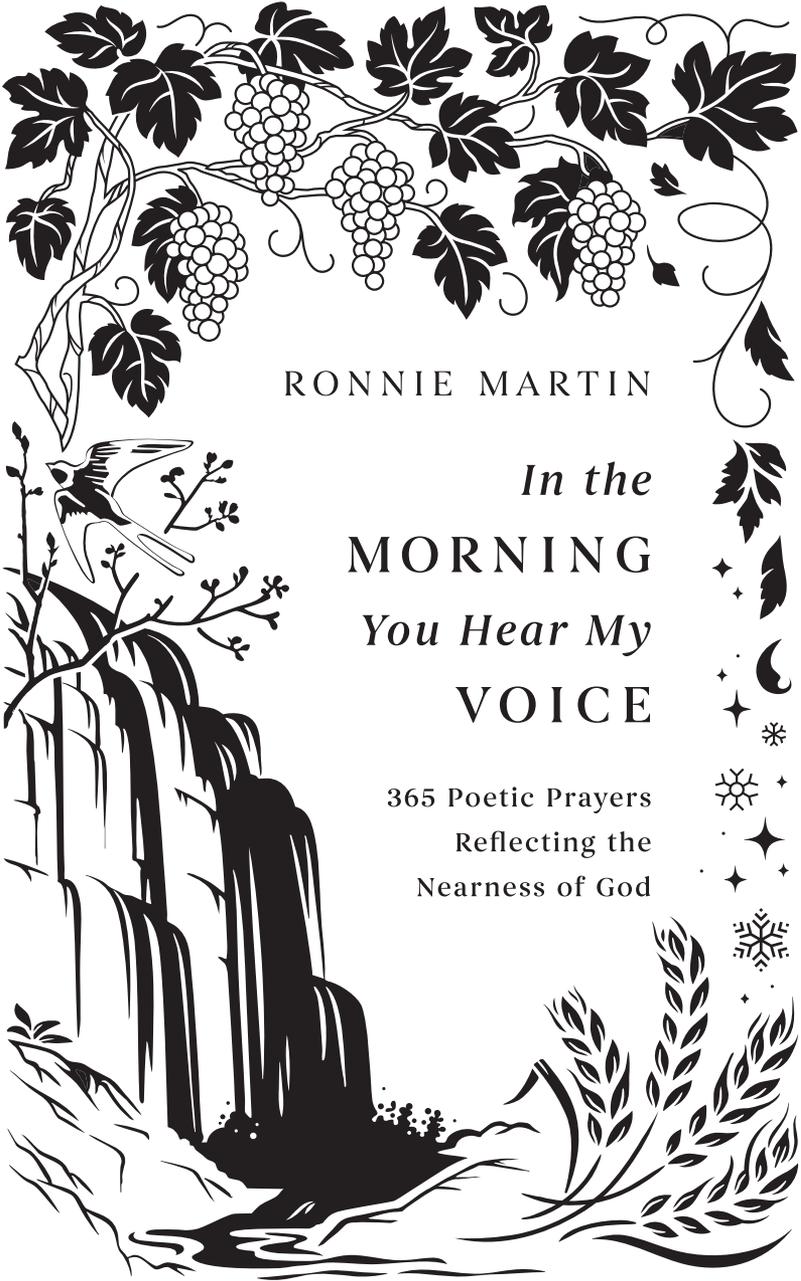


RONNIE MARTIN

In the
MORNING
You Hear My
VOICE

365 Poetic Prayers
Reflecting the
Nearness of God

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To Melissa,
who wonderfully hears my voice, too

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The book you hold in your hands has been three to four years in the making. The nature of the writing meant that it was not good for me to feel rushed. I needed unhurried time to find my voice, let the words begin to form, and discover a way to create something poetic without being overly abstract, although it has many of those moments. I'll let the readers determine whether I succeeded or not. Because of this, the release for the book needed to be pushed back an entire year!

I am grateful to the entire team at B&H for the slowness and space I needed to create. Both your patience and enthusiasm for this work has been affirming.

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Finally, thank you to my wife Melissa. I have heard that it is hard being married to a creative type, so thank you for the never-ending patience and love that you have given me all these years. I don't know how you do it, but I sure am glad that you do.

INTRODUCTION

Listen to my words, LORD;

consider my sighing.

Pay attention to the sound of my cry,

my King and my God,

for I pray to you.

In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;

in the morning I plead my case to you and watch expectantly.

Psalm 5:1-3

Every morning, I am greeted by the budding light of dawn, sometimes dim, sometimes bright, as the earth springs into existence all around me in marvelous and mysterious movements. I am greeted by a bounty of grace, which provides me with the sight to see, and the senses to savor the seasons that the Lord has created and purposed for me to behold.

Also . . .

I am greeted by the unconscious sighs of the night, where unresolved fears, unsettled anxiety, unrestored relationships, and unanswered questions meet an unspoken longing to be whole and to become better acquainted with joy.

Before the morning wanes into the ether of midday, and the first hint of night begins to softly materialize, I remember the Lord. I try not to forget that I am greeted by one who hears my voice, understands all my worrisome words, and sings over me with delight as he forms me into the person I am becoming. In all of my forgetfulness and foolishness, I seek to remember that I am shepherded by Jesus with undiminished love. And good thing too, because I am a fragile mortal with many needs, many disappointments, and many unrealized dreams.

And so are you.

As you journey through this collection of short prayers and brief reflections, let your mind wander a little. Spend a few short seconds, or an hour if you have it, and maybe jot down a word or two as they appear in your mind. Take a moment to wait expectantly for Jesus, remembering that he who made all the winters, springs, summers, and falls, is not so far after all.

Ronnie Martin

WINTER



January 1

THREADBARE



A new year greets the old me with barely a “hello”
The night has delivered a steady snowfall
Flurries respond in frantic patterns to the occasional bluster
Metaphors for an unknown year abound

And here I am, with you, O Lord

What changes will befall me?
What opportunities will reward me?
What sorrows will overwhelm me?
What joys?

I want to claim this year as “my year!”
But what claim do I have to anything?

The year is yours

All of these forgotten hours will be yours
All of these aches and pains will be yours
All of this broken, unswept glass is yours

Much too often, I see myself like an old tree trunk
Alone in a desolate field
Until I remember that I have branches
That will be covered in snow

The way you cover my *threadbare* soul

Reflection

January 2

LIGHT



This barren winter landscape
Holds me in captivity
Icicles are like tentacles
Cooling my warm blood

Who will bear with me in this scarcity?
Who will light a lantern and lead the way?
Who will provide light upon endless light?
The lamps of my own lighting have gone dark

But what is darkness to you, O Lord?
I just remembered

It is as *light*

Reflection

January 3

BOTH



Glorious mountain
Occupying the bright blue realm of hovering birds
Your expansive circumference
Meets my feet with the gravity of comfort

Lord, make me immovable like a mountain

My head will sometimes circle the soaring blue heights
And my heart will sometimes be buried in dark, muted lows

Yes, I will exist in both

As you exist with me in *both*

Reflection

January 4

BECAUSE



Most days
All is not what it seems
I am a skin-covered skeleton
With a barely-there smile
And a rarely-there soul

But this I know
The Lord's favor rests upon me
There is light
And with light, lightness
As the Spirit recalls words of hope within me

Some days, I am like a dangling thread
Thin, unseen, and unattached
Other days, I am like a human anvil
Heavy with anxiety and sorrow

Here I am
A ginormous ball of unexplained complexities
But here you are, completely unphased

Because you are not me

But you are ever before me

Reflection

January 5

VINE



These clusters of bare trees
Delivered to the clutches
Of another cold-blooded winter
With not a green leaf in sight
Or even the hint of a bud
They are like miniature cocoons
Waiting to burst with joy

But not yet

Lord, I feel like this bare branch
Seeking pale rays of winter sun
To warm these shortened days

I feel like a broken branch
Until I recall this astonishing thought

I am no less connected to the *vine*
Then when I am full of green leaves

Reflection

January 6

DAWN



This irrepressible weight
Of colorless night
Imposing its phantom limbs
Around oblivious bystanders
Centuries of wordless longings
And hushed sighs
Cast into the nothingness of this midnight light

Engulfed by a voice
That rises above this ensemble of low hums
Spiraling upward into the initial depths of heaven
An angelic accompaniment begins to harmonize
Until an ageless chorus emerges
It's arrival is unrestrained
Nothing in all the earth able to prevent its return
No creature above or below able to eliminate the morning light

I am startled from this dream
As morning colors
Pierce through the glass
Like darting knives to slumbering eyes

I suppose this was no dream at all
The Lord has once again delivered his light
To a dimly lit world

Dawn

Reflection



When David writes, “In the morning LORD, you hear my voice,” we hear the cries of a man coming before the Lord in desperation. The good news is God will hear his voice, but David also knows his prayers must include a season of waiting before he sees the Lord intercede in his life. David’s poetic and poignant prayers give words to the groanings of our own hearts.

In the Morning, You Hear My Voice captures the unmistakable and awe-worthy presence of God through both the hard seasons and heavy realities of our daily lives. The 365 daily readings detail honest expressions before God, as well as our praise and thanksgiving to Him for never abandoning us, even in our most desperate seasons of waiting. Starting on whatever day of the year a reader begins this devotional, they receive daily encouragement as he or she prays through brief words inspired by the book of Psalms.

We often need words that speak to where we are and affirm where God is as we wait in hope. *In the Morning You Hear My Voice* provides short prayers for long seasons that are filled with daily reminders of God’s promise to never leave or forsake us. 🌿



RONNIE MARTIN (DMin) is a pastor, author, songwriter, and synthesist. He is director of Leader Care and Renewal for Harbor Network, pastor-in-residence at Redeemer Community Church, and cohost of *The Heart of Pastoring Podcast* with Jared C. Wilson. He has authored several books and recorded dozens of electronic music albums at his studio, The Holly Haus. He and wife Melissa have one daughter and live in Bloomington, Indiana.

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