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St. John's Lutheran Church of Burlington  
5 April 2026

Easter Dawn Sermon on Psalm 30

Worship Theme:

**JESUS DRIES MY TEARS AND TAKES AWAY MY FEARS**

I can walk through a cemetery where loved ones are buried. What do I feel? Sadness as I think of their departure? Fear that I will soon join them? Without the resurrection of Jesus, I fear death and I continue to cry. But he lives, and it makes a difference. Jesus is the resurrection first fruits for the harvest of humanity. Dead is not dead forever. Death is not final at all! My deceased Christian loved ones are not gone forever. I will see them again. Jesus will do what he promised. He dries my tears. He takes away my fears.

Sermon Theme: "Rejoicing Comes in the Morning!"

Are you a morning person? Some people are. Some people just wake right up, no alarm clock needed, with a smile on their face regardless of the weather or what day it is, and they are all charged up and ready to do whatever it is they plan on doing that day. But then there are other people too. The "don't even think about talking to me, looking at me, or even breathing in my general direction until I've had at least half a gallon of coffee" people. Whether you are a morning person or not, I think we can all agree that this is a pretty early hour to be having church.

So why are we? Well, we have gathered at this very early hour because something has happened. Something has happened that we can't wait to talk about and we can't wait to celebrate, not even for another hour. And the most amazing part about this is that what we have gathered to talk about and celebrate should never have happened – it's not a normal occurrence! This thing doesn't happen! But it did.

What is it? Well, first let's back up a little bit. Because whether you like mornings or not, something always comes before the morning. That's the night. In many ways, darkness and night have become synonymous with challenges, difficulties, fears, and losses in life. If you're in a dark place, you might be in deep emotional distress, hopeless and overwhelmed, lost and depressed, intensely worrying or grieving. When night comes, many normal activities come to a stop and cannot and will not continue until it's day again.

Jesus' followers were facing a serious night. Just a couple days ago, their world came crashing down around them. Jesus was captured, taken by a group of soldiers. Judas, their former friend and fellow disciple, had led that group right to the place where Jesus and the other disciples were. Jesus spent the whole night and next day before a crowd of people, the Jewish leaders, soldiers, and the local Roman governor. After enduring endless agony and torture and suffering, they condemned him to horrific death by crucifixion and led him away. They nailed him to the cross, hoisted him into the sky, and waited for his body to shrivel up and dry out while every last bit of strength he had slowly melted away until he could

support his weight no longer and he suffocated. Even after he had died, they sliced open his side just to make sure he was really dead.

In more ways than one, that was the deepest darkness anyone has ever seen or known. Literal darkness had covered the land in the middle of the day. Jesus had cried out, given up his spirit, and died – yes, GOD HIMSELF, the immortal Lord of heaven and earth, had submitted and subjected himself to death. God’s lifeless body was wrapped up and placed in a tomb. And then night came. Never had the disciples felt more hopeless in their entire lives. They locked themselves up in a little house, just trying to process it all, hoping that somehow the weight of this darkness would not be the end of them. But no matter how hard they tried to be strong and how desperately they tried to keep it together, there was one truth they simply could not deny or ignore:

Jesus was gone.

Does it still feel that way to you sometimes? As if your night will never end and you’re stuck facing it all alone? Maybe you are going through a dreadfully dark time in life with the weight of your suffering threatening to crush you into the ground. Maybe it’s your physical health as you watch your body betray you and crumble to pieces with nothing you can do to stop it. Maybe your mental health is fragile on your best day, and on the worst day you can think of nothing positive or helpful or worth living for. Maybe a sin is troubling you, one you just can’t forgive yourself for or one you just can’t seem to stop doing. Maybe it’s a loss, someone in your life who was always there for you and with you and now they aren’t anymore and, whether it was recent or not, you’re still trying to come to grips with the reality that everything is different now in a way that cannot be erased or undone. As you go through that terrible deep darkness of whatever night you’re facing, you can’t help but feel just like those disciples shuddering in a locked room, waiting for the end to come, confident that one thing must still be true:

Jesus is gone.

It must be true, right? Otherwise, why would you be facing what you’re facing? Why would you be suffering this way? Wouldn’t everything be okay if Jesus were here? Surely this must be the end, a direct result of his absence. He is gone. He can’t help anymore. This night is too deep, too dark.

But the disciples were forgetting something they never should have forgotten, something we too dare never forget: *Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.* (Psalm 30:5) Two truths are found here: First, morning is coming! And second, we will rejoice when it does. And we don’t say these things to minimize or brush off the suffering and agony of darkness and night. Quite the opposite! We say these things to remember the power of the morning.

The morning brings light back to the world. The power of the morning comes from the God who is the true Light of the World, the God who never forgets or abandons his people, but rather promises to be with them every step of their life. He is the God who does everything necessary to save his people from everything which torments them. In fact, this is exactly what he did on the darkest of days and most despairing of nights: he saved his people. Jesus was punished and put to death on the cross to pay the price for your sin and mine. And because he cried out “it is finished” and bowed his head in submission to death, you and I can be 100% certain that there will never be a single day in our lives when God is punishing us for our sin. It doesn't matter what horrible painful thing we are facing – it is not because God is punishing us. As unsatisfying as it may be, we may never be able to say for certain why suffering still comes to us other than as evidence that we still live for a little longer in a broken and fallen world.

But perhaps we would do well to remember again this beautiful powerful truth, a perfect comfort to which we may cling in any suffering of darkness or night: no darkness will last forever – morning is coming! How can we make such a bold statement? Because we've already witnessed it. Jesus died, and Jesus was buried, and never would there be a darker night than that. But then, just as God had promised in so many places to so many people over so many years, the third day came. Morning came!

And what did that morning bring? *Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.* (John 20:1) The morning brought the most profoundly unexpected announcement: the stone rolled in front of the grave to block and seal the entrance had been moved. That was extraordinarily unusual – there was no reason to open a grave again once it had been closed! Yet the door that was closed on the dead body of Jesus had been opened again. And his grave was empty. Death had not been strong enough to keep him there. Jesus had submitted to death in order to conquer death and to make it submissive to him! So when Jesus decided he was done being dead, he stopped being dead! And his return to life was the greatest stamp of approval God the Father could give to the mission and sacrifice of his Son. Everything was now complete. Peace between God and humanity was restored. Every sin was now forgiven. Eternal life had now been won. The Light of the World brazenly pierced through the darkness and overcame it. With the sunrise that first Easter morning came the most joyful message ever: Jesus isn't gone! He lives and is present with his people in victory and life forever!

God announced this greatest news to ordinary people, through ordinary people, because it is for all people and he wants all people to hear it and know it! Everything Jesus did, he did perfectly. Everything he did, he did for us. And because he won and conquered all, darkness has no final say in our lives, and it cannot harm us forever. Night will never triumph. Morning comes again, and ***rejoicing comes in the morning!***

Whether you are normally a morning person or not, today we are all morning people, because we are children of our Heavenly Father, saved by the

Light of the World. We get to bask in the beautifully bright glory and light of Jesus the Savior, eternally alive, eternally victorious, who eternally lives and reigns over everything for us and for our eternal good. The results of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are eternal and forever! This is worth waking up for, this is worth gathering together for, and this is absolutely worth celebrating – we couldn't wait any longer! ***Rejoicing comes in the morning*** because of this greatest truth which we shamelessly cry over and over again, the victory call of the people of God: ALLELUIA, CHRIST IS RISEN! (He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!) Happy Easter! Amen!

And the peace of God which goes beyond all understanding will guard and keep our hearts and our minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.