

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16

### *Psalm 97, Isaiah 61*

“Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!” This song comes to mind when I reflect on Psalm 97. Those words became a gift the year I taught a challenging class of fifth-graders. “Rejoice in the Lord Always” became my go-to song! While they remained challenging, the students transformed into a caring community of learners. Today, I find myself wondering: What is there to rejoice about when our culture seems divisive, self-centered, and the news imprints our minds with brokenness?

The Psalmist gives us hope! The Psalmist clearly states that the Lord reigns, which is why the whole earth is to rejoice and why we worship him. When we rejoice in the Lord, we experience joy. As believers, joy should characterize our lives. Rejoicing often comes in small moments. My father was a great role model of joy. His joy came in planting, growing, harvesting, and selling produce. Every spring, he would plant corn, and after a few days, he would check the germination and marvel at God’s faithfulness of how one tiny kernel of corn would grow into a corn stock with two ears of corn! My friend Peter displayed his joy when listening to “Shine Jesus Shine” on YouTube. As the song began to play, Peter, with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face, lifted his chin, arms, and hands, and expressed his joy through facial expressions and movements. While these expressions of praise could seem small and insignificant, Peter’s joy and my dad’s joy encourage me to rejoice in the Lord.

The Psalmist tells us that the mountains (or obstacles) will melt like wax when we rejoice in the Lord. As Christmas approaches, seek, cherish, and live out small moments of joy as you rejoice in the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

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