

DISCUSSION: Read this week's text: Psalm 98

1. This Psalm is a loud "brass band" song remembering God's mercy, faithfulness, authority, power, and our future hope. Where might you rate yourself on a joy scale of -10 to + 10 in this season of your life?
2. For a long time, we have all known about the birth of Christ, and are reminded every Christmas. But what if you were one of the shepherds visited by angels announcing the birth? How do you think you would have reacted?
3. Psalm 98, verse 1 says to sing to the Lord a new song. Has there been a time of trial or deliverance in your life that has inspired you to "sing a new song" to the Lord?
4. This Psalm, which is a Hebrew song, starts quietly and like the symphony it is, ends in crescendo. It moves from voice to adding a succession of musical instruments to God's creation. Share some ways that we could remember the monuments to God in our past and use them to inspire us to hope for today and the future.
5. C.S. Lewis calls the incarnation the "Grand Miracle." Why is this arguably even greater than the healing and other miracles Jesus performed?
6. When pondering the incarnation, do you understand its implications for you personally? What is your reaction and response?
7. Reread Psalm 98:2-3. What has the Lord done? How is this relevant to the whole world and especially to Israel? In verse 4, how are we encouraged to respond?
8. How is joy different from happiness?
9. Read Luke 1:46-55 (known as the Magnificat). These are the words spoken by Mary after the angel Gabriel announced that she would bear the Son of God. The passage from Luke is Mary's response to what is written in Psalm 98. For example: Psalm 98:1a announces "He has done marvelous things." Mary responds "He who is mighty has done great things for me." What is another example of Mary's response to Psalm 98?
10. While Psalm 98 is a prophecy probably written in about 1000 BC, vv. 1-8 speak of what God "has done" and the response to that. This is understood by many commentators to refer to salvation through the Messiah, fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ. Read v. 9, which refers to what God "will do." When will this be fulfilled?

APPLICATION

1. Joy is a theme of Psalm 98. Recall a time when you experienced joy because Jesus saved you and walks with you. How can you better experience joy this Christmas season?
2. Think of some ways that you might make this year's remembrance of Christ's birth deeper for you. Spend some time reflecting on specific passages, remembering His mercy and faithfulness in the past, present, and for the future.

For additional study material, go to bthl.ch/ggl

I. Joy because of **salvation**

Lk 2:10; 19:37-40;
1 Pet 1:8-9; Jn 15:9-11;
Js 1:2; Rev 5:9-10; 12:10;
Ex 15:1

II. Joy because of **His love for us**

Deut 15:1-2, 12