

**December 20 / Sunday**

**Repeat the Sounding Joy**

Read [Psalm 98](#) / [Genesis 3:17-18](#) / [Luke 2:10](#)



**21 / Mon – Reasons for joy** | Read [Psalm 98:1-9](#)

Happiness is often related to your circumstances and can be fleeting. Joy is different. It is deeper, more solid, rooted in things that don't change. In Psalm 98, the basis for Isaac Watts' carol *Joy to the World*, notice the reason for joy (v. 1-3). How can you express that joy (v. 4-6)? Where have you seen that same joy present in God's creation (v.7-9)? What will you do today to *repeat the sounding joy* to those around you?

**22 / Tue – You never know who's listening** | Read [Acts 16:16-34](#) / [Matthew 7:7](#)

One outstanding characteristic of Christians in the early church was their joy, even when facing persecution and suffering. Paul and Silas' act of mercy led to them being flogged and thrown in prison without a trial and chained in stocks. What would your reaction be to this kind of injustice? Read in v. 25 what Paul and Silas did, then the result in v. 26 and finally, how people were radically changed in v. 34 by the joy they witnessed in these men. Do you want that kind of joy? Ask.

**23 / Wed – Looking back** | Read [Psalm 126:3](#)

You are nearing the end of a very unusual year. What high points of happiness do you see as you look back? What are some unexpected moments of joy you experienced? And what prompted them? The psalms were written over many years, when life was good but also in seasons of great turmoil. One theme threaded through this collection is the joy that comes from reflecting on what God has done. What have you seen Him do in your own life this past year?

**24 / Thu – A momentous occasion** | Read [Luke 2:8-20](#)

It was dark, maybe even a 'silent night,' when the angel appeared to the shepherds with a message that was completely unexpected. It was also personal. '*Don't be afraid...a Savior has been born to you...and this will be a sign to you...*' Have you read these familiar words during past Christmases and assumed it was a proclamation to the world at large? Read v. 10-11 again as if the angel was speaking directly to you. Let the words sink down deep. What is the reaction of your heart?

**25 / Fri – Yay, presents!** | Read [John 15:11](#)

Birthday parties are a fun tradition. Children look forward with excitement to decorations, games, birthday cake with candles and opening presents from their family and friends. Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth-day but *he* is the one giving the gifts. You probably know what some of those might be but this verse reminds you of a specific gift. Notice Jesus is not offering a generic joy; he is offering you his own. How might his different from yours?

**26 / Sat – Looking ahead** | Read [1 Peter 1:3-9](#) / [Hebrews 12:1-3](#)

After the excitement of yesterday's celebrations, today can seem anti-climactic. Real life rolls back in with the same problems and anxiety that you had managed to push to the back burner for a little while. How does a person move forward with joy when facing uncertainty? The answer is found in these verses. It's what carried Jesus through his darkest hours. No difficulty lasts forever and you can be sure of what lies on the other side. Joy focuses on that goal!