

The Fierce Warrior - Zephaniah 3:14-17

Study Guide

Big Idea: Believe that God is for you!

1. The prophet Zechariah (ca. 600 BC) witnessed failed leadership and the invasion of the northern Kingdom of Israel. Left behind in Judah, the people under King Josiah didn't really turn back to follow God. Instead, there was continued idolatry, false religion, oppression, corruption, and violence. Read Zephaniah 1:2-4 and 3:8. What decision did God make? How do you think the remnant felt who were trying to follow God? Have you ever felt that God is mad at you? What was that like? Discuss.

2. Read Zephaniah 3:14-16.

How can there be loud singing and rejoicing amid pending doom? Discuss the idea that **God's wrath is:**

- a. Measured- Only for those who have turned away (Zech. 1:5-6) and not for those who seek the LORD (Zech. 2:3).
- b. Purposeful- The fire of God is to purify us (Zech. 3:9).
- c. Productive- Discuss how productive captivity was (book of Daniel, Esther...); and discuss how productive God's wrath on the cross was for all of us.

Share a time when you saw (*after the fact*), that God's wrath was measured, purposeful and/or productive. What helped you to still have "a song" in the night? Discuss.

3. Read Zephaniah 3:17.

Notice the emotion of God towards you. He doesn't just love you, but He likes you. As a "parent", God likes you because He already sees you (*beyond the messy diaper and jam smeared hands*) in your perfect state. What does it mean to you that He:

- a. "rejoices over you with gladness"
- b. "He will quiet you by His love"
- c. "He will exult over you with loud singing"

Share examples of what that looks like in your life.

Application

Today we are challenged to believe that God is fighting for you!! Take a few moments in silent prayer to thank Him for the hard things you are experiencing. Affirm your trust in Him. Then take time to pray aloud as a group for each other. Ask God to strengthen our faith and to bring that joy to others as they consider the goodness of God amid hardship.

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Message Outline

Advent- Latin 'Adventus' = coming!

Colossians 2:17 - "These are a **shadow** of the things to come, but the **substance** belongs to Christ."

The Righteous Branch- Jeremiah 33:14-15

The Strong Shepherd- Micah 5:1-5

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"The God of the OT is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; petty, unjust, an unforgiving control-freak, vindictive...bloodthirsty...". Richard Dawkins

What do you think about God?

What does God think about you?

Zephaniah- A minor Prophet (ca. 640-600 BC)

Zephaniah 1:2-4a

"I will utterly sweep away everything from the face of the earth ...man... beast... birds...fish...I will stretch out my hand against Judah...Jerusalem..."

Zephaniah 3:1- "...oppressing city..."

Zephaniah 3:3- "...officials...roaring lions...; judges...evening wolves..."

Zephaniah 3:4- "...prophets...fickle; priests ...profane what is holy..."

Zephaniah 3:8b

"For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, **all my burning anger**; for in the **fire of my jealousy** all the earth shall be consumed."

A. There is a Song in the Night (v.14)

Zephaniah 3:14-17

14 Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

B. God is Fighting For You (v.15-16)

15 The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

1. His wrath is measured

Zephaniah 1:5-6

"...those who bow ...those who have turned back from following the LORD..."

Zephaniah 2:3

"Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility..."

Psalm 30:5

"For His anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning."

B. God is Fighting For You (v.15-16)

2. His wrath is purposeful

15 The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; **he has cleared away your enemies**. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

Zephaniah 3:9-11

"...I will change the speech of the people to a pure speech..." (v.9)

"...my worshippers...shall bring my offering..." (v.10)

"...not be put to shame..." (v.11)

"...I will remove the proud..." (v.12)

French philosopher, Simone Weil

"There are only two things that can crack open the human heart: suffering and beauty."

B. God is Fighting For You (v.15-16)

3. His Wrath is Productive

15 The Lord has **taken away the judgments** against you; he **has cleared away your enemies**. The **King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst**; you shall never again fear evil.

16 **On that day** it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak.

Present and future prophecy – Shadow & Substance

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C. God Likes You! (17)

17 The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;
he will **rejoice over you** with gladness; he will **quiet you** by his love;
he will **exult over you** with loud singing.

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