

“Joy to the World”

December 17 & 18, 2016 | Gospel in the Carols #3

INTRODUCTION

This week’s sermon was inspired by the carol “Joy to the World.” We sing this song at Christmas, but its lyric celebrates much more than Christ’s incarnation. In fact it is based on Psalm 98 and rejoices in the entire redemptive story of man from the fall in the garden to Christ’s second coming. This study looks at four reasons that Christians have to rejoice, as illuminated by this beloved carol.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

What aspect of Christmas brings you the greatest joy?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Shout for Joy! Jesus is coming back!

Q1. Read Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:8; Isaiah 53:5; Revelation 1:7
“Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King”

The very first line of this carol declares “the Lord is come.” Note that the hymn composer, Isaac Watts didn’t use the past tense in this declaration. How do Matthew 28:20 and Hebrews 13:8 reveal Jesus’ coming was not confined to the past? What cause for joy is found in Isaiah 53:5? How does Revelation 1:7 lead us to believe that Isaiah prophesied this about Jesus in Is 53:5? How does Psalm 98:9 give us reason to rejoice in Jesus coming back to the earth?

Shout for Joy! Jesus is Lord!

Q2. Read Philippians 2:9-11; Matthew 28:18
Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!

Sometimes it is difficult to reconcile what we see happening in the world around us with the truth of God’s Word. What does Philippians 2:9-11 tell us that we can be joyful about? Consider the absolute extent of Christ’s Lordship in Matthew 28:18. Why might you be hesitant to let God reign in your heart? What are some practical steps we can take that help bring God’s reign into the difficult situations of our lives?

Shout for Joy! Jesus sets us Free!

Q3. Read Genesis 3:17-18; Hebrews 10:12-13; Galatians 3:13; Revelation 22:1-3; Genesis 2:9
No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground

Genesis 3:17-18 describes the fallout of Adam’s sin; man was banished from fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden, and instead fell under the curse of toiling amidst thorns and thistles. What did Jesus do to reverse this? (see Hebrews 10:12-13, Galatians 3:13) In Revelation, after the first heaven and earth have passed away, we see a new heaven and new earth. In addition to setting us free from the curse (Revelation 22:3) what has been restored from the garden (Revelation 23:2, Genesis 2:9?)

Shout for Joy! Jesus makes all things new!

Q4 Read Revelation 21:1-8; Psalm 98:4-9

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

Even though we live in a fallen world, God gives the promise of a glorious future to those who follow Jesus. Read the description of the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21:1-5. What do you find in this passage that demonstrates God’s love? His righteousness?

Psalm 98:4-9 gives us many expressions of joy over God’s promises. Which promise would you say gives you the greatest cause to rejoice this Christmas?

Wrap-Up

The heart of Christmas is God showing his love for us by reconciling mankind to Himself. But the celebration is not limited to the incarnation alone. We can celebrate that Jesus is coming back again, that he sets us free and reigns as Lord right now, and that when He returns he will make all things new.

Memory Verse

*Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things;
Psalm 98:1a NIV*

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs: (see back for more notes) _____

Challenge:

When you see images of Jesus as a baby this week, pause to remember that He is not confined to the past, but is present with us now and forever.

Q1

Matthew 28:20 ESV - 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Hebrews 13:8 ESV - 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Isaiah 53:5 ESV - 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Revelation 1:7 ESV - 7 Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

Psalms 98:9 ESV - 9 before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

Q2

Philippians 2:9-11 ESV - 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Matthew 28:18 ESV - 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Q3

Genesis 3:17-18 NIV - 17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

Hebrews 10:12-13 NIV - 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.

Galatians 3:13 NIV - 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole."

Revelation 22:1-3 NIV - 1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

Genesis 2:9 NIV - 9 The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground--trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Q4

Read Revelation 21:1-8 in your Bible

Psalms 98:4-9 NIV - 4 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; 5 make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, 6 with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn-- shout for joy before the LORD, the King. 7 Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. 8 Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; 9 let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

Prayer Notes cont.
