

# *The Songs of Christmas*

ADVENT: Day 4

## "GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN"

*Go tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go tell it on the mountain  
Our Jesus Christ is born*

*When I was a seeker  
I sought both night and day  
I asked the Lord to help me  
And he showed me the way*

"Go Tell It on the Mountain" is a children's choir favorite for its upbeat tempo and ease of singing.

It's hard to say when this song was specifically written, though it dates to at least 1865. "Go Tell" was originally sung by people who'd been forced into slavery in our country. Very few of them were given the chance to learn how to read and write, yet they created and sang some of our favorite songs.

### **The story behind the song**

John Wesley Work, Jr. was the son of a church choir director. He grew up in Nashville and earned a master's degree in Latin. He taught Latin and Greek, but his first love was always music.

He began to collect and record the spiritual music that had been created by those who'd been forced into slavery, and this collection included "Go Tell It on the Mountain."

Those who first sang "Go Tell It on the Mountain" shared the same Christmas message the shepherds had announced. They wanted to proclaim "that Jesus Christ is born!" Many of those early slaves had very hard lives, and their songs reveal their sadness. This Christmas hymn was a hymn of hope to people who needed it and a reminder that Jesus was born to offer us his strength and his direction for our lives, even in our struggles.

### **Would you rather be happy or joyful?**

For some people, Christmas can be a hard season. You probably know someone who is needing to feel joyful this Christmas. Families endure struggles, friendships can be broken, and the responsibilities of life can overwhelm.

But one of the messages of Christmas isn't about happiness; it's about joy despite present circumstances.

Joy is possible even when happiness isn't. The message of Christmas is found in the words of the shepherds and those early slaves: "Jesus Christ is born."

And Jesus can show us the way to his quiet, comforting joy—even in the midst of any of life's trials and tribulations.

Who needs that message of joy today?

Will you "go tell it" to them soon?

*"The Songs Tell the Story"*

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