

# YOU

**Sermon Series: When Emotions Rise**  
**To be used with: Session 3: Embracing Joy**  
**Sermon Title Possibilities: Feeling Joyful**  
**Scripture: Psalm 95:1-3; Luke 2:4-14**

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the small group study “*When Emotions Rise*,” this sermon explores reasons that believers have to experience joy. Having experienced joy ourselves, believers should be motivated to share this joy with others.

**Introduction:** There is a song that proclaims, “this joy I have, the world didn’t give it to me. The world didn’t give it and the world can’t take it away.” Experiencing joy truly is a blessing. Joy becomes even more amazing to us when we consider what happens when it is shared. While burdens that are shared with others are divided, joy that is shared is multiplied.

Recall times in which you had some good news you could not wait to share. The feeling you had is one that should be exemplified by all believers when we think and speak about all that God has done for us. We can multiply the joy in ourselves and others by sharing it.

## **1. Celebrate God’s Position (Psalm 95:1-3)**

The psalm opens with a call to worship. This call is an invitation for everyone listening to join a celebration. People are invited to shout triumphantly, meaning they can be loud as they praise the Lord. The people are called to celebrate the Lord as the foundation of their praise and their entire lives. God’s people can be thankful for his triumph over all obstacles and opponents.

Giving thanks requires looking back and remembering all that God has done. When we think about God, we should thank Him. The psalmist provides an answer for anyone wondering why God deserves such praise and gratitude. The Lord is high and lifted up above everything and everyone else. No one is like our great God.

## **2. Celebrate God’s Promises (Luke 2:4-7)**

God’s power is on display in a different time and context here. In Luke 2 we find the fulfillment of God’s promises to and through his prophets. He had promised Abraham that he would bless all nations through him (Genesis 12:3). In Isaiah 9:6, a special child was promised. Micah 5:2 declared that a ruler for God’s people would come from the small town of Bethlehem. The time has come for these promises to be fulfilled.

God orchestrates events surrounding the birth of Jesus to be in line with His promises. Joseph, a descendant of David, travels to Bethlehem with his pregnant fiancé Mary in advance of Jesus' birth. The fulfillment of the promises may look different than expected, with a descendant of David born in a manger. God often acts in ways we do not understand, but we can always trust that He will do what He said.

### **3. Celebrate God's Presence (Luke 2:8-14)**

As is the case in Psalm 95, this celebration is not exclusive. Shepherds, who are members of a marginalized group, are the first people to hear the news of Jesus' birth. An angel makes the announcement while God's glorious presence surrounds the shepherds. They have no reason to fear, because God is giving them good news. Jesus, who has been born in a manger, has the high positions of Savior, Messiah, and Lord. Whatever we face, we can remember that because God is with us, there is always good news.

An angelic host praises God for what he has done. Jesus' birth brings glory to God and peace to humanity. Through Him divinity and humanity are reconciled. Later, having seen the newborn baby for themselves, the shepherds give praise and glory to God as well (Luke 2:20). God's presence with us is a cause for celebration.

**Conclusion:** When we think about all that God has done, our hearts cannot help but overflow with joy, gratitude, and praise. Our God sits high but looks low. Not only does He look low, but because of His great love for us, He lowered Himself to become human in Jesus (Philippians 2:7). Because of the incarnation, we have great joy.

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