



BEACH SUNRISE MEDITATION

PSALM 65:8

“Those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe of your signs. You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy.”

EXPERIENCE

My daughter and I have a tradition of beginning every beach vacation with a visit to the ocean’s edge to see the sunrise on the first morning. What follows are reflections from one of our first father/daughter creation meditations together.

I trust that you took a few minutes just to listen, look, feel, smell, and perhaps even taste the salt-spray experience of being at the beach. I hope your senses woke up and came alive with the thrill of being at the coast, “the ends of the earth”. I hope you took your sandals off and walked in the surf. I pray that you soaked up the morning glory of the sunrise and that you, like the writer of Psalm 65, were in awe of God’s signs. Susie and I were in awe of:

- *The breathtaking shades of orange, pink, yellow, blue, white, purple, and violet.*

- *The softness and gentleness of pastel colors.*
- *The 270-degree arc of warm colors, like a hug with gentle arms wrapping around us.*
- *The delight of the dawn of a fresh new day that shouts for joy.*
- *The sunrise itself (the actual sun peaking over the horizon) as such a short and fleeting moment, so special and so worth seeing.*

CONTEMPLATION

Signs are emblems that point beyond themselves to something far greater. According to David in Psalm 65, awe arises in the hearts of those who experience sunrises and sunsets, particularly those who understand them as God's signs. Sunrises are a sign of God's beauty. God is gloriously beautiful! God makes the day dawn with spectacular colors. The sky is painted in such an array of colors that no painter's canvas, no matter how good the painter, could ever capture. The hues of an early morning sunrise are just a foretaste of the infinite radiance of the colorful beauty of God. Radiant and glorious is the morning sky—radiant and glorious is our Lord Christ. One day we will gaze at his shining face in ecstatic delight. Reverent awe-filled worship is the right response to God's display of glory in the skies.

Sunrises are also a sign of God's joy. God is a happy God, a joyous being, who delights to express joy—even shout it! The sunrise shouts! Bright, bursting with colorful light that is warm and lovely, it conveys the joyful character of God. The Lord bookends the day with this glorious pronouncement of his character as a call to joyfulness for those who know him and to whom he chooses to draw near.

God desires for you to live joyously today, not because you are at the beach, but because you are a follower of Christ to whom he has shown his beauty and expressed his joy. As God's sunrise prompts you to praise his beauty this morning and find joy in his presence today, may you also seek and find your heart's true delight in him this vacation. You might want to finish your day at a similar spot with your gaze turned westward to savor the sunset as well.

PRAYER

O Lord, we are reminded this morning of how beautiful you are. Your character is perfect. We are drawn to who you are and desire to be in your presence. You are warm toward your children, a gentle Father who wraps us up in your kindness. You invite us to enjoy your beauty, to delight in who you are, to join you in your joy. Yet, all too often, we skip opportunities to see and savor our Creator and Redeemer. Instead, we sleep through the early morning hours and miss the chance to meet with you. Help us this week, or weekend, at the beach to choose you O God over an extra hour of sleep. Help us to take advantage of each new day as an opportunity to connect with you—to bask in the glory of your radiant and joyful presence. Amen.

CONFIRMATION

Psalm 65: 4a, 7-8 – “Blessed is the one you choose and bring near . . . [O God of our salvation] who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples, so that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs. You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy.”

According to Psalm 65:8, the sunrise is an emblem (a sign) of God’s joy (see also Psalm 19:5). The joy of God is expressed in part by the beauty of the sunset—a display of delight. In Psalm 50:1-2, the writer likens the sun to God. He goes on to describe God and his character as the perfection of beauty. From the rising to the setting of the sun God’s beauty is on display in the skies and from Mount Zion. “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth” (Psalm 50:2).



John Bunyan

FROM *TEMPORAL THINGS SPIRITUALIZED* - XXIV - “ON THE RISING OF THE SUN”

“Look, look, brave Sol¹ doth peep up from beneath, Shows us his golden face, doth on us breathe; He also doth compass us round with glories, Whilst he ascends up to his highest stories. Where he his banner over us displays, And gives us light to see our works and ways.”²

John Bunyan was a 17th century Puritan preacher. He is most famous for writing the allegorical book, *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Bunyan wrote many poems about emblems in nature. My favorite line in the above poem is “He also doth compass us round with glories”. Glories describes magnificence and beauty. When the warm pastel colors of the sky are before and behind you, the experience of the 270-degree arc of a beach sunrise is like an encompassing hug of indescribable beauty, loveliness, and magnificence.

¹ The word “Sol” is a mythological word for the sun, especially as Bunyan is using it to personify Christ.

² Excerpt from John Bunyan’s *Temporal Things Spiritualized*, accessed 7/19/2023 on Judith Bronte’s website - <https://acacia.pairsite.com/Acacia.John.Bunyan/Poetry/Book.For.Boys.Girls/XXIV.html>.



Charles Spurgeon

SERMON #2947 “ROYAL EMBLEMS FOR LOYAL SUBJECTS”.

“As the sunrise is thus joyous, and comforting, and glorious, let us remember *how unparalleled it is*—unparalleled because divine. By no method of illumination can we manufacture such a light as the sun exhibits

by his simple rising.³

³ <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs2947.pdf>