

A young boy once complained to his father that most of the hymns they sang in the church were boring to him. His father put an end to his son's complaints by saying, "If you think you can write better hymns, then why don't you?" The boy went to his room and wrote his first hymn, "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross." That teenager was Isaac Watts, the writer of "Joy To the World."

She was an American mission worker, poet, lyricist, and composer who lived. She was one of the most prolific hymnists in history, writing over 8,000 hymns and gospel songs, with over 100 million copies printed, despite being blind from shortly after birth. She is known as the 'Queen of Gospel Song Writers,' and as the 'Mother of modern congregational singing in America,' with most American hymnals containing her work. Some of her best-known songs include; Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour(UMH #351)," "Blessed Assurance(UMH #369),' "Praise Him, Praise Him,' 'I am Thine, O Lord,' "Rescue the Perishing,' 'Near the cross,' and "To God Be the Glory.' Her name was Fanny Crosby.

He is an American contemporary Christian music artist, worship leader, and songwriter who has sold nearly 30 million records. Some of his most well-known songs are "How Great Is Our God", "Holy is the Lord," "Jesus Messiah", "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)", "Your grace is enough," "Indescribable," "Unfailing Love," "Everlasting God," "Made to Worship," and "Our God." He has had at least nine number one hits. Let us listen to his songs.

For over a decade, he has been providing the soundtrack for many Sunday morning worship services around the world. More people have heard this singer/songwriter's songs than three of the top-selling secular artists combined. He is undoubtedly one of the most successful songwriters of our generation. His name is Chris Tomlin.

Very different artists from different periods have written different styles of music. They have had a high impact on the world through God's gift of music.

Music is an important part of our lives. You think about all the places and things we do that have music. The music reflects our mood, and it can also affect our mood.

Few things in life touch the heart as well as music. And music for many represents what you believe, what's important to you, what you identify with, what resonates with who you are. Think about it. If the majority of the songs you listen to talk about getting drunk and wasted, then I'm going to bet that's a temptation for you. If the music you listen to is filled with sexual innuendos and bold vulgarity, then I'm probably going to say that inside that's the kind of person you are. If what you listen to talks about faith, trusting in God, praising God, and living for God, then I'm going to guess that you are a believer, a Christian, someone who cares about God.

The kind of music we love says a lot about who we are. Why do we sing on Sundays? Why do we play music? The music we sing expresses what we believe and what we feel about God.

As I said, *Joy To The World* is based on Psalm 98. Psalm 98 begins with the verse, "O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things," and then "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises. Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody. With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

A psalmist invites us to sing a new song and make a joyful noise. Watts wrote in verse 2, “Let men their songs employ... Repeat the sounding joy Repeat the sounding joy Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.”

Does the psalmist mean that we should just make a new song we don’t know and sing it? Well, if each of you wants to create a new song, I willingly make a special Sunday called “Mystery Song Sunday.” However, that’s not what the psalmist is saying. That’s not the point at all.

The psalmist is talking about praising God for what He has done lately in your life. Can you see something God had done for you?

David said in Psalm 40:1-3, I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.

New songs are about new rescues and fresh manifestations of grace. As long as God is gracious toward us, as long as he keeps showing us his power, it is fitting that we do not just sing old songs inspired by his past grace, but also that we sing new songs about his ever-streaming, never-ceasing grace.

The music we sing on Sundays and throughout the week ought to be an expression of our joy and thankfulness to God, the God who saved us and is saving us. That’s what it is for Isaac Watts. That’s what it was for Fanny Crosby. That’s what it is for Chris Tomlin. That’s what it can be for you. I want to close the sermon by singing Joy To The World verse 2,

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

God is still doing new things in our lives. God's mercies are new every morning.  
Sing a new song for what God has done in our lives!