

“Joy to the World”

Analog Christmas Sermon Series | Week Three | Newbreak Church

December 12th, 2021

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to their spiritual formation.

In this week’s study, we look at the song, “Joy to the World,” and explore why we talk about joy during the Christmas season every year.

Icebreakers for Life Groups

- What is your favorite Christmas decoration? Why that one?
- Have you ever been caroling? If so, what was your experience like? If not, is it something you have wanted to do? Why or why not?

Going Deeper Into the Message

Read Psalm 98

Point 1 – “Joy to the World” reminds me of the bigger picture of Christmas.

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come / Let earth receive her King / Let every heart, prepare Him room / And heaven and nature sing...” – *Joy to the World*

What makes the Christmas story so miraculous; what gives us peace and hope? It’s not only that God Himself left the perfection of the heavenly realm and came to be born in humble beginnings on earth. It’s not just that He was to live in a broken and corrupt world. That, in and of itself, is miraculous and more than we could ever imagine. But what makes this story even better is that this was just the beginning of His redemption plan that He started way back in Genesis. He always wanted us with Him for eternity. Jesus’ birth here on earth was one of the paramount steps in setting His plan in motion.

For centuries God's people had been waiting for the Savior, the Messiah. But they knew that Him being born was not enough to save them. They knew that *life* did not save. They knew there had to be a sacrifice. There had to be a price paid for the sins committed. The sacrifice had to be more than what they regularly offered. God would not accept a less than offering. This sacrifice had to be perfect, had to be without fault and able to cover a multitude of sins. Jesus had to live on earth, with His people, perfectly to be a worthy final sacrifice. More than that, He had to defeat death. He had to be raised from the dead and stand perfect before the Father to cover our sins.

So, why did the angels triumphantly announce the birth of the King, why did heaven and nature sing? They knew this was the first step in God's final plan for the redemption of His people. The sea resounds, the rivers clap their hands, the mountains all sing together for joy because the Lord has come! He has come to judge the earth with righteousness and restore His creation and His people! Receive our King this Christmas season by preparing room in your hearts for our Savior!

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- How can you prepare your hearts for Jesus to reign this Christmas season?
- Listen to the song "Joy to the World." Make it your prayer today and ask God to give you His peace in this season.
- Who in your circle of influence needs to hear that God reigns, that God is in control and He will give peace to all who seek Him? How can you share this fantastic news this week?

Read Luke 1:46–55

Point 2 – Choose to focus on the power of our God more than the pain of your circumstances.

Reading Luke 1:46–55 at first glance, it might seem obvious as to why Mary would rejoice at the news of her immaculate conception. But life got a lot more complicated and not any easier with her role as the mother of the Messiah. Imagine trying to explain to your family and community that God was impregnating you... it would be crazy! The shock factor has lost its luster since we know how the story goes. But for Mary, the first Christmas was a lesson in learning how to channel her joy to focus on the power of God

rather than the difficulty of the circumstances, which is why her response is one of rejoicing instead of weeping or complaining or any other reaction.

Mary teaches us that choosing joy is a journey of training my mind to lead my heart.

As a group, try to identify the ways that Mary focused on the power of God (see Luke 1:46–55).

Here are some of our observations...

- She **recognizes** God's mindfulness. (Luke 1:48)
- She **worships** God for His holiness. (v. 49b)
- She **praises** God's mercy. (v. 50)
- She **remembers** God's mighty acts in the past. (v. 51)
- She **acknowledges** how God exalts the humble. (v. 52)
- She **sees** God's provision in the midst of her poverty. (v. 53)
- She **celebrates** how God keeps His promises. (vv. 54-55)

This is not a coincidence, Mary makes a conscious decision to make God the center of her focus, which organically produces a genuine, godly experience of joy.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What is something about the passage (Luke 1:46–55) that sticks out to you? What are some details you would highlight, circle, or underline? Why those?
- When was a time you had to recenter your focus away from your circumstances and onto God's perspective? What did you do to make that shift? What difference did it make in your attitude afterward? What advice would you give others from your experience?

Point 3 – When I choose joy it becomes contagious.

“Repeat the sounding joy.” – *Joy to the World*

Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise! Let the earth and all living things join in. Let the rivers clap their hands in glee! Let the hills sing out their songs of joy before the Lord... (Psalm 98:7-9, NLT).

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13, NIV).

In Romans 15:13, Paul teaches us two amazing things about God in relation to joy. First, God is the source of our joy. I am reminded during our cooler winter season that a single ray of sunlight can bring warmth to my bones. Even though the source of that sunlight is 91.561 million miles away, we can still experience a small piece of its warmth and energy. It is similar to God's joy. He is the ultimate source of our joy and His supply never runs out. He gives it to us joyfully.

The second truth about joy found in this passage is that God is generous with supplying us His joy. He is the opposite of Ebenezer Scrooge from Charles Dickens' 1843 novella, *A Christmas Carol*. He isn't stingy, miserly, or begrudgingly generous. Notice Paul's description of the amount that is available to us. Paul asks that the God of hope will fill us with all joy and peace so that we may "**overflow**" with it.

The joy that is available to us can literally pour out of our lives so the excess can flow into the lives of others. This makes me think of David's description of God's care in his life as seen in [Psalm 23:5b](#), "[You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.](#)" God is such a wonderful shepherd that His care, provision, and joy can't be contained, but needs to be shared through the actions in our lives.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Did you experience the joy of the Lord in your life this week? If not, why not?
- Can you remember a time in your life when God met you in a dark place and shined joy into your life?
- If God is the source of joy, and Christians are His children, why aren't we known as the most joyful people on the planet?

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?

BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?