

Sunrise Tomorrow

by Vance Havner

Vance Havner's sermon 'Sunrise Tomorrow' emphasizes the hope and renewal that comes with the promise of Christ's return, likening it to the beauty of a sunrise after a long night.

Scripture: Job 7:4, Psalm 130:6, Matthew 28:1, Romans 8:19

Topics: "Hope in Christ", "Anticipation of His Return"

Description

Vance Havner reflects on the beauty and significance of sunrise, drawing parallels between the physical dawn and the spiritual hope found in Christ's return. He emphasizes that just as the world eagerly awaits the break of day, so too do Christians long for the 'Son-rise' of Jesus, who brings hope and healing. Havner shares personal experiences of sleepless nights, illustrating how they can lead to deeper communion with God and a greater anticipation for the dawn of a new day. He reminds us that true comfort and resolution for the world's troubles can only be found in Christ, the ultimate source of light and life. The sermon concludes with a call to remain expectant for the promised return of Jesus, the true sunrise that will bring an end to darkness.

Transcript

There has always been a peculiar charm about sunrise. It has been the theme of many popular songs like "The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise" and that wedding favorite, "At Dawning." Poems aplenty have been written about sunsets, but there is a different beauty that belongs to sunrise. Probably not many of us see enough sunrises to enter into their secrets. I am not parading myself as an early riser. I miss more sunrises than I see. But some that I have seen will abide in my heart forever. There is something about darkness giving way to light, the mystery of a new day being born, the eastern sky aflush and then aflame, that lingers in the soul.

Sick people can tell us much about sunrise, for they have passed many a restless night longing for the break of day. They know what the Psalmist meant when he said, "My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning: I say, more than watchmen wait for the morning." They understand Job when he said: "When I lie down I think, 'How long before I get up?' The night drags on, and I toss till dawn."

I remember such a night years ago when I was suffering from nervous exhaustion and was unable to sleep. I spent the night in a cottage beside a lovely lake. I was to preach the next day in a city church near by, and I needed a good night's rest but could not obtain it. Of course, the harder one tries to sleep, the

less likely he is to succeed. Toward morning, I gave up and resigned myself to watching for the day. I remember the first faint intimation of coming light. I could not put my finger on the clock at any one minute and say, "Here began the day." But there was the gentle, gradual fading of the darkness; a few birds chirped in the trees; there was soon a glint on the water; by and by, the first rosy tint flushed the east; and through it all grew the mystery of the world waiting for the sunrise.

One who has passed sleepless morning hours may learn to "meditate in the night watches," to pray if he cannot sleep. He begins to understand why the saintly fathers rose early for a session with God. He knows why the New England Pilgrims prayed at sunrise. Bradford tells of an Indian attack at daybreak while they were so engaged. He recalls William Law and that he rose at five because he was a Christian and, when tempted to stay in bed, reminded himself, "I am an old man and am far behind with my sanctification." So he flung himself out of bed before the servants had made their fires or the farmers had yoked their horses, for he thought it a shame to lie folded up in bed when life was so short and there was so much to do.

Again, one thinks of Jacob wrestling with the angel and crossing Peniel at sunrise, limping but having power with God and men. Especially does one think of the Saviour, who, rising up a great while before day, went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed." Evidently He found it good to wait on God while the world was waiting for the sunrise.

We are told that during Paul's experience in the storm at sea "they cast out four anchors and wished for the day." We are passing through one of the worst moral and spiritual hurricanes in history; multitudes are at sea, and many are wishing for the day. Whether on beds of pain or bowed down with sorrow or burdened with the uncertainty of today and dread of tomorrow, millions were never so weary of the night and so anxious for the day. And never have so many been homesick for heaven. They have cast their anchor safe and sure and are waiting till the day dawns and the shadows flee away. "Weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning."

But so many dear souls are not sure about the sunrise. There is small comfort in a vague hope that "everything will turn out all right." There is little solace in a mere Pollyanna optimism and a Micawberish philosophy (a fictional Charles Dickens character) that "something will turn up." Nor will Utopian dreams of a better world, a brotherhood of man welded together by politicians and diplomats, satisfy the soul.

In the account of one of the appearances of our risen Lord it is stated: "In the morning, Jesus stood on the shore." The Christian is looking for morning. For him "the morning comes." But to him sunrise means Son-rise, it is the Son that brings the morning. "To depart and be with Christ" is daybreak for the saint. Then he says good night here and good morning up there.

But I am thinking of another sunrise that is due some tomorrow. It is the sunrise the Saviour promised when He said, "I will come again." It is the sunrise promised at His ascension: "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go away." It is the sunrise Paul promised when he wrote, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." It is the sunrise Peter promised when he said, "The chief shepherd shall appear." It is the sunrise promised by John when he wrote: "When he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is." Christ is both Son and Sun, both Son of God and Sun of Righteousness, of whom it was said that He should arise with healing in His wings. He was called the Dayspring from on high and Peter tells us to take heed unto prophecy until the day dawn and the Morning Star arise in our hearts. For the Son-rise, for the return of Christ the world is waiting. Ruined by sin, it has never been happy and never will be until He shall

reign whose right it is.

THE PHYSICAL WORLD IS WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE. "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (Romans 8:19-22). This world of tooth and claw, of thorn and thistle, of sweat and blood, is a world that crashed because of sin. The animals that cringe in fear, the birds that furtively look around with every step they take, all proclaim a reign of terror that started with Adam and shall end when the Saviour shall redeem the earth, when the lion and lamb shall lie down together. The Scriptures describe such a blessed state: The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:6-9). Here is a picture of a world which we have never seen but which we shall see after sunrise, when the night is past and the day has dawned.

THE POLITICAL WORLD IS WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE. The politicians do not know it, of course. They would try to make the day dawn by their efforts around conference tables. But the hope of a better day rests with only One, the Lord of Glory. Only in Christ can you bring men together. Capital and labor have no trouble when they meet in the Lord. When Boaz saluted his laborers by saying, "The Lord be with you," and they answered, "The Lord bless thee," they gave us then and there the only solution of the labor problem. The white man and the black have no trouble when they both love the Lord. They have most trouble when starry-eyed idealists try to solve their problems. The rich man and the poor meet in Christ: there a Joseph of Arimathea stands on equal footing with fishermen disciples. The learned and unlearned meet in Christ, and an uneducated D.L. Moody can work with renowned scholars and theologians bound by a common love. National lines melt in Him with whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free.

The scattered pieces of this bleeding world can never be put together by any conference of experts. Only the return of our Lord holds the answer. There may be armistices and breathing spells while fresh confederacies form, but Christ alone will bring an end to dictators, just as He will bring an end to death and disease and depravity and the devil.

THE CHRISTIAN WORLD IS WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE. "Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:23). The people of God are looking for the Lord. Certainly that was the New Testament attitude, not only readiness but also expectancy, anticipation. They were not merely looking for something to happen, they were looking for Someone to come. "To wait for his Son from heaven" "Unto them that look for him shall he appear" -- that is the note of early Christianity. The Christian who understands his Bible is looking for the sunrise because he is looking for the Sun! Men may call him a pessimist, but he is looking for morning, not night. He has the brightest outlook of all, for he is looking for a day when there shall be no night. He has the happiest hope in all the world, for he anticipates a day when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes. He has the surest hope, for back of it is the authority of God's Word.

We are looking for Sunrise Tomorrow. And it might be today! For indeed "the night is far spent, the day is at hand!"

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