



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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April 24, 2011  
Easter Sunrise Worship  
Sermon Text: [Psalm 30](#)  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 12:1-6](#)  
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 30](#)  
Second Lesson: [1 Corinthians 15:51-57](#)  
Gospel Lesson: [John 20:1-18](#)

**Alleluia! Jesus Lives!**  
He changes death to life  
He changes sorrow to joy  
He changes silence to praise

If you were here Friday, it's not hard to notice that when you walk into church this morning things are a little different. Unless you have a walking stick or a dog with you, you probably could notice it right away. Even then, you probably could smell the lilies to know that something is different, something has changed, right?

That's exactly what this Psalm depicts. This Psalm paints for us a picture of people who are beaten down, people who are distressed, depressed and feel as though they have lost. Doesn't that kind of describe the followers of Jesus after Good Friday? The women who went and saw where he was buried, the disciples who locked themselves up inside the room, maybe put a chair against the door because they were worried that they might be next? These people had spent three years following Jesus thinking he was the one. Now they had seen him die as a common criminal. They had seen him buried. And they had no idea what would happen next.

I have to believe that on the first Good Friday or that first Easter morning, these guys were not exactly thinking about Psalm 30 and singing, "Lord, you turn my wailing into dancing. You remove my sackcloth and clothe me with joy." I have to believe their focus was entirely on the sackcloth, entirely on their wailing and entirely on their world that was turned upside down.

We live in a sinful world. Those same feelings are going to engulf us at times as we go through life, won't they? We will face challenges. We will face difficulties. We will face things that make us wail, things that make us like we are wearing sackcloth and ashes, things that beat us down, things that shake us that feel as though God has hidden his face from us, that dismay us, things that make us weep through the night. We are going to face them. God doesn't say you might. He pretty much says you will.

So this morning, as we gather together on early Easter Sunrise Worship, and as we look at this Psalm, here is God's answer for us. When the weeping and the wailing and the difficulties come, turn to the truth that we learn this day...Alleluia, Jesus lives! It changes everything. It turns our world upside down. Our world at times feels like the weeping and the wailing and the pain and the suffering and the difficulty and the discouragement is going to last forever. But the truth of the matter is that when our

God looks us in the eye and says to us, "Weeping may remain for a night but rejoicing comes in the morning"...his anger lasts only a moment but his love lasts a lifetime, the empty tomb is God's seal of approval on that truth. He turns everything around.

When we worship on a Good Friday and we see our sinfulness and we see what our sins have done and we see what God goes through because of the depth of his love, we are amazed at his love, but we are wounded as we look at our sins. We are troubled. And if we're not, we aren't paying real close attention. It hurts to know what we've done to the God who created us and loves us and has redeemed us and has given us the gift of faith and how often we still turn our backs on him.

Yet, when God points us to the empty tomb, he says, "It's all done. I have completely defeated your enemy." Your enemy is death. Death has been defeated. Satan is defeated. His power over you is the threat of eternal death and separation from God. Physical death may come now, but he says that the rejoicing lasts a lifetime in eternity because we know that those that die in the Lord are with the Lord. As we heard in our Second Lesson this morning, we know that those who die in the Lord, even though their bodies are committed to the ground, they will raise. They will be raised on the Last Day. Their bodies will be transformed. They and we together will spend an eternity with our God in heaven. That's why our God can speak in these kinds of terms.

These kinds of terms are amazing to me. This phrase he "turns your wailing into dancing." The "wailing" you can understand, right? Grief, sorrow, pain that can only be expressed with a wail, with a loud noise. You can't put into words that kind of pain. But it will be "turned into dancing," this word for "dancing" is not what you see guys like me do at a wedding reception, just stand there and move a little bit. This is described as a whirling dance, as being so excited you're jumping all around and you don't care what anyone thinks about you because you are so excited about what God has done. This personal expression of joy...you can't picture two things as different in the Hebrew language as those phrases, wailing, and then this phrase for dancing. I don't think we begin to understand what God is telling us here.

This Psalm was originally used by the Jews, it says for the dedication of the temple in the heading. It's a Psalm of David, but it was also used as a Psalm of personal thanksgiving when you would present a thank offering to the Lord. The individual would sing this. It would talk about the things that have happened to them personally in the first few verses of the Psalm, and then it talks about the reminder for all of God's people, that God changes things. That personal worship of wailing to dancing...I don't know whether they actually did it or not, but that's the picture...a joy that you can't contain.

What does that really tell us? I think one of the things it tells us is that as Christians we don't have to be afraid at being emotional at this truth that our God loves us. Our God has opened heaven to us. Our God has taken away our sins. We don't have to be afraid that if we show a little emotion at the great things God has done for us that means we're not relying on the Word of God anymore. I don't buy that for a minute.

You look here and God is telling us “The things that I have done for you are so great they’re going to touch your hearts in ways you can’t even imagine until you see it and think about it and contemplate it.” That’s the truth of Easter morning.

Wailing to dancing. Silence to Psalm. Death to life. That’s where we get to live. Yes, we are going to face those difficulties, but when they come, take a moment, take a breath, close your eyes and picture the empty tomb. Then remember this Psalm. Weeping may remain for a night, and it will be hard and it will be difficult, but the God who is at your side through it all is the God who raised his Son from the dead to assure us that we are forgiven and that eternity is ours and heaven is open.