

1 WEEK

The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God.

C.S. LEWIS



LIGHT
DAWNS *in* THE
DARKNESS
FOR
THE UPRIGHT;
HE *is*
GRACIOUS,
MERCIFUL, *and*
RIGHTEOUS.

PSALM 112:4

ESV

LET THERE BE HOPE

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Midnight stole upon us while the sun remained high in the sky. It was a Saturday. The phone rang. I answered. And just like that, night fell. Words upon words, like soot-black spatters of darkness, rained from the phone and smothered me.

It was the call that other parents get. You know, the ones of whom we say, “Oh, those poor parents. My heart breaks for them.” Only it was not other parents. Not this time. And the heart crushed and ground to fragmentary shards lay dead but stubbornly alive within my own chest.

Luke had fallen to his death. A sentence grammatically simple. A fact devastatingly horrid. On this side of the resurrection, he will remain, with every passing year, 21 years old.

He had died on a hike while studying abroad in Chile. In the weeks we waited for his body to be flown home, in the time between his funeral at home and his second funeral and interment at the United States Naval Academy, and in the months following, I arose early and walked for miles in the dark. Praying psalms. Weeping rivers of tears. Launching a million and one whys to heaven’s throne of grace.

Day by torturous day, unbeknown to me at first, the Spirit of God was doing what he has been doing since the dawn of life: accomplishing his best work in the dark. The Lord’s creation of all things began in the dark. “Let there be light,” he said, and there was light. His creation of each

of us began in the darkness of the womb. “Let there be birth,” he said, and there was birth.

Within me, the voice that spoke, initially in a whisper but with gradually intensifying volume, uttered these four words: “Let there be hope.” And there was hope.

Our Father was accomplishing his work within me in the dark. He taught me, when the present is covered with the shadow of death, to borrow light from the past. There is hope because the young man whose body we buried had been united by baptism to the living body of Jesus, who had also been buried, then rose triumphant, his foot on the neck of death for us.

The Lord taught me to bank on light from the future as well, for no matter how fierce the growl of midnight grief, it whimpers in defeat when dawn begins to laugh. And the dawn of resurrection comes. It shone during the first advent of Jesus, when he vacated his borrowed tomb, and that resurrection dawn will dispel every vestige of night at his second coming.

I have learned that tears and smiles can coexist in a soul full of the hope of what Jesus has done, is doing, and will do for us. Never will I be the same, and I am grateful for that. Through wounds and tears, in darkness and grief, I have learned that “even the darkness will not be dark to you,” O Christ (Ps. 139:12), for you are the Light of the World. ✨

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