

TIDINGS of COMFORT and JOY

Message topic: Joy To The World

Message date: December 17, 2020

Primary biblical texts: Psalm 98, Romans 5

Purpose of the Advent Message Series

Our Advent message series is called *Tidings of Comfort and Joy*. During the four weeks of Advent, we will look at different Christmas songs and see what they can teach us about God. Try to listen or sing the songs with your group and discuss what comes to mind when you hear each song. (The lyrics are below.)

Message Content

This week, we looked at the hymn “Joy to the World.” It was written by Isaac Watts, a student who was disappointed by the lack of joy in church worship. He saw a disconnect between the hope Christians find in Jesus and the mood of worship. So, he wrote “Joy To The World” to invite others to live in this joy. His hymn is an imaginative rewriting of Psalm 98, as if David had known Jesus. The result is a song that declares Jesus will reverse all the sorrows and thorns in this world, and it tells the story of God’s setting all things right in Christ. It is the joyful message of God coming to be with us in Jesus at Christmas. Congregational worship was forever changed because of Isaac Watts and “Joy To The World.”

Discussion Questions

1. Mixer: What makes you feel outright joy? Where or when do you feel the most joy?
2. What stood out from this series?
3. Do you think the church is a place of joy? Why or why not?
4. Christian shared this week about the joy of God putting to right the sorrows and thorns in this world. What are some sorrows that you see/experience? What are some of the thorns?
5. God is the God of blessing and joy who redeems all things. What are some of the blessings that you have seen that have come out of sorrow and thorns in your life?
6. Where has God been at work in your life?
7. Where is a place where the world’s needs can be met by your creativity and joy?

Challenge

1. Think about the sorrows in your life. Bring them to God. Ask God for this joy. He gladly wants to give it to you.
2. Think of the people in your life who need joy. Ask God how you can share the joy of Christmas with them. Pray for an opportunity to share God’s Joy with others. Look for and take opportunities to share what you have in tangible ways.
3. Read a psalm a day this week that speaks of joy. (Psalm 1, 23, 27, 103, 116) Think about these questions: Where do they hint at reality? Where does Jesus fulfill the longings of the Psalmist? Try to rewrite them in your own words in light of Jesus’ work in the world.

Close in Prayer



Joy to the World

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.