



I KNOW... MY REDEEMER LIVES

JOB 19:25

I remember once, during a tough few months, reading Job and being struck by these verses:

God gives me up to the ungodly and casts me into the hands of the wicked... he broke me apart; he seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces; he set me up as his target
(Job 16:11-12 ESV).

Surprisingly, these verses comforted me. I'd often felt like this in the previous years: that God was opposing me, destroying my plans and my peace, and taking away the things I longed for. I was relieved that someone had so boldly articulated such feelings before me.

It also struck me that Job only *thought* God was against him. Actually, God was delighted with him; that's why Satan wanted to attack. I realized that just because it feels like God is opposing me, it doesn't mean He is.

However, Job had suffered in innocence, and I couldn't possibly make that claim for myself! Often the things I have

suffered are a murky mess of circumstances and sinfulness. How could I be sure God was not against me?

Because hundreds of years later Jesus felt *exactly* how Job felt. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus wrestled in anguish as He faced what was to come. He pleaded for another way, one in which He would not be handed over to evil men, broken apart and dashed to pieces. He shed tears as He anticipated having God's entire wrath at sin channelled against Him.

Yet, He was willing. He gave Himself up to become the means by which God's justice might be satisfied.

So, how could I be sure God was not against me? Because on the cross, Jesus was opposed by God in my place. The innocent was rejected, so that the guilty might be welcomed.

Gloriously, Jesus' innocence was vindicated in His being raised from the dead. That's why the words of Job are so precious: I know my Redeemer lives!

It may feel like I am God's target, but my living Redeemer is testament to the mind-blowing truth that whatever it may feel like, God is on my side! Jesus suffered for my sin, so when I suffer I can be confident that it is not as a target of God's wrath.

O God, my Rock and my Redeemer, thank You that Your righteous wrath at my sin has been fully satisfied in Jesus. Please help me, when I am tempted to believe that You are against me, to trust in my Redeemer, who bears the marks of Your justice on His hands and sides. Thank You for Your forgiveness; help me to trust in Your willingness to give it to me. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

*Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.*
Edmond Budry (1854–1932)

JOY COMES WITH THE MORNING

PSALM 30:5 (ESV)

When I'm suffering a bout of 'low', I do not think that joy will come in the morning.

Instead, I postpone going to bed in a vain attempt to avoid the morning, because in these seasons waking up means more sadness, and more disappointment. Perhaps you've had a chirpy friend say, 'It'll all feel better in the morning,' and you know full well that it will not. In the morning, there will be dread and weariness and probably not enough milk in the fridge for breakfast.

Thankfully, David is not that friend. He doesn't say, 'Joy comes with the morning' from a happy-go-lucky place of unfounded optimism. David wrote Psalm 30 having experienced plenty of weeping. He had known betrayal, false accusation, fearfulness and isolation, and in this psalm he writes of mourning, sackcloth, grief and despair. He has experienced the darkness of night.

The beauty of this verse, like so many others in the Bible, is that it acknowledges the reality of weeping. Life in this

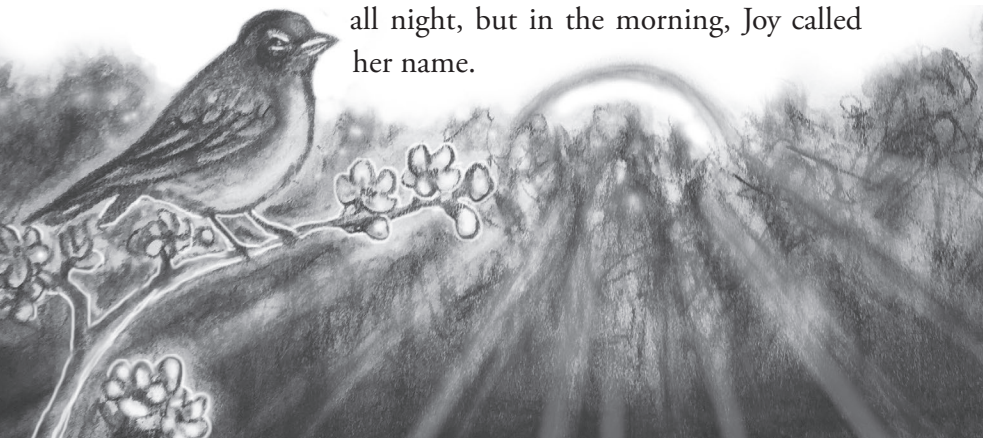
world will involve tears and pits and foes. But the testimony of David and the promise of the Bible is that joy will come. And it's not just a vague 'this too shall pass' approach; for David, the joy to come is personal:

*You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness
[...] O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever!*
(Ps. 30:11-12 ESV)

The Lord Himself will bring David joy, the Lord Himself will work to turn it around. And He did: David wasn't in a pit forever. He ended up on a throne! That's the narrative of redemption that begins in Eden and ends in the New Jerusalem: the Lord Himself turns the night's mourning into the morning's dancing. The Lord Himself takes us from the mire to places of majesty!

But how can we be so sure?

Years later, a woman spent a night weeping. She had watched her son die a criminal's death in brutal humiliation. She had stored up a lifetime of memories but her heart had been pierced as she stood by the cross. Her weeping lasted all night, but in the morning, Joy called her name.



Because of that resurrection morning, today we can know with certainty that Jesus is alive. We can know, because He is alive, that the Lord has worked to turn our sadness into delight. And we can know, because He will *always* be alive, that one day the sun will rise and darkness will be swallowed up forever. Easter Sunday morning is the cornerstone of hope in all our weeping nights. Joy will come.

I do not know when I go to sleep tonight whether there will be joy tomorrow morning. Maybe it won't 'all feel better'. But I know Jesus, who weathered the darkest night and then triumphed over it. He wore our sackcloth so we could wear His royal robe. And on that Easter morning, He left the tomb. He is the Morning Star; He is coming soon. Ultimately, joy *will* come in the morning.

Father, hope of the nations, thank You that You are making all things new through Your Son, the Lord Jesus. One day the dawning of Your Light will forever swallow up sadness, sickness and sin. In my dark nights, give me hope that the morning will come. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

*See what a morning, gloriously bright
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem;
Folded the grave-clothes
Tomb filled with light,
As the angels announce Christ is risen!*

Stuart Townend and Keith Getty, 2003