

WHY? A Resource Kit for Talking to Teens about Disaster, Relief, & Restoration

Joy Comes with the Morning

By Rev. Micah Gaunt

Core Text: Psalm 30:5

Core Visual/Illustration:

Listen to the following two songs. For the work by Tree 63, consider listening to the CD or downloading a free tune online. For the hymn, consider asking your parish musician to play the hymn on the organ or piano, have someone sing for the group, etc.

"Let Your Day Begin" by Tree 63, from The Answer to the Question

Lord, are you still coming?
This world is all in shame
Everything is broken
But you remain...

Have mercy on me, Jesus
I can't take one more step
The lights go out all around me

I want to see your face
I want to hear your voice
I want to lay my burden down
I want to run to you
Forever dance with you
I long for night to end
Lord let your day begin

The sons of men are hiding
Pretending to be free
They're yearning to escape you
For "liberty"...

I want to see...

But all I want, Lord Jesus
Only you can give
When the light goes out all around me:

I want to see...

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"If God Himself Be for Me" # 407 Lutheran Worship

Major Teaching Points:

Teaching Point #1

The lyric to Let Your Day Begin (LYDB) "The lights go out all around me," raises the question, where does suffering and hardship come from: Satan? The world? Or the alien work of God sending His wrath by His holy law? In some ways this question doesn't matter. What matters is that such hardships cause us to despair of what we see and experience and lead us to God's proper work of the Gospel. Any light of hope found in politicians, science, or our own efforts goes black. We are left only to see by the light of the Gospel. The lyric proclaims that only "you remain" and "all I want, Lord Jesus, Only you can give." (LYDB)

Teaching Point #2

Only by the light of Christ are we able to see what is otherwise hidden from view. By such light we are able to sing Paul Gerhardt's hymn "If God Himself Be for Me.1" We confess with conviction a hope that is otherwise hidden if it weren't for the incarnate Christ who shed real blood, and really rose again in the body as witnessed by real people. (1 John 1: 1-2)

Teaching Point #3

We experience the one joy of the morning light in Psalm 30: 5 in two ways. Ultimately we have the promise that, "Night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever." (Rev. 22: 5) Yet the light of the lamb (Rev. 21: 23) has invaded our world ahead of time in the incarnation of Christ. In one sense, the morning has already come.

Teaching Point #4

Christians can long for the eschatological morning (Psalm 30: 5) and can sing "Let Your Day Begin" because we know the true Son. Like Gerhardt says, if it wasn't for Christ our, "splendor, sun, and light alone" we would be "destroyed forever as darkness by the light." (v. 3) But Christ is the "sun that cheers our spirit" so that we might exclaim "The heav'n I shall inherit makes me rejoice and sing." (v. 6)

Questions/Discussion Starters for Youth:

1. Psalm 30: 5 says "weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning." Is this wishful thinking? Hurricanes, deadly flu pandemics, wars, earthquakes, and other tragedies are enough to cause us to ask "Lord, are you still coming?" (LYDB), or "How long Lord?" (Psalm 6:3)
2. In LYDB Ellis writes, "The lights go out all around me." Apart from God, in whom or what do people seem to invest their trust in order to "see" and get through life? How might recent events have weakened such misplaced trusts?
3. What is Ellis asking for when he says, "Let your day begin"? Why is he certain that "joy comes with the morning?" (See Rev. 22:5)
4. While we wait for the full endless day, how has God already brought us the light of morning? What does Gerhardt say in "If God Himself Be for Me?" (See esp. verses 3 and 6) How does the light of Christ bring real comfort even now? (verses 1 and 4)
5. We pray with Ellis:
I want to see your face
I want to hear your voice
I want to lay my burden down

Where has God already allowed us to see Him, hear Him, and lay our burden down? (Leader: Unpack the gifts of Word and sacrament and the consolation that comes from dialogue with other Christians. Talk about the fact that right now, gathered in dialogue with fellow Christians around the Word, the youth are participating in the light)

Other thoughts for discussion that can be added

6. Why does Gerhardt say that if it were not for Jesus we would "be destroyed forever as darkness by the light" (v. 3)? What is communicated by the image of darkness destroyed by light? Notice that this fact turns even our longing for the light of morning into a gift. Only a Christian can eagerly await the light that would have otherwise destroyed him/her.

7. Finally consider again, are the TREE 63 song and Gerhardt's hymn just wishful thinking? What have we been given so that we might be sure of the light of salvation? [Leader: Thoughts to share:

a. Christ became incarnate as a real human being who shed real blood unto death. He really rose from the dead and all of this is attested to by real humans (1 John 1:1-2).

b. What from the world clues us into the light of Christ? (answer: nothing) Such thinking wouldn't even be a wish if it didn't come from a source apart from the world. The light of the gospel truth must come from the outside. If it wasn't for the Holy Spirit witnessing to us (Heb. 10: 15, 1 John 5: 6) we would never know.]