

September 29, 2024

From Mourning to Morning

Psalm 30:4-5, 11-12

Most people have experienced grief of some kind: the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, the breakup of a marriage, the estrangement from family members, or a terminal diagnosis. The last thing we want to hear are clichéd platitudes that don't recover our loss or help us heal. But the Bible shows us that although we grieve, we should cultivate joy. If you think it's impossible to have both or navigate the path from mourning to joy, you're not alone. Marisa Lee, grief advocate and author of *Grief Is Love*, talks about "being intentional about and creating space for . . . grief so that there is room for joy." We struggle to have joy when we ignore our grief. Lee says, "When we give ourselves permission to grieve and to acknowledge all that we've lost, we create space for joy to enter into the equation."¹

David knew a lot of sadness in his life. From the falling out with his hero, Saul, to the death of his firstborn, David experienced grief. He was acutely aware of God's power and provision, and the special celebration of the dedication of the Temple was no exception. Despite the grief he had encountered, he marked the day with gratitude, joy, dancing, and revelry, making sure God got all the praise and attention.

I love the beautiful contrasts in this passage: anger and favor, night and morning, weeping and joy. We can see David's grasp on the ups and downs of life, and it is a relief when he lands on singing praise at the end. It is good to remember that joy follows weeping when we are grieving the loss of someone or something important. There is hope in the rising of the sun every morning that brings comfort to the dark 3:00 AM moments when we are so troubled we can't sleep. Hang on, this psalm advises. Joy will come!

"Weeping will spend the night" (Psalm 30:5). The good news is that grief has an appointed check-out time, and we can anticipate finding joy when it finally begins to abate. God's Word is a reminder that sadness can turn into gladness with the passing of time and the remembering of God's great works and with good grief counseling. It also helps to remember that the sorrow of the night of the Crucifixion was followed by the joy that came on Easter morning when the tomb was found to be empty.

Focusing on God's greatness helped David get through the tough moments of his life. That can help us, too. Psalm 30 reminds us that God can help us take off our funeral clothes and dress us up in joy if we yield our sadness to the power of the Holy Spirit. May joy come in your mourning as you seek God's face.

1. What have you grieved?
2. Were you able to find a balance between grief and joy? How?
3. How can you help others who are grieving?

¹From "Living Joyfully After Loss: A Conversation With Marissa Renee Lee and Rebecca Soffer," by Madeleine Kim, The—M—Dash (mdash.mmlafleur.com).