

One of the most popular Christmas carols, "Joy to the World," was written by Isaac Watts in 1719 and set to the music of George Handel [of Messiah 'fame']. Watts was a prolific hymn writer credited with over 750 English hymns. But did you know that he did not write this song for Christmas? The song was part of a compilation of *Psalms of David Imitated* and is based on Psalm 98 where we read [Psalm 98: 4 – 6]:

Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music:
make music to the Lord with the harp,
with the harp and sound of singing,
with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn----
shout for joy before the Lord, the King.

Are you shouting for joy this Christmas and sharing what God has done in your life so that others may receive the most wonderful, free gift?

Getting To Know You

What is your definition of the word, "JOY"?

Apart from Jesus, what was the best news you ever got?

Who did you tell first?

Into the Bible

1. Even in a sorrowful or complicated personal situation, what does the Bible say to do? How are joy and rejoicing related?

2. How do we have "complete" joy, according to John 15:11? *"These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."* John 15:11

3. John 17:13 says this joy is "within us." This seems to indicate it is something internal and not controlled by circumstances. How do we get this Joy that the Bible speaks about?

"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves."

4. Pastor Sam said "Christmas joy is not a product of the presents, but the presence of Christ! How can we have the presence of Christ?"

Taking It Home

1. How will you try to express this “inexpressible joy?”

To whom will you offer or share your full measure of joy?

2. Put some joy into another person’s life. Give a call, write an e-mail, or, if you are old-fashioned, send them a card.

“Good News of Great Joy”

(Luke 2:10)

“The ultimate purpose of God in all his work is to increase our joy.” [C.S. Lewis]

Is it possible to experience joy in the midst of trying circumstances?

I. GREAT _____.

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” [Luke 2:10] “When they saw the star they were overjoyed.” [Matthew 2:10]

- The Bible speaks of J_____ in the midst of D_____. A joy not diminished by, but actually transcending T_____ and T_____. Joy in the midst of gloom.
- This joy is available to A_____ and is E_____.

II. GOOD N_____.

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you: he is Christ the Lord.” [Luke 2:11]

Biblical joy is rooted in the person of J_____ C_____.

The Good News is that God has come down to us!

- God is W_____ U_____ in our suffering.
- God can R_____ our suffering.
- God will one day R_____ our suffering.

Want to find the Joy?

- Try R_____: Make sure you are right with God.
“Restore to me the joy of my salvation” [Psalm 51:12]
- Try F_____: Fix your eyes on Jesus.
“Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.” [Habakkuk 3:18]

Christmas joy is not a product of the presents, but the presence of Christ!

“Thought you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with inexpressible and glorious joy,” [1Peter 1:8]