

Revival & REFORMATION

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Joy and Pain

By Lisa Lothian

I vividly remember the day that my husband and I found out that I was spontaneously pregnant with twins. What joy! I was fortunate to have a flawless pregnancy. No morning sickness. I felt great during the entire nine months. With excitement, we awaited the arrival of our precious twins in the very hot month of August over two decades ago.

Finally, as the time drew near for delivery, our babies just didn't seem to want to leave my comfortable womb. In those days, scheduled C-sections were not the norm. My OB/GYN wanted me to have the twins vaginally. My doctor even came in to deliver while he was on vacation. I will never forget that. I ended up being induced on a Wednesday, and by Friday morning I still had not dilated. Time dragged on, and so did the pain. I remember being in excruciating pain at various points during the process. My husband was right by my side the entire time trying to comfort me, but there was no comfort to be found. It was painful!! Finally, I had to get some relief by way of medication. Still, the discomfort of being so large in size lying for hours in a not-so-comfortable bed reached its limit. My doctor decided that I must have a C-section because I started running a fever. The epidural was truly painful, but nothing can describe the joy of seeing my precious newborn twins, healthy, beautiful, and in my arms! I quickly forgot all about the pain I experienced.

Jesus speaks about the paradox of joy and pain in John 16:21. He says "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world" (John 16:21, KJV). Every mother can identify with this. We soon forget all about the pain when we receive the expected gift of a newborn baby.

But there are more painful realities in life where we cannot see or anticipate the immediate joy as experienced in the arrival of a newborn baby. Recently, a dear friend lost his wife suddenly. I recall finding out about this and reaching out to him. All I could do was sit silently and pray as he wailed in pain over her unexpected loss. I didn't have any words that could truly comfort him. I was impressed to pray for him and his family daily. A few weeks later, I saw a Facebook post of pictures from the funeral. Strangely enough, there was an authentic joy apparent in all of the pictures. A child that was estranged from my friend, along with another child who hadn't spoken to him in many years, were all together in very loving poses. My heart was warmed, but not as warmed as when I spoke to him personally and he attested to the fact that the Lord had, despite that very painful loss, turned something so broken into something very beautiful. Relationships were healed. Hope was rekindled in the family. He, like the psalmist, could honestly say that "Thou hast

turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness..." (Psalm 30:11, KJV).

Over the years, in my own life of losses and pain, I have noted very often that there is truth in the Bible verse, "...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5, KJV). As difficult as it is to accept, it seems that in order to have joy in this life, we must also experience pain. They somehow seem to go together. Jesus was our ultimate example of this truth. He left the glory of heaven to come to this earth and identify with broken humanity. He knew that there was one path for Him, for He was "...despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.." (Isaiah 53:3, KJV).

Jesus experienced pain on a level that we will never have to endure. All of this He went through for us. "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The scriptures remind us to keep our eyes on Jesus in Hebrews 12, "...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

Jesus experienced pain on our behalf, that He might ultimately win the victory over death and the grave, having been a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. He now sits on the right hand of God and lives in the joy of His Father's presence. All for us. May God also help us to go through our times of great pain as overcomers so that we, too, can experience His joy throughout all eternity.

Lisa Lothian is a Registered Nurse in Westchester County, NY. She loves intercessory prayer, teaching, journaling and encouraging and discipling women. Her greatest desire is to be a blessing and witness about Christ in her everyday associations which have become known to her as daily divine appointments.

World Church Prayer Requests

August 11- 17, 2023

- Pray for peace in the midst of the life's storms. Pray that we as believers would trust Jesus no matter what pain or struggles we face in the future, knowing that we serve the Lord who rules life's storms.
- Pray for the Southern-Africa Indian Ocean Division. They are conducting Shepherdess Training Programs, Seminars, and Shepherdess Congress in some parts of SUD. Pray for the success of these programs.
- Pray for the country of Taiwan as it is a closed territory. Pray that leaders and believers there can find ways to support members in that country. Pray they can translate material to support the pastors and spouses.
- Pray for 158 newly baptized members in the country of Mongolia. Pray for these new believers to share their faith with others, and that the message can be passed on with more decisions for Christ.