

# Joy to the World? (Psalm 98) ■■■■■■■■■■? (■■■ 98)

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Preacher: William HC

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, everyone. Merry Christmas. For those of you who don't know me, my name is William. I'm one of the pastors here. And this is Pastor Barry as well.

This is such a wonderful opportunity to worship together as one family in Christ, isn't it? And perhaps all year we've been worshipping in separate congregations, and today we realize how big and how precious this family is.

We may have divided into different■■■ to celebrate, but today we're very happy to be together. And I do apologize, my Cantonese is not very good.

Just listening to the wonderful choir, I was thinking in my head, just then, Maybe when I'm old enough, my Cantonese will be good enough to join this choir. When I heard C-Mann sing the beautiful song, I thought, Maybe I'm going to their age, or my Cantonese will be better.

Whatever your background this morning, you are welcome here, and we are here to celebrate our Lord Jesus together. No matter where you are, we welcome you to celebrate Jesus' birthday.

[ 1 : 18 ] Now Christmas in our household looks a little bit different to other Asian families. I grew up in New Zealand from nine years old, so we kind of just picked traditions from different places.

I was here to celebrate our Lord Jesus' birthday. So our tradition is actually from many different places. And I imagine for many of you, you have lived here, but you are still working out what your Christmas traditions are.

Maybe you've been here for a long time, but you are still trying to build a tradition of different traditions to celebrate? Different families, different cultures will celebrate Christmas differently.

Yes, we have different families, different cultures will celebrate Christmas differently. We also have different ways to celebrate Christmas. Maybe even for tomorrow, you have still not decided what you would do together as a family. Maybe even for tomorrow, you have still not decided what you would do together as a family.

Well, here are some ideas. Maybe there are some ideas. I mean, if we look around us in New Zealand, there are lots of people who will plan days at the beach. Maybe not today.

[ 2 : 23 ] In New Zealand, we will plan days at the beach. Maybe not today. Or maybe for Christmas, for many Kiwi families, it's just to go shopping, maybe. Maybe you want to go shopping, maybe. Maybe you want to go shopping, maybe. Maybe you want to go shopping, maybe. Maybe you want to go shopping, maybe?

Yeah. But all the way around the other side of the world, in Germany, they have what's called a big street market. It's called a Kriskindl Market. But if you look at the Western University, and you look at Germany, there are some big places.

And if I just put the slide on for you, you'll see how big they are. Oh, this one. And it's in the middle of winter, and everyone is trying to get warm, so they go to the markets to buy hot food and drinks. It's in the winter, so you can buy some hot food or drink. Is it not what you think about food?

I'm going to buy some last minute blueberries. But in China, many parts of China, they're going to be hunting last minute apples. And some of you know that the word for apple, pinguo, sounds very similar to pinyanye, silent nights.

[ 3 : 36 ] Pinyanye, not sure how many apples you have in your fruit basket today. I don't know how many apples you have in your fruit basket today. Or is it not just lunch somewhere?

Or is it not going to be out to eat a Christmas big food? Lots of food, lots of seafood, or just the best foods you can find. There are a lot of food, a lot of fish, and a lot of food. But in Japan, the best way to celebrate Christmas is with KFC.

But in Japan, they are going to eat a chicken for Christmas. I don't know why, but I did do some reading. Apparently in the 1970s, they thought that Santa Claus looked like Colonel Sanders. That's how it started. So, in the 1970s, they thought that the King of the Gai was like a Christmas old man. And so today, on Christmas Eve, millions of Japanese people are lining up to buy KFC. So, in Japan, there are a thousand, a million people to buy KFC. Maybe you're not into feasting, but you're into singing, like we've heard this morning.

[ 4 : 45 ] Maybe you're not into feasting, but you're into singing, like we've heard this morning. And another well-known tradition that actually our church takes part in is caroling or singing Christmas carols. Yes, like we were in the church today, we sang some Christmas carols.

This is a little bit of a taste of what happened yesterday. It was raining, yes, but that didn't dampen our spirits. We still sang Christmas carols together. Yes, although yesterday was a little rain, but it didn't affect our time.

We were in the street with the train, and we were together to sing the train. And I want to bring your attention to one Christmas carol in particular, and we've actually sung it this morning, called Joy to the World.

And this is actually a truly international song, believe it or not. This is a song that was written by an Englishman, Isaac Watts.

And then it was set to music by an American, Lowell Mason. And now today it's sung in English, Cantonese, and many, many other languages around the world.

[ 5 : 54 ] But I wonder when you sang Joy to the World, how did you feel inside? Is this song true? Has God really brought joy to the world?

Is it true? Is it true? Is it true? Is it true? Is it true? It's true to the world in this world, today's world? After all, there's not much joy when we read what's on the news each day at the moment. When you watch the news news, you'll be feeling that it's not very happy.

Our brothers and sisters in Gaza are not having much joy. Our economy is in a lot of trouble and difficulty.

Even last night, I was talking with someone at our Christmas party, and he was telling me this might be his last Christmas alive. And let's be honest, as we think of the challenges in our lives, you might find it hard to sing joy to the world.

Some of us here, this is the first Christmas without a loved one. Perhaps some of you here are struggling financially.

[ 7 : 27 ] Or maybe here you are, and you have a serious health challenge. Or maybe you're here, and you know that someone you love will not sit next to you.

There is unresolved conflict this Christmas. Maybe you're sitting there, but you're seeing that someone you're not sitting there. It's because there's no way to solve it. Can there truly be joy to the world?

The answer from the Bible, God's word is, yes, there truly is joy to the world. But if we look at the Bible, the answer from the Bible, the answer from the Bible is true.

It's true. It's true. It's true. It's true. Because what some of you may not know is that Isaac Watts wrote Joy to the World, inspired by a psalm in the Bible. And so if you and I want to know the true meaning of joy to the world, we need to understand Psalm 98.

So you want to know the true meaning of this song, we need to look back the original verse 98. He explains on the screen in his own words, in this hymn, including Joy to the World, he has taken from Psalm 98 what he believes is true from the scriptures.

[ 8 : 48 ] He wrote this song, it's from the Bible, it's from the Bible, it's from the Bible, it's from the Bible. So I want to invite us to open our Bibles, if you have them, and to read Psalm 98 together.

If you can, I'll open your Bible in your own words, and let's read it like we sang this morning.

So I'll just jump off the mic, and then we'll read in Cantonese, and then English together out loud.

Shall we do that? So let's read together in our respective languages. One, two, three.

Sing to the Lord, and He has done numerous things. His right hand and the Holy Heart have won salvation for him. The Lord has made his salvation, and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of all of us. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth burst into a violent song for music.

[ 9 : 59 ] Make music to the Lord with the heart, and the heart of the sound of the sound of the sound of the sound of the sound of the sound. With trumpets and blasts of the rams fall, shout for joy for the

Lord, the king.

Let the sea resound, and everything will be in it. The world and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the mountains sing for joy. Let them sing for the Lord, for He comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world and righteousness, and the people with equity. This is God's word for us today. This is God's word for us today.

Now when you heard that, let's be honest, that didn't sound like a Christmas carol, did it? You heard it, it's not like a Christmas carol. But this was actually holiday music for the Israelites.

But for the Israelites, it was actually a Christmas song for the Israelites. God's people who first sang this song, they would have felt this very precious to sing Psalm 98 together.

[11:03] They would think it was a very precious, very precious one of the songs of the Bible. You see Psalm 98, it sits in the book of Psalms, in between a section of songs, all talking and singing about the Lord as King.

The Lord as King. Notice in verse 6, this song is to be shouted for joy before the Lord King.

It's like the 6th verse, we call the Lord to the King of Kings. And so when we listen to Psalm 98, we are listening to a song for the King of Kings. So, when we listen to Psalm 98, we are listening to a song for the King of Kings.

And this morning I want to share three things we can learn, Today I want to share with you three things to let us know why we can be a joy to the world.

Three reasons why there can be a joy to the world. Firstly, there can be a joy to the world because the Lord has made known His salvation to the nations.

[12:16] It is really a joy to the world because the Lord has made known His salvation to the nations. Look at verse 1 again in your Bible. It says, Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things.

We want to hear the Lord's voice because He has done many amazing things. Emphasis on the word a new song, right? It is a new song, right? But how can we sing a new song when it is the same old song every year?

We are actually singing the same old song, right? Well, it is new because this time we sing to the Lord, there are new people singing with us. Why is it a new song? Because every time there are new people singing with us.

I mean, every year on the hill, the people who sing the carols change, don't they? So it is a new song. Every time there are people who sing the carols, they change, don't they? So it is a new song. When we sing the song, every time there are people who sing the carols, they change the carols.

Why do we sing the carols? Because our Lord's voice is bringing new things, by bringing salvation. Notice in this Psalm, three times, in three verses, the Lord, the Psalmist sings about salvation.

[13:25] This word. Look at this verse, the verse, the verse is three times to say that the Lord's voice is going to us. The king of kings is one who has saved or delivered his people.

The king of kings is one who has saved or delivered his people. He has made the salvation known to the watching world. He has made the salvation known to the watching world.

The ends of the earth have seen and heard about God's salvation. The ends of the earth have seen and heard about God's salvation. And look, in verse one, for us to speak of his right hand and his holy arm, it's not to put extra limbs on the God of the universe, as it were.

In this verse, we talk about God's right hand and his holy arm, it's not to put extra hands on the universe in the universe. Rather, these words are bringing to mind one of God's most powerful acts of salvation.

This is to speak of the Lord's most powerful acts of salvation. It's called the Exodus. It's called the Exodus. When God's people were rescued from slavery out of Egypt.

[14:34] And I'm particularly excited because the Prince of Egypt has just been released on Broadway.

And I'm keen to watch that live one day. I don't know if you know, there's a book of the Old Testament. There's a Prince of Egypt, and there's a Prince of Egypt. And that story is obviously based on the Bible, right?

And what God has done in salvation history. That story is precisely based on the Bible, right? And what God has done in salvation history. When the Lord brought the nation of Israel out of slavery,

He did so, Deuteronomy 26, verse 8 says, With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Just like the Exodus 26, verse 26, verse 8. It's called the use of the power of the power of the Lord's most powerful acts of salvation. You and I might think of basketball players who have mighty hands and outstretched arms.

We will not think of those of the players who have had a strong arm. But they cannot compare with what the Lord has done. But they cannot compare with what the Lord has done. When He saved Israel. When He saved Israel.

[15:37] When He saved Israel. When He saved Israel. And singing about this salvation brings joy to the nations for them. When they say this, it can really be very happy for them.

But as you and I know, the Israelites' problem was not just physical slavery, right? They were also under spiritual slavery from their sin.

And so when they sang this psalm, they were also remembering how God brings ultimate salvation from spiritual slavery. So when they sang this song, they thought about their Lord's people's being able to be able to save them.

At Christmas time, we have the picture of the mother Mary with the baby. When Mary first heard that she was going to have a baby boy, she sings a Christmas carol of her own.

And in Luke 1.55, we hear a bit of this song, and she sings, The Lord has helped her servant Israel, and remembered to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants.

[17:10] Nine months later, there's a man named Simeon who gets to hold the baby Jesus in his arms. Baby Jesus, baby Jesus.

He also sang a song of the Holy Spirit, and said, My eyes have already seen your light, and it's the light that you have prepared to see the people of the people of Israel. It's the light that you have prepared to see the people of the people of Israel.

He continues, he says, A light is coming for revelation to the Gentiles, God's, to the whole world, and the glory of your people Israel. So you see, brothers and sisters, because Jesus is the light for revelation to the world, Jesus is the fulfillment of these words in Psalm 98.

And so every person who praises God for salvation is Jesus, is also joining in Psalm 98.

And so every person who praises God for salvation is Jesus, is also joining in Psalm 98.

[18:40] Now this is a wonderful gathering of brothers and sisters here.

But too many people do not know the Savior.

Too many people even today are lost, trying to save themselves or rescue themselves.

This psalm reminds us that the Lord has come. And He has made and worked salvation.

That is the first reason there is truly joy to the world.

The psalm continues, and let us now look at the second reason I believe there is truly joy to the world.

There is truly joy to the world, secondly, because the Lord is praised over all the earth as king. Perhaps you are sitting here this morning, and you might be wondering, Is this psalm even for me?

[20:02] Maybe you look at these words, and you look at verse 3, it says to the house of Israel, and you're like, Oh, that's their problem, that's their joy.

Oh, that's with them, it's not with me. But that's why I think from verse 4 onwards, there should be no doubt who should sing this song, right?

Because it says all the earth. you will see, it's no secret, it's really all people can come to the world. It says, verse 4 says, Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.

And so here that command, that instruction from verse 1 we saw, it's expanded, isn't it? Instead of just one command, sing a new song, here, this verse has actually four different commands in the original language.

So whether in Chinese or English, you can see, right? It says, Shout for joy, or break forth, exalt, play music.



And if you are like me, And you sometimes feel like the odd one out this Christmas, I'm the only Christian in my family.

If you feel like the odd one out this Christmas, Look at Psalm 98.

[ 27 : 18 ] And remember that our crucified king is praised all over the earth. Did you struggle to find a car park this morning?

? Then praise God, Because there are so many people Worshipping God, our Savior this morning. We are just one of many, many, many churches Celebrating, shouting to the Lord For His great salvation.

So praise the Lord, And hold on and shout to the Lord With everyone on earth this morning.

shout to the Lord, And if this is your first time at church, Perhaps you're here and you're not a Christian.

Let's talk a bit about shouting too. Can I ask you, Who do you shout for joy to?

[ 28 : 33 ] Do you have someone to give thanks to even? Who gets the praise for your every breath, Every meal you have, Even the wheels that got you here.

? I mean, you could just thank yourself, Like I used to do, When growing up without Jesus.

But are you forgetting the giver of all good gifts?

Do you know of the king of kings, And yet you are not praising him, Shouting to him with your life?

The Bible tells us the Lord is king, And he knows everything you've ever done in your life.

And yet he loves you this much, To die on the cross for your sins.

[ 29 : 43 ] He loves you more than you could ever repay back. This Christmas, can I encourage you, If you take away one thing, Take away this.

If you're not a believer, Don't let the promised child Jesus become, Or stay a stranger to you.

Don't keep searching for joy in the wrong places.

Can I encourage you this Christmas to humble yourself, Come to Jesus as your king, And shout to him for joy.

Earlier this year, Our country hosted a world cup competition.

[ 30 : 47 ] Eden Park But can I tell you this, There will be greater shouts of joy from a ransom people for God, From every tribe and language and tongue and people and nation.

Truly, there is joy to the world, right? He's revealed his salvation, And now all the earth is worshipping the king of kings.

And finally, briefly, Let me share with you, That there is truly joy to the world also, Because the Lord is coming to judge the earth with fairness.

Look at the very last line in Psalm 98, It says, For he comes to judge the earth, He will judge the world in righteousness, And the peoples with equity.

We live in a broken world, don't we?

[ 32 : 37 ] We are in a world that needs and longs for fairness or justice.

We just keep seeing over and over again, The same things in the news, Unjust rulers, Unfair situations, Unrighteous people who just seem to get

away with what they do.

But can I ask you this, Why do we even notice that it's unfair?

Why do we feel like there needs to be justice?

?

It's because I believe we live in a world that has sung Psalm 98 for years and years and years.

We live in a world now that cares for justice.

And the Bible says what we now long for, He is promising a future judgment that will make all things right.

[ 34 : 00 ] If there were no coming judgment for the Lord, All the hurt and injustice in our lives in this world would never ever be resolved.

If the Lord does not come to judge all our sins, All of the world's sins would never be dealt with.

But as Christians, We know that justice delayed is not justice denied.

Brothers and sisters, We are actually awaiting Christ coming again. One day he is coming again, And he will truly bring joy to the world and judge.

And that joy comes when he judges the world fairly.

He will judge your sin and my sin and their sin as well.

[ 35 : 19 ] Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5.10, We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

And on that day, where will you stand?

? The final lines of joy to the world, the song says, He rules the world with truth and grace.

When we sang this just before, I wonder if you thought, Really? Is that true?

? And then here in the psalm, It seems like when God judges, It's something that happens in the future. ?

And that's right. Here is something most of us don't realize. When Charles Wesley, Sorry, when Isaac Watts wrote Joy to the World, He actually intended it not as a Christmas hymn, But actually an Easter hymn.

[ 36 : 38 ] Charles Wesley So Isaac Watts, when he wrote this song, He was thinking about Jesus coming back again.

You can see that he's talking about The Messiah's coming and kingdom In his original words. Would you and I be bold enough to sing Joy to the World on Easter Sunday?

? Well, Isaac Watts, Isaac Watts would have been just fine with that. Isaac Watts, And in a moment, We're going to sing Joy to the World again.

And it may not feel to you like a song to sing Beyond Christmas.

But praise the Lord, Psalm 98 is a song we can sing All year in all situations.

98 Can there truly be joy to the world? ?

[ 37 : 57 ] The Bible's answer is yes, Because the Lord is King. He has saved before all nations. He is praised by all nations.

And He will come one day to judge all nations. Let's pray.

Our Lord and King, Show us the true meaning of joy this Christmas.

As we celebrate with our families, Help us tell them where true joy can be found.

We thank you for the Lord Jesus.

We pray in his name. Amen.

