

Zephaniah 3: The Bright Side

☞ **Zephaniah 3:15-17**, 9 oracles in this little book and 8 of the nine pronounce severe judgment. They represent some of the most categorical statements of judgment in the entire Bible: Zephaniah 1:3; 18b; 3:6, 8. An intervention is coming, the World addicted to sin, debauched and destroying itself and God will not just sit by. He will intervene and clean house. It's called the "Day of the Lord," Zephaniah uses this phrase some 19 times in his little book. We considered this dark side of God's love and justice and this week we are going to look at the bright side of it.

1. For three and half chapters Zephaniah prophecies dark judgment then in the last half of the last chapter comes the Bright side of it all.

- ✓ Change happens where the focus changes from what people have done to what God will do, Zephaniah 3:12; 17; 18; 19; 20. No matter how depressing the messages of Judgment are in the minor prophets, it's never the final word of God to His people.

2. The bright side starts off with a strange command: Zephaniah 3:14

- ✓ This may sound like perfectly biblical language to you, and it is common theme in the Psalms and Revelation and other places, but I want you to mark it as strange. This is a command to be joyful. How do you command someone to be joyful?? It leaves you waiting for the "Why?" or better, "How?" He's not insisting that we all just muster a smile, He's saying, "go crazy with joy," the root of this word involves movement, dancing and spinning so it's not just "Ah, I feel joyful" but it's wearing yourself out excitement and not getting over it.
- ✓ **God wants us to double down on this rejoicing!**

3. We are to rejoice because of Three things that God has done for us and the four reasons we are assured of those things. 3 things He's done for us:

- 1) We are to rejoice because We are **Saved**.
 - 2) We are to rejoice because We are **Safe**, saved from ourselves and everything else.
 - 3) We are to rejoice because We are **Secure**, "fear disaster no more."
- ✓ At the risk of oversimplification, let me say, a large portion of our anxiety to due to false protectors that we are trusting in. A false protector is anything that you've leaned and depended upon to comfort and protect you other than Jesus. Purge from your life any notion that you're going to be OK for any other reason or because of any other person other than Jesus. Renounce it and turn away from it. Our security is only in Christ.

4. Three things that God has done for us, and now 4 reasons to be assured of them

- 1) We are assured of salvation and security because of **God's presence Zephaniah 3:15; 17, John 14:8; Hebrews 13:5; Isaiah 7:14**, it's not just what He does, it's what He is. He's right in the midst of whatever you're in the midst of, rejoice in that.
 - 2) We are assured of salvation and security because of **God's Power, Zephaniah 3:17b**, "a victorious Warrior," read that, a Soldier who knows how to win, undefeated in battle and on your side.
- ✓ Back to the statement about an Intervention. God is intervening on your behalf to rescue you from what's killing you, that would be sin. Something to know about interventions and addicts: when you have to intervene, they take it personally, they don't appreciate it, you are attacking what's killing them and trying to save them, they think you're attacking them.
 - ✓ Sometimes our struggles can be best understood as an intervention, God is warrior who fights for what's best for us, He intervenes to protect us and guide us into what's best, but we take it personally "He's attacking what I love", but it's not the best for you, it's not the right person for you, it's not the right direction for you, it's not the right thinking. He's not attacking you, He's attacking what could kill you, as well as your joy, and your abundant life.
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- 3) We are assured of salvation and security because of **God's Peace** "He will quiet you in His love" or "He will be at rest in His love." Carries with it the same idea of God resting on the 7th day after 6 days of creation. Why did He rest? Tired? He was done! And it was Good! God's busy right now in our lives, He's working up a storm! It's not all good yet, but He's not finished yet, but He will be!
- 4) We are assured of salvation and security because of **God's Pleasure Zephaniah 3:17c; 17e.** Again, this rejoice isn't just "Oh wow, that's awesome." It's a spinning around in joy with great gladness, it's physically involved. God is throwing a party over you, Where's your party clothes? God is singing over you, why aren't you singing? God is dancing, why aren't you moving? Commanded to rejoice because that's what God is doing. Is God's Rejoicing over you not the picture you had of Him?, **Nehemiah 8:10; John 15:11; Galatians 5:22; Luke 15**, Jesus gives us a three-act masterpiece of God's joy:
- Lost Sheep, leaves the 99, "Rejoice with me" **Luke 15:7.**
 - Lost Coin – 10 and finds 1, "Rejoice with me" **Luke 15:10.**
 - Lost Son – Robe, ring, fatted calf, **Luke 15:32.**
- ✓ "We had to celebrate"?? When does God ever have to do anything? He only has to do what He imposes on Himself!

Don't follow your heart, Lead your heart! "HE will take great delight in me! He will finish what He's started in me and rejoice over it!"
