



Joy Comes in the Morning

M. Basilea Schlink

*Tears
may flow in
the night,
but joy comes
in the
morning.*

Psalm 30:5

Emmaus, a small village in the Holy Land associated with the Easter story, tells of joy after deep suffering. Yes, Emmaus tells us that joy — not suffering — is the end of the story, for the disciples were privileged to find Jesus again as the living Lord. Emmaus speaks of the fulfilment of Jesus' words, 'You will not be left all alone; I will come back to you' (John 14:18) — 'You will be sad, but your sadness will turn into gladness' (John 16:20).

FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

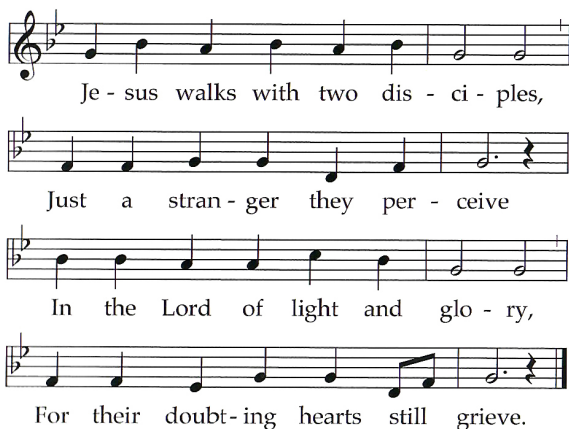
On that same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a village named Emmaus ... As they talked and discussed, Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them; they saw him, but somehow did not recognize him.

Jesus said to them, 'What are you talking about to each other, as you walk along?' They stood still, with sad faces ... 'The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth,' they answered. 'This man was a prophet and was considered by God and by all the people to be powerful in everything he said and did. Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was crucified. And we had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free!'

... Then Jesus said to them, 'How foolish you are, how slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then to enter his glory?'

... He sat down to eat with them, took the bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, 'Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?'

Luke 24: 13-32



Je - sus walks with two dis - ci - ples,
Just a stran - ger they per - ceive
In the Lord of light and glo - ry,
For their doubt - ing hearts still grieve.

*Grieving still and near despairing:
Christ their Lord is crucified,
Knowing not their risen Master
Who is walking by their side.*

*Jesus shows He needs must suffer,
His great glory to attain,
He then gives them joy for sorrow,
Heals and takes away their pain.*





On the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, Jesus met the dejected disciples, who thought He lay buried in the grave. They were permitted to complete their journey at His side and in the end to recognize Him. Emmaus proclaims that Jesus draws close to those who have buried their hopes and can no longer understand God in their darkest hour. These are the souls He seeks out. He hears the sighing of their hearts and shares their sorrows. He listens to their cry of 'Why? Why?' just as He listened to the two Emmaus road disciples discuss en route the matters preying on their minds since the crucifixion:

Why did the Son of God have to die? He had proclaimed the Kingdom of God more powerfully than anyone else, actually ushering it in with miraculous deeds. The sick had been healed, demons expelled, the dead raised. Why couldn't He have established His kingdom and begun a reign of peace, justice and joy in this world devastated by hatred, war, sickness, suffering and death? Why not?

Emmaus declares: *The One with the answer to all your questions is here. He is right beside you and wants to shed light upon your darkness, because He is love and takes your pain to heart. He can't bear to see you in such inner turmoil ...* Jesus, who once approached His troubled, burdened disciples, draws near to us today. For us, too, He has an 'Emmaus', a time of encounter, a time for answers, in store. This time will come for us, just



as surely as it did for the disciples of long ago after that darkest of hours when they had witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus.

In an Emmaus encounter Jesus says, as it were, to those who belong to Him: 'Don't be so foolish, imagining that all is lost when you meet with suffering and nothing seems to make sense and you cannot understand God's ways. If only you would believe that out of every dying process comes a new beginning and new life; if only you



would believe that suffering gives rise to joy, tears to laughter.'

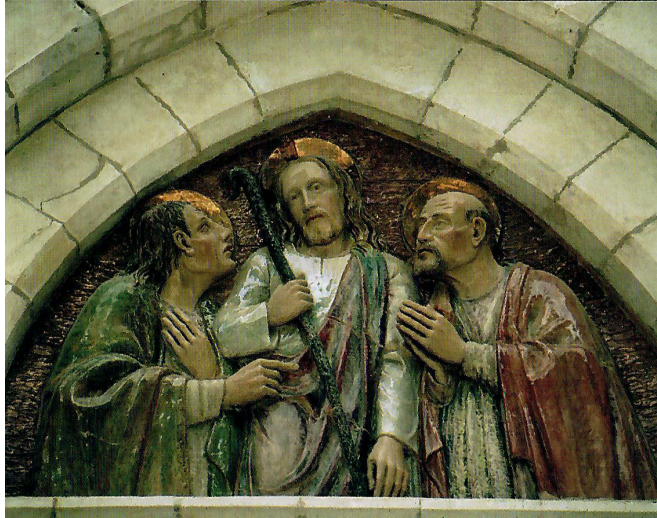
Do we not read this over and over again in His Word? His Word has an eternal quality, thus being valid today. Jesus Himself is testimony to the truth that from death comes life, from suffering and dying comes overwhelming victory. This is the message He proclaimed. By going to Calvary, He became the risen Prince of Victory, before whom every knee one day will bow.



*xalted be the Saviour
And mighty Lord of lords
Emerging as the Victor
O'er Satan and his hordes.
Whoever trusts His victory
Will be victorious,
Triumphing over enemies
Still dominating us.*

*With all our hearts we thank You,
O dearest Lamb of God,
For suffering untold anguish
Upon that cross of wood,
For there You conquered Satan
And victory won for all.
Our songs of adoration
Shall reach the gates of hell.*

*Oh, glory, praise and honour
Be to the Lamb of God.
All mankind, hail the Victor,
Acclaim Him Lord of lords.
What songs of jubilation
Will fill the heavenly spheres
When after His afflictions
He reigns for endless years.*



Emmaus — here the hearts of the two disciples began to burn. Whose heart would not burn when Jesus begins to speak and reveal Himself, today as long ago?

Like the Emmaus disciples, we will realize that behind everything that happens is the Eternal One, who declares, 'I know the plans I have for you ... plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope' (Jeremiah 29:11 RSV).





*Our darkness turns to light,
His words of grace
Imbue with streams of life.
O blessèd place!*

*As He reveals His heart,
Our anguished whys
And troubled thoughts depart,
All grief subsides.*

*In suffering and pain
A purpose lies,
For dying brings forth gain,
New hope of life.*

*For Him the grave brought light
And victory,
And so for us the night
His glory brings.*

*Oh, how our hearts did burn
As He broke bread
And gently ministered,
Our souls refreshed!*

Just as Jesus broke bread with His disciples, He gives Himself to us today in Holy Communion as the most precious gift of all, imparting life and salvation to us. He has the power to forgive sin, having paid the penalty for our sins in His body at Calvary. He has the power to give us the bread of life, which will transform us into new persons, as we receive it in faith, because He Himself enters us as the Bread of Life.

In this way He grants us the most intimate fellowship with Himself. He gives us Holy Communion as a token of the New Covenant, in which we are united with Him, so that suffering can no longer separate us from Him and His love. Nothing can separate us from this love: neither tribulation nor fear, danger — not even death itself (Romans 8:35-39).

And just as we are privileged to have encounters with our Lord here on earth, encounters which cause our hearts to burn, so will we see Him in heaven as He is; and our hearts will be ablaze with a love beyond all telling. The blessed fellowship in the breaking of bread, which the Lord has with His followers to this day, will culminate in an eternal 'Emmaus' when we celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb with Him. Then we will see clearly that all God's ways lead to the supreme goal of glory — glory far surpassing all the suffering endured (Romans 8:18).



Emmaus – the morning dawns.
Emmaus – all cares are banished.
Emmaus – our hearts burn within us.
Emmaus – our sorrows have vanished.
Emmaus – the Lord has come.
Jesus, Jesus is here in love
to break bread with us.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, we thank You
that in Your love You are especially drawn
to those who are full of doubts and questions.

I, too, come to You
with my unanswered questions
and inner conflict,
when I cannot understand You and Your ways
and nothing makes sense.

I thank You that from the very outset
I can rest in the assurance
that You have a solution for my problems,
the answer to my questions.

I want to humble myself in spirit before You
and acknowledge the rightness
of Your dealings with me.

How lovingly and gently
You rebuked the Emmaus disciples
for their foolish questions, and how often
You have to do the same with me.

Thank You for showing that
in our dedication to paths of suffering
all our inner conflict disappears
and You draw near to us with Your
loving presence.

Amen.

*With Jesus, joy —
not suffering —
is the end of the story.*

*Jesus drew near to the
grieving disciples and
transformed their pain
into love and joy.*

*He wants to do the same
for us today.*



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