

Introduction

This week is the last in our series *Story of the Carols*, as we study the "Joy to the World." Often we view joy differently than Scripture portrays it. This week, Pastor John explains what true joy looks like and how it's obtained.

Discussion

1. Start your study by singing or reciting at least the first stanza of "Joy to the World" [more stanzas if you know them]. What does worldly joy look like? According to the carol, where is our joy to come from?
2. Isaac Watts first published the carol in 1719, and it is was the most published hymn in North America as of the late 20th century. The song was based on Psalm 98. Read through the psalm and cite why we should be joyful.
3. Re-read **Psalm 98:1-3** and **Matthew 1:21**. Note one passage is a prophecy; the other is the fulfillment of the prophecy. How does having a Savior in your personal life bring you joy?
4. Re-read **Psalm 98:4-6** and **Matthew 1:22-23**. Discuss what it means to have God with you [Immanuel]. How does that affect your outlook on daily life?

Think About It

Imagine a team of frozen junior high football players on a field, most with nagging injuries, down 24 to 6 entering the final quarter of play. How do you think they feel? Many junior high players might be willing to forfeit the final quarter just to get in a warm locker room. What if the team's famed all-American coach suited up and promised the team that despite the present circumstances, his skill and ability would bring the team a victory? Would the team change its attitude? Would they be joyful? Compare this to your present circumstances, whatever that "field" looks like to you, and focus on *our* leader and Savior Jesus Christ. Does His presence in your life bring you joy?

Do Something

1. Since it is almost Christmas, sing "Joy to the World" a few times this week and think about the carol's message in light of your current circumstances.
2. Take some time this week to meditate on the word *Immanuel* and the presence of God's Kingdom in your life.
3. Since God's Kingdom is within you, ask God to give you an idea how you can share His Kingdom with another person, whether they are a family member, fellow church goer, neighbor or friend.