

Daily Devotional, April 7, 2021 My Hope & Joy is in Jesus—He's Alive!

Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. Isaiah 49:13 (NIV)

We continue to celebrate the joy of Christ's resurrection. I truly hope you each had a very blessed Easter Sunday, and I want to share a little joy with you today. We are one day closer to the end of this time of separation. It may seem odd to say that, as we do not yet know the exact day, hour, or minute that we will feel as though we can go back to life as usual. However, I know this, each day that passes is one day closer to the day when we can gather and celebrate the coming to life again of our nation, our metro area, and our church.

When Isaiah is writing the words recorded in this chapter, his heart is heavy. He has seen from the Lord the ways in which the people have been disobedient, and the plans of destruction that God has that will come to Jerusalem. For him, the signs are in place of the Lord's wrath that will be carried out at the hands of other nations. However, even though they will be in despair for a while, Isaiah knows they are not to be left without hope. Isaiah speaks of a savior, of a time of salvation, and he speaks of the joy of returning home.

We have learned, in this time of social distancing, that we also are not without hope. Each and every day new messages of hope come to us through neighbors, friends, people checking on us, or sending a simple hopeful message. We know that though we are apart, God is keeping us together. Yes, we do long for the day when we can gather again, but that does not keep our hearts from singing.

Our congregation very much enjoyed singing the songs of Easter this past Sunday, and as the weather forecast is for rain these next few days, we are reminded that all things are washed and made new with the spring rains and by Christ's blood.

God will have compassion on his suffering ones as he has since times of old. Hang in there, we are comforted, we are loved, God is singing over us songs of joy that will inspire our hearts to join the chorus.

There is a song that we sang at the 11:00 service this past Easter Sunday that has stayed with me in this reflection. It is titled "*Praise the King*". I believe there is much hope and freedom in the words that help us to rejoice in the gift we have been given of eternal life in Christ. This is one of the verses and I hope you will meditate on it as I believe it will bring you much hope over the coming days.

There's a reason why the curse of sin is broken.

There's a reason why the darkness runs from light.

There's a reason why we stand here now forgiven: Jesus is alive.

There's a reason why we are not overtaken.

There's a reason why we sing on through the night.

There's a reason why our hope remains eternal: Jesus is alive.

(Chorus:) Praise the King. He is risen. Praise the King. He's alive.

Praise the King. death's defeated. Hallelujah, He's alive. Hallelujah, He's alive.

This hymn give us plenty to rejoice about, it tells the story of Jesus our savior being the very truth and love of God, that he purged our sin, reigns on high, his kingdom shall not fail, he rules over earth and heaven, and holds the keys of hell and death. Jesus, the risen, reigning lord is our glorious hope. Therefore, we shall sing and rejoice with all creation, because we have the new life promised in His resurrection. *He's Alive!*

Prayer: Lord, I am weary and don't know when this race will end in my life. I feel like I've been running forever, trying to outrun this trial. Help me to stop trying to outrun my pain but rather run with endurance the race you have set before me. I know that because of you I am ultimately a victor over the trials in my life. I know that nothing in this world can separate me from your steadfast love. Please give me a measure of your love today; give me the strength to endure this trial. Thank you for your love for me that never ends and for the joy that awaits me forever in your Kingdom! Jesus, I rejoice in You. Amen.