

Joy and Sorrow

Scripture Reading — Isaiah 60:15-22

I will make you ... the joy of all generations. ... and your days of sorrow will end.
Isaiah 60:15,20 —

While driving to work one wintry morning, I crossed a highway overpass. The sun had been up just long enough to melt most of the frost on the roads. But on the overpass, there was a thin layer of ice—very real, but invisible to the eye. My car spun out on the ice and whipped around three times on an otherwise busy highway. I was untouched. I sat at the side of the road and dissolved with tears that mixed fear and joy.

Our emotions are often mixed, aren't they? In this broken world, storm clouds of fear and sorrow often intersperse with the sunlight of joy.

We often use trite sayings to prepare us for waves of sorrow that can spill over into our lives. "These things come in threes," I've heard people say. Or, "things are going so well that it seems something bad must be about to happen." We try to trick ourselves into thinking we can absorb the shocks of life. But we don't have the power to create joy or endure sorrow in our own strength.

Isaiah tells us that God is at work doing a remarkable thing in which our sorrow will come to an end. Joy will take the place of sorrow completely when God's work is finished.

In anticipation of that day, we live with sorrow—in hope. And we live with joy—in trust.

Prayer

Lord, we would like to be in charge of our joys and sorrows. Give us hope for the day when you will replace all our sorrows with joy. May we trust you always. Amen.

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Printed on March 20, 2019

