

Fifth Sunday of Lent - April 3, 2022

Joy in the Morning

[Psalm 126](#)

*“Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.”
Psalm 126: 5-6*

After another bewildering year of life during a pandemic, we might ask ourselves what our hopes are for 2022. Are we looking for a restoration of the old normal?

Psalm 126 has the perfect message for a time like this. It is the story of a people who remember a time of great joy, and they want to have it again. Isn't that what we want, too? We know that life contains both joy and sadness. We all saw that happen throughout 2021 as the impact of the coronavirus got worse and then better. The pandemic affected all facets of life, some in negative ways and some in positive ways.

There have been difficult days when all you can do is get out of bed and do what you have to do. You keep going. Some days include tears and feelings that overwhelm you, and yet you are thankful for the blessings God has given you.

Even when life seems so hopeless, God never abandons us. If we have faith and keep putting one foot in front of the other, joy will always follow. Psalm 126 shows us that there is a cycle of sadness and joy. Great joy is often preceded by a time of tears as if the tears we sow are planted to reap the crop of joy.

This passage brings to mind an anthem Natalie Sleeth wrote for the inauguration of her husband Ronald Sleeth as the president of West Virginia Wesleyan College. The anthem was titled “Joy in the Morning” and the lyrics of the first verse reinforce the feelings of hope and joy:

*There'll be joy in the morning on that day,
There'll be joy in the morning on that day,
For the daylight will dawn when the darkness is gone,
There'll be joy in the morning on that day.*

As we engage in this journey through the Lenten season, we remember that Jesus sowed the tears of the cross for us until finally he died.

Nevertheless, the glorious reality is that he arose, and is now in heaven where he waits with the Father until his return, bringing his sheaves with him. There'll be joy in the morning on that day.

Prayer: *Father God, we know that your Son spilled his own blood for us. Grant us the courage to face difficult moments in our lives, and remind us that we need not face them alone without the hope of joy in the morning. Amen.*

Cheryl Reger

First United Methodist Church, Buckhannon, WV

careger54@gmail.com

Nurture Team Chair, Upshur Helping Hands Work Team Leader