



Sunday, January 24, 2021
Pastor Don Denyes

Intro to Zephaniah 3:14-20

One of the most challenging things for Christians is to forget that God loves us. I've been thinking a lot lately about the letter to the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2. In that letter, the Lord praises their sound doctrine and commitment to truth, but He admonishes them for their lack of love. It seems that, if the logic "we love because He first loved us" is true (and it is), then knowing the love of God is crucial for reciprocating that love to Him and to others.

Not only that, it was Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus where he prayed that the church would know the love of Christ which surpasses understanding so that we might be filled with the fullness of God. So, knowing the love of Christ is at the same time a necessary foundation and a constant pursuit in the Christian life.

Thankfully, this passage in Zephaniah helps us in that pursuit. It tells us—even as human beings in the depth of our depravity—that God loves us and, through His discipline, will bring us out on the other side with great joy. He disciplines us because He loves us. So, we must always remember His love, even when our circumstances betray us into thinking that He doesn't.

Context

Zephaniah is focused primarily on encouraging the Israelites in exile (or going into exile) to remain faithful to the LORD. In this, his focus is largely on the "remnant" of Israel that would continue to worship the LORD. Some scholars speculate that because he is called "son of Cushi," that Zephaniah may have been of African descent (Cush was located south of Egypt in and around modern-day Ethiopia). His name means "Yahweh hides," which is a fitting name for someone who was writing to people under God's hand of discipline.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Zephaniah 3:14-20

“He Sings over Me”

- (1-5) Woe to Jerusalem
- (8) Wrath
- (9) Purify
- (11-13) Remove wrong-leave remnant
- (14) Sing...shout...rejoice

For the LORD is with you... Zephaniah 3:15 & 17

Powerful Presence

- The King is with you (15)
- Your God is with you (17)
- Mighty Savior is with you (17)

Personal Presence (17)

- He will take great delight in you
- He will quiet you with His love
- He will rejoice over you with singing

Discuss

- 1) When are you most tempted to doubt that God loves you?

- 2) How strong is the temptation for you to root your identity in the love/affirmation/praise of someone other than God?

- 3) What aspect of God's love described in this passage is most compelling to you? Why?

- 4) How does knowing God's love for you motivate you to pursue holiness?

- 5) How does knowing God's love for you motivate you to share that love with the people around you?