

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor David Bennett
15 December 2013

“Joy to the World”

Good morning Fil-Am, it is so good to see so many of you here this cold chilly morning. What a week we have had, I trust that you have managed to stay inside and keep warm.

Ok for time’s sake let’s get into the **World of God** or more importantly let’s get the word of God **into us!**

We are continuing our series this morning with familiar songs that you might here at Christmas time. Last Sunday Pastor Rolly briefly talked about the song Go Tell it on the Mountain, and this morning we are talking about the song **Joy to the world**.

In 1692 when Isaac Watts was 18 years old, he criticized the hymns the church sang on Sunday, at the dinner table with his family. His father said, if you don’t like the songs we sing, then write a better one.

Isaac did, he introduced his song to the church the following Sunday and they liked it, in fact asked him to write more. He wrote a new hymn almost every week to be used on Sunday.

Isaac Watts has written around 750 songs during his lifetime and his also known as the “Father of Hymns”

The song we are talking about this morning is Joy to the World which was written in 1719 based on Psalms 98.

A Call to Praise the LORD for His Righteousness.

*1 O sing to the LORD a new song, For He has done **wonderful things**,
His right hand and His holy arm have gained the **victory** for Him.*

² *The LORD has made known His **salvation**; He has revealed His **righteousness** in the sight of the nations.*

³ *He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the **salvation of our God**.*

⁴ *Shout **joyfully** to the LORD, all the earth; Break forth and sing for **joy** and sing praises.*

⁵ ***Sing praises** to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.*

⁶ *With trumpets and the sound of the horn shout joyfully before the **King**, the LORD.*

⁷ *Let the **sea roar** and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it.*

⁸ *Let the rivers clap their hands, Let the **mountains sing** together for joy*

⁹ *Before the LORD, for He is coming to judge the earth; He will **judge** the world with **righteousness** And the peoples with **equity**.*

Now when we look at the lyrics of the song Joy to the World based on Psalms 98 above tell me what you notice?

JOY to the World, the Lord is come
Let earth **Receive her King**,
Let every heart prepare him room,
And Heaven and nature Sing x3

JOY to the World, the **Savior Reigns**,
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding JOY x3

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Not thorns infest the ground,
he comes to make his blessing flow,
Far as the curse is found x3

He rules the world, with **Truth and Grace**,
And makes the nations prove,

The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love x 3

When you look at the lyrics Joy to the World you will notice you see nothing about...

- ✓ Shepherds
- ✓ Mangers
- ✓ Wise Men
- ✓ Angels

Or in fact any other elements typically recognized as elements of the Christmas story.

The reason for this is simple. Isaac Watts didn't write it as a Christmas hymn, the origin of the song was the **second coming** of the Lord, during his return even the Rocks will sing!

It was about 100 years later that Lowell Mason adapted it, arranged it into the song we know today. It is not exactly sure how the song became associated to a Christmas song.

But if we listen to the words again you will see that they do indeed apply to Christmas as...

1. The **Lord is Come**
2. He **came to save** the world
3. We should **Rejoice**

The lyrics all point to the reason Jesus came... So we should rejoice and be **joyful** this holiday season.

Let's face it; Christmas is a stressful time for most adults. For some it is a time of intense loneliness or crushing grief because of a loved one who is gone.

Many seem to forget the reason for the season and leave Christ completely out of the scenario.

Let's face it Christmas can be very stressful. Christmas means parties to plan, gifts to buy, elaborate meals to cook, long trips to take, or out-of-town guests to host.

Instead of bringing **JOY**, Christmas can bring **Frustration** and a lot of stress.

I heard a story about a woman who was doing her last-minute Christmas shopping at a crowded mall. She was tired of fighting the crowds. She was tired of standing in lines. She was tired of fighting her way down long aisles looking for a gift that had sold out days before. Her arms were full of bulky packages when the Elevator door opened. It was full.

The occupants of the Elevator grudgingly tightened ranks to allow a small space for her and her load. As the doors closed she blurted out, "Whoever is responsible for this whole Christmas thing ought to be arrested, strung up, and shot!" A few others nodded their heads or grunted in agreement. Then, from somewhere in the back of the elevator came a single voice that said, "Don't worry, lady. They already crucified him."

We need to remember **who is responsible** for the whole Christmas thing. It is all about the miraculous birth of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ!

However, as we have said too many people leave Christ out of Christmas. Instead of looking to Jesus, people look for **JOY** anywhere and everywhere else.

In the same way that your body craves food, exercise and rest,

Likewise your Spirit craves a relationship with God. Without that relationship, your soul will become famished and restless.

I know I have said it numerous times in the past but **fully believe** that there is indeed a **God-shaped** hole in every life.

WE try and fill it with things that satisfy us... (**Saints please listen to me**)

We try and fill that hole with anything, drugs, alcohol, a career, anything we can, to try and satisfy that God-Shaped hole in your life...

The problem is, try as you might, you will **NEVER** be satisfied, because when the high wears off, when the thrill of what you're doing is gone, you are left wanting and no matter how hard you try will never find **JOY**.

If you try and fill it with anything other than God you will never be satisfied, this leads us to the first point of today's sermon.

The 1st stanza of JOY TO THE WORLD teaches:

1. THERE IS JOY WHEN THE KING IS RECEIVED

"Joy to the world! The Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing."

John 1:12 NASB

"But as many as received him to them gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name."

JOY is the flag that flies over the castle of our heart announcing that the KING is in **residence** today!

It is only when you receive Christ as King of your life, that you understand what is true Joy.

Saints If Christ is not **King of ALL** then he is not **King at ALL!**

The world tries to substitute pure JOY with a counterfeit, that resembles Happiness rather than JOY.

The kind of JOY the Bible talks about goes much deeper than mere happiness.

In the words of Vance Havner, this world's happiness should be spelled happen-ness because it depends on what's happening.

- ✓ The worlds JOY (Happiness) is feeling
- ✓ **God's JOY is a Condition**
- ✓ The worlds JOY (Happiness) is temporary
- ✓ **God's JOY is eternal**
- ✓ The worlds JOY (Happiness) is expensive
- ✓ **God's JOY is free**
- ✓ The worlds JOY (Happiness) is based on fantasy
- ✓ **God's JOY is based on reality**

Joy is an inner sense of well-being that has nothing to do with circumstance. The kind of JOY the Bible describes can't be found in possessions or entertainments.

- ✓ The worlds JOY (Happiness) is born in the Mind
- ✓ **God's JOY is born in the Heart**
- ✓ The worlds JOY (Happiness) comes from Humans
- ✓ **God's JOY comes from God**
- ✓ The worlds JOY (Happiness) is exchanging Christmas gifts
- ✓ **God's JOY is the awareness of what Christmas is all about!**

The second stanza of JOY TO THE WORLD teaches;

2. THERE IS JOY WHEN THE SAVIOR REIGNS

"Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, repeat the sounding Joy."

Matthew 25:31 NASB

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the Angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne."

Having knowledge of Christ and letting him Reign in our lives are two separate things.

It is one thing to **believe in Jesus**, it is quite another to **believe what Jesus believed**. And the first can't be what it should be without the second.

When we aspire to acquire the mind of Christ, thinking and feeling as he did, that's what we call **transformation!**

What does the word Reign mean?

- ✓ The period during which a sovereign occupies the throne
- ✓ Royal Rule, authority, sovereignty
- ✓ Dominating power or influence
- ✓ To possess or exercise power or authority over
- ✓ To control or influence of any kind
- ✓ To predominate to be prevalent

Look to the person sitting on your left and ask **does the Savior Reign** in your life?

Jesus encountered large crowds who were ready and willing to receive him; however there were very few which were willing to allow him to reign in their lives.

They are more than willing to receive all the **good things** Christ wants to offer them. But they don't want Him to try to **take charge** of their...

- ✓ Business ethics,
- ✓ Their entertainments,
- ✓ The language they use when under pressure,
- ✓ Their Reputation
- ✓ Their Friends or people they associate with

They don't want Jesus to be in charge of where they live, or who they date, or who they marry, or what kind of career they choose.

Mother Teresa once commented, “***She is free to be nothing; therefore God can use her for Anything.***”

If you try to RECEIVE Christ without letting Him REIGN in your life, you will **miss out** on the blessings God has in store for you.

You will **miss out** on JOY God wants you to enjoy.

The third stanza of JOY TO THE WORLD teaches;

3. THERE IS JOY WHEN THE SINNER REPENTS

"No more let sins and sorrow grow. Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow, far as the curse is found."

Matthew 4:17 NASB

“... Jesus began to preach and say, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

True Liberty is **NOT** found **WITHOUT confession** of our sins and the experience of Divine Forgiveness.

A repentant person is one who is justified, who receives legal standing with God. Sin can be VERY enticing, however **ALWAYS** delivers denial, defeat and sorrow.

There is only true JOY when repentance is present.

The original Greek word for repent which, simply means a changed mind.

By repenting, you are simply agreeing with God that what you were doing is, **WRONG**, and turn that part of your life over to the master physician to heal and rebuild.

Repentance brings about **JOY**.

An author named Bret Harte wrote a story about the Wild West, called “The Luck of Roaring Camp.” Roaring Camp was the meanest, toughest Mining Town in the West. There were more murders and thefts than any other place around.

Roaring Camp was inhabited entirely by men ... except for one Indian woman name was Cherokee Sal.

Cherokee Sal became pregnant and gave birth to baby, however due to complications she died in childbirth.

The men put the baby girl in a box with some old rags under her. Somehow that just didn't seem right, so one of the men rode 80 miles to buy a Rosewood Cradle.

When they put the rags and the baby in the beautiful new cradle, the rags just didn't look right. So another man rode to Sacramento and purchased some silk and lacy blankets. They men lined the Rosewood Cradle with silk and tucked the new blanket around the little baby girl. But then someone noticed that the floor under the cradle looked dirty.

The next thing you knew, a few of those big, tough men got down on their hands and knees and scrubbed the floor until it was spotless. Of course, then the walls and the ceiling ... and the dirty windows looked awful. So they washed down the walls and the ceiling, and they even hung some clean white curtains on the windows.

Things were beginning to look a lot better. But they soon realized they had to give up their carousing and fighting. After all, the baby needed a lot of sleep, and babies can't sleep during a brawl. Besides all that, the baby didn't like angry voices or frowning faces.

So the men started smiling and talking in pleasant, cheerful tones. And, since babies shouldn't be left alone, they set the cradle by the entrance of the Mine and one of the men stayed next to her while the others worked.

Then somebody noticed how ugly the mine entrance was. So they planted some flowers and made a small garden near the cradle.

When the baby would reach up out of the crib one of the miners would reach down to pick her up, but when they did they realized that their hands looked black and dirty, and they didn't want to scare the little baby with their scraggly hair and wild beards.

Pretty soon the general store sold out of soap and shaving gear.

The baby changed everything. And that story gives a small picture of the way the Son of God can transform our lives.

True Repentance is not merely behavior reform, **true repentance** involves a change of habit and purpose; it inevitably results in change of everything!

A true call to believe in Christ should also compel following him.

The point of salvation isn't the **FINISH LINE**; instead it is the **STARTING POINT**, for a lifelong journey toward sanctification.

Ask the person sitting beside you how has the Bethlehem Baby **changed your life?**

Finally the last stanza of JOY TO THE WORLD teaches;

4. THERE IS JOY WHEN THE TRUTH RULES WITH GRACE

"He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love."

John 1:14 NASB

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of Truth and Grace.”

D.L Moody one said, *“The best way to show that a stick is crooked, is not to argue about it or spend time denouncing it, but lay a strait stick **alongside** it.”*

JOY comes because He rules with a perfect balance between TRUTH and GRACE. You see, sometimes truth is not very gracious.

Look at it this way, when you hear someone say, “Well, I don’t know why there Mad, I just told them the truth,”

We have all offended someone by going heavy on the TRUTH and light on the GRACE.

Jesus brings JOY because He is the perfect balance of truth and grace. He is the truth, the way, and the life.

Humpty Dumpty had an unsolved problem,

We too have a problem; however ours has a solution...

Jesus Christ came to our Wall,

Jesus Christ died for our Fall,

So that regardless of death and in spite of Sin,

Through **GRACE**, he might put us together again!

True JOY can be yours this Christmas if you will...

- ✓ **RECEIVE** the King
- ✓ Let Christ **REIGN**,
- ✓ **REPENT** of your sins, and
- ✓ Allow yourself to be **Ruled** with Truth and Grace.

We need to look beyond the tinsel and lights and see the real cause of JOY.
Joy to the World! The Lord is Come!

Now we offer you the opportunity to receive Christ as your King right here
TODAY!

Let us Pray...