurrection is clear. The one brought on grief; the other, gladness. The resurrection not only gives us assurance of eternal life with Christ, it gives us lasting hope in Christ, with which to expect and experience morning joy.

Here's the question, though. How do we sustain "morning joy" when night seasons keep coming? May I suggest that we take a few simple steps to help master our thoughts, and thereby govern our beliefs and behaviors. Try declaring these six simple truths as an aid to overcoming the negative emotions that naturally tend to accompany the night season. Here's my holy hunch. By recalling and repeating these short statements first thing each morning and when challenges arise during the day, we'll discover that joy supernaturally will return and replace the natural emotion. Here they are:

Jesus Came. Take time to remember that Jesus considered us well worth leaving His home in heaven that He might tend to our needs. Consider all that was strategically, geographically and miraculously

arranged over centuries to ensure His arrival as Immanuel, God with us. Knowing that He came to be with me, brings humility and JOY!

Jesus Lived. Consider that we have a High Priest Who understands our struggles, temptations, hungers and pains, because He walked in our shoes, tasting and tackling the human experience. He identifies with human frailty. He faced our fiercest fears and foes; and He won! Knowing that He understands me because He came like me, brings comfort and JOY!

Jesus Served. Remember how Jesus served others despite the very human *nights* that He encountered because of His enemies. He brought joy to those living in their darkness by lifting them, leading them, loving them, and liberating them. He never lost sight of His mission to seek, to serve and to save. Knowing that He could focus enough to seek, serve and save me, brings purpose and JOY!

Jesus Died. Just in case we can't find a cause for joy in His coming, His living, or His serving, surely, we will find joy when we recall how and why He died for us. He loved us enough to lay down His life on our behalf. He died as our sacrifice. He died as our substitute. He died for our salvation. "Just for me," it's been sung, "Jesus came and did it just for me." Knowing that He died as an offering for me brings gratitude and JOY!

Jesus Arose. As we contemplate just how desperate was our plight, while possessing no way to deliver ourselves, then to discover that the proclaimed liberator, in Whom we had placed our faith and future, had died, what joy emerges when testimony of His resurrection spreads abroad. Even now, the sheer remembrance of that original, unbridled excitement has the power to inspire immediate adoration and praise. Knowing that He overpowered death and the grave to secure me brings assurance and JOY!

Jesus Reigns. How glorious and awe-inspiring is the resurrection of Jesus Christ! There is no event in world history that bears greater importance or impact. With it comes one more reality that should help evoke joy within Christ-followers all over the world. Not only does He live forever, but He reigns forever. He is Lord. He is risen from the dead and He is Lord. Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! Knowing that He enjoys exclusive and everlasting reign over all brings worship and JOY!

May the JOY of the Lord be our strength such that we can make every day a day of Thanksgiving. From evening to morning, may our attitude and actions always convey that Jesus has come into our world and brought JOY. In the words of VaShawn Mitchell,

*There's beauty in my brokenness.
I've got true love instead of pain.
There's freedom though You've captured me
I've got joy instead of mourning.
You give me Joy - Down deep in my soul.*