

Read: Malachi 4:1-6

See the Light of the Sun Who is the Son

Malachi 4:2

But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

If you live in California, you can wear flip flops in December. But not if you live in the Midwest where it's dark and cold in winter. Wintry weather means you have to bundle up to go to work, school, shopping, and basketball games. As much fun as it is to go sledding, ice fishing, ice skating, have snowball fights, and drink hot chocolate, by March you just want to feel the warmth of the sun again. That's why so many people go to Florida, Arizona, and Texas for a spring break.

Living in this world is like living in the middle of winter. Some of it is fun—like friends, family, sports, toys, dances, volunteering—but some parts are so hard. Parents fight, people get sick, friends can sometimes not be so nice, teachers don't always seem to understand you, or you get cut from the team. That's why we yearn for the "sun of righteousness"—Jesus, the Son of righteousness. He will come back and heal all the hard times.

And he will do that—because he promised he would! He said that we would have problems in this world, but that he has already overcome them. Plus, after he rose from the dead, he went to heaven to get your room ready for you. There'll be no more crying, sadness, or pain. There will just be healing, joy, and happiness because you are with God!

When that day comes, you are going to frolic like a baby cow who gets let out of the barn. To give you a better picture, the prophet Malachi could have said it like this: When Jesus comes, "you will run around like kids who have been let out of school for the summer!" or, "You will jump up and down like kids entering Disneyland!"

There's just one problem. People who don't believe in Jesus don't have this hope or promise. There isn't a future full of joy for them. God says there will only be even more sadness for them. Do you see why Jesus wants you to tell them about a "sun of righteousness" who brings healing for them? Tell them that he's paid for their sins. Tell them that he's coming back. The good news is for them too!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- Do you have a friend who is sad or sick right now?
- Consider making a card to help him or her feel better and know that Jesus loves them.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What one thing do you wish Jesus could come back and fix for you right now?
- Until he comes back to fix it forever, how might Jesus use you to make a difference and be a ray of light in the dark?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Name the hardest thing that's happened to you—something that still bothers you to this day?
- Until he comes back to fix it forever, Jesus doesn't want you to stay sad. Name three things he's done or given you that makes you really happy.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, you know that this world can be sad. Thank you for your promise to come back and take us to a place where there will be no more sadness or darkness, only your Light—a place where we will jump with joy and excitement forever!

Hymn: CW 31:1,2 – Oh Lord of Light Who Made the Stars

O Lord of light, who made the stars,
O Dawn, by whom we see the way,
O Christ, Redeemer of the world:
Come now and listen as we pray.

In lowliness you came to earth
To rescue us from Satan's snares,
O wondrous Love that healed our wounds
By taking on our mortal cares.