



*For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning (Psalms 30:5 NIV).*

Greetings this morning, a new October dawn and a new season, my dear friends in Christ!

My personal JOY is in the morning, always has been! And this scripture so clearly points out to us the stark contrast between Law and Gospel; God rightly condemns & punishes sin, but because of Christ's work, His Gospel, and His favor—we **are to remember always**: that Our God loves us **forever**. Weeping & anger on one side of the scales is a sharp contrast to His favor & JOY! What a loving God we have. (Factoid: JOY is mentioned in the Bible over 500 times!)

I have JUST come home from an in-filling, well-attended Fall Retreat on the banks of Crescent Creek, flowing out of Odell Lake. Our presenters' theme was "The Reason for Our Hope; I Peter 3: 14-16." The retreat, with a sisterhood of 50+ years of strong ties, was a great time for small group sharing. Perhaps we need to practice this more often—and Be Prepared! And if that doesn't knit into the verse I already chose, for my 100th issue of The Hug—you tell me?

We are living in a fitful world right now, where we are forever being challenged as Christians to give answers and defend our faith and beliefs **on all fronts**—and be prepared to give the reasons for our hope that burns within us, armed with a conviction that brings us to each new day—that heartfelt peace and JOY in the morning!

As a teacher, long-time retired, I **still** live on teacher-time; I wake before dawn, welcome the sunrise with my bird-filled sanctuary-backyard—and a side curse might be, I do pretty well on a good 6-7 hours' sleep. Then, finally, here comes Fall, forever my favorite season. And with it, there is a strange "stirring" inside me, as I make efforts to re-arrange my home and the color schemes to match with happy colors—always reflecting the changing of the season!

I am grateful for the countless promises the scriptures give us, as in I Peter 3:14-15—that even if we should suffer for righteousness' sake, we will be blessed—being always prepared to make a defense, stand up, and share the reasons for our hope—Yet we are mandated to do it with gentleness and respect. You see clearly here what a privilege it becomes to honor our Lord with a personal witness that reflects God in our own lives—"and see what He has done for me!" We must be armed with the breastplate and sword of righteousness as shared in Ephesians 6:14: *Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness*, knowing what we truly believe; then teach, share, confess and bear witness to God's gracious and overflowing love and favor towards us all. I love it when Peter goes on in verse 17 of the same chapter to remind us: *For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil*. We all know we have often been put in difficult situations that have tested us, but we know He will never give us more than we can bear.

In a truly heartfelt & grateful peace of mind, I stand privileged to be sharing this 100th issue of The HUG!! May it be a blessing to all, I shall keep my wrist writing until God calls me home.

*Pat Reck, HUG Author*