

Sermon Discussion – 5 November 2023

Read Nahum 1:1-8

Getting Started *Sharing from personal experience*

The sermon begins by addressing the difficulty of understanding and relating to prophetic books in the Bible. Have you ever found it challenging to engage with prophetic writings? What aspects or passages have you found particularly difficult?

Observation *Discovering the context*

Nahum prophesied in the 7th century BC after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel. We know very little about Nahum; even his hometown of Elkosh cannot be identified clearly. His prophecy focuses on the Assyrian empire and their capital city of Nineveh, which was also the focus of Jonah. It appears the Ninevites have “repented of their repentance in Jonah,” and now are facing judgment from God. We know historically that Nineveh did fall in 612 BC and the Assyrian empire came crashing down shortly thereafter.

- How does knowing the historical context of Nineveh and Assyria help us understand the message of Nahum?
- Why do you think Nahum's message of judgment brought comfort to God's people?

Interpretation *Discovering the meaning*

1. In verses 2-3a, Nahum describes God using terms like jealous, avenging, and wrathful. How do these descriptions challenge common cultural perceptions of God?
2. The message points out that God's jealousy is rooted in love for His people, desiring that they find their ultimate satisfaction in Him. How does this view of God's jealousy impact the way you relate to Him?
3. Reflect on the natural phenomena mentioned in verses 3b-5 (tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes). How can recognizing God's power in nature impact our perspective on His ability to bring about justice?
4. According to verses 6-7, why is it impossible for any human to stand before God's wrath? How does Jesus provide the refuge and protection that humanity desperately needs?
5. How can the idea of God's goodness and His judgment coexist? Why is this balance important for our understanding of Him?

Application *Putting knowledge into practice*

- Consider the closing question of the sermon: "Do you have that refuge?" Take a moment to reflect on your own relationship with God and your confidence in Him as your refuge. If you feel comfortable, share your reflections with the group.
- In what ways have you personally experienced God as a refuge in times of trouble or difficulty?
- Try memorising Nahum 1:7...
"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him."
- How has God blessed you and answered prayer this week?