



Figure 1 Image by Angela C from Pixabay

Sunsets and Sunrises

When we left the farm to move back to a metro suburb there were many changes.

I was thrilled to be reconnected to my husband after a 14-month time of transition for his new job and our property sale.

A vastly different lifestyle, environment and outlook awaited us on the other end of this 800-mile journey. Rather than grieving in the new location, however, the Lord graciously shifted our perspective to enter in fully to His new gifts and era.

There, at The Meadows of the Good Shepherd, we enjoyed our animals and the quiet peace, set apart from hustle and bustle of road noise. It was a good life. Simple. Quiet. Joyful. Filled with beautiful sunrises and sunsets, a view of deer feeding, wild turkeys, our redbud grove and peonies as well as the smell of freshly cut hay.

In the new location, however, I no longer see the sunsets, sunrises or have ready access to the serene nature setting I loved so much at my country house. There is a change of dark to light and back, but I cannot behold the brilliant palette of vivid color that graced our horizons on the farm.

The sunrises and sunset are still happening in the city for God does not change. We'll just have to travel a bit to find them and remain open to the adventure that presents.

It is all a part of the tradeoffs of one season to the next. Like winter to spring and summer to fall — each has their own beauty.

We loved the farm and every part of country living.

Creek walks, hiking in the timber, following deer trails. There was joy meeting with God in a variety of settings like sitting on the pond dam in the wee hours in fog as the new day arrived, while walking the pastures, or reading the Bible out loud to feed God at the creek.

In contrast, we are also very much enjoying our time in the metro.

God has given us a perfect place and we are so grateful. Here there are wonderful, unique ways to experience different cultures. I can shop any day easily for ingredients to make ethnic dishes for dinner. There are terrific worship and learning opportunities nearby. The people and the weather have been warm. I am excitedly awaiting the burst of spring and summer flora and fauna to be seen at home and on excursions exploring the region.

It occurred to me that others, too, might be longing to see this grand display from God's big paint brush. A quick web search yielded a listing of the very best places to see sunsets and sunrises in the region. These are going on my list of future road trip destinations — or at least considerations for detours if we are traveling nearby.

Embracing change is often fueled by our willingness to shift perspective.

WE EACH HAVE SEASONS OF LIFE

What I am learning is we each have seasons of life. To most fully grow it is important to appreciate all the little treasures and relationships God gives us on that path.

I know the sunsets and sunrises still exist. Even though I cannot view them easily right now at some point in the future I will once again embrace the sky with my eyes. I will delight even more in what has been restored to my view because of that absence.

These are some of the takeaways I am gleaning from this life lesson:

1. **Each season has its own sweetness. Find that and focus on these things.** (Ecclesiastes 3; Philippians 4:6-9).
2. **Treasure the memories and what God has done in the past.** (Psalm 9:1; Psalm 77:11-14; Psalm 143:5-16)

3. **Take lots of pictures to help remember.** This is a practical step that yields great benefits.
Like the sunsets and sunrises, I can refer to pictures now to help me remember and praise the Lord again for His goodness. Today the ability to capture memories of people, places, and special times is as close as our cell phones. These generally prompt me to offer grateful praise as well as prayers for those connected to the memories. (Philippians 1:3-6; Ephesians 1:16-18; Ephesians 3:14-21)
4. **Release what has passed to be able to fully embrace the NOW with joyful anticipation.** (Philippians 3:12; John 10:10; Jeremiah 29:11-12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 8:36)

The cycle of changing seasons, with both gains and losses for each, will continue all the days of our life.

As God grows us, we can more quickly adjust. He will help us see through His eyes if we ask Him.

Releasing what was, while embracing with the fullness of our hearts, can help speed up our awareness of new, hidden gems prepared in advance.

Gratefulness and praise of the One who created and provided it all also can accelerate our growth and relationships.

KEEP LOOKING UP TO JESUS

Will there be hard times? Of course — this is life on earth. How much we focus on those things, however, determines the impact they have on our joy.

Keep looking up — Jesus has the answers and the Holy Spirit is our ever-present comforter. If we welcome Him, He will guide us to new perspectives and vistas.

As we focus on the goodness of our Heavenly Father, we can increase our Jesus gratefulness perspective as we:

- **Speak to the plenty, not to the lack.**
- **Speak life and more abundantly.**
- **Speak thanksgiving.**
- **Speak fullness, blessing and appreciation.**
- **Speak expectation of all that encompasses the fruit of the Spirit.**
- **Speak to the mountains trusting Jesus for answers**

Our greatest sunrise, in the context of our personal lives (relationships, job, healing, financial breakthrough, etc.), **very well may follow the dark of night.** And the night (hard

times) often follows a gorgeous sunset (a time of personal fulfillment). Looking at life with an eternal perspective our greatest and best to look forward is Heaven.

It is important to remember to look up to Jesus constantly. We must set our sights on things in the heavenly realm. Even in the midnight hour (hardship) if we raise our heads and hands in praise and position ourselves to be able to view God is there. He is as close as the next breath we take. He, and the stars and moon He created, are there waiting for us. His Presence can be invited and welcomed all times and seasons.

GET IN POSITION TO LOOK FOR THE SUNRISE OUT OF THE DARK

Remember, we see the awakening dawn more vividly because it arises from the darkness. To receive that beautiful gift of light by being up and in position, looking for it. The sunrise comes and goes.

Whether we see it or not depends on us. What direction are we looking? And when? It requires effort to get up early to embrace the day breaking. We also have to know which direction to look. Keeping our eyes turned toward Jesus gives us the ability to shift our gaze to where He leads.

Likewise, it is easier to deal with issues in this present world by looking beyond the temporal challenges. There is comfort in embracing circumstances with an eternal perspective. We can be assured God does, indeed, have for each of us a future and a hope.

“11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 29:11-13 King James Version (KJV) ¹

The Word of God, the Bible gives us many promises. Each Word from God is Holy Spirit empowered and true.

Through God’s Word we can face the dark days knowing:

- Joy cometh in the morning (Psalm 30:5).
- Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17).
- We can be still and know that He is God (Psalm 46:10),
- Jesus is the healer (Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24) and

- He has more and better for us always. (Psalm 138:7; Psalm 40:1-3; Psalm 121:7-8)
- He will never leave us or forsake us...we only need to choose Him.
- Through Jesus we can live a life of joy despite earthly circumstances. (Isaiah 41:10; Romans 5:6-8; John 3:16, Romans 10:9-10)
- As we submit, He can take us from glory to glory.

WAKE UP FROM DARKNESS TO SEE THE LIGHT

One of my friends recently shared her three-year-old great granddaughter's exclamation, "look, the sky is waking up". What a beautiful phrasing from the mouth of a child. Sheer appreciation of God's glory coming forth.

My prayer is for us, also, to wake up to the new day Father God has prepared for us with joyful anticipation.

MY PRAYER FOR YOU

Heavenly Father, I pray You will impart to those reading this a joy of the treasures You are placing in their path and bless them to be a blessing to others. May they view all the wonderful people, places, skills, sights, and memories You grant them as they, too, "wake up" in greater appreciation of You.

May the sunsets and sunrises of their lives give them encouragement in the times of the night as they rest in You knowing they can rise and look up any hour of the day. You are there in all creation and in their life if they will seek You.

May their days be better as they filter everything that happens through Your promises and seek to gain the mind of Christ. Help them look for the good things as the sun rises and sets in their sphere of influence.

As they increase in faith and fruit of the Spirit may they be a beacon of hope to those around them and introduce others to You.

Amen and amen!

In Jesus's mighty name.

Donna Turpin

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