

## Daniel Szarkowicz - Zephaniah 3:17

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The Lord our God is in our lips the Mighty One will save. He will rejoice over us with gladness. He will quiet us with his love. He will rejoice over us with singing.

A couple of weeks ago, Brother Byron asked me if I would share a few thoughts with you this afternoon. On a verse that we just read taken from Zephaniah 3:17. I quickly said yes. But then as quickly as I said yes, I quickly realized that I don't know much about Zechariah. So Zephaniah rather.

So let me ask you before we start, how many of you are familiar with the message of the prophecy of Zephaniah? Please raise your hand. Okay, we have one, two. Okay, so this is perfect. Now I got everybody's attention.

Some of you will keep eye on me. What I'm saying is right, and the rest of you just sit back and relax because it's a new, new story for you.

Identifies himself better than any other minor prophet right from the get go. In the very first verse of his prophecy, he traces his lineage back to his great great grandfather, King Hezekiah. So in other words, Zephaniah was from a royal line. The book itself was written in a form of poetry.

Is written in a form of poetry. Sorry.

And his heartfelt plea to repent and seek the Lord. It is interesting to note that Zephaniah was written around the same time as Jeremiah, which brother Ken spoke about and shares many of the same concepts. Zephaniah mainly speaks about the day of the Lord that ultimately will result in the blessings of God's presence among his people. Hence our theme scripture, Zephaniah 3:17.

But throughout the book, Zephaniah speaks about the dreadful day of the Lord in very vivid and explicit way. For instance, Zephaniah 1:14 and 15, the great day of the Lord is near. Near and coming very quickly. Listen. The day of the Lord is as a warrior Christ out in a.

Literally. The day is a day of anger. The day of trouble and distress. The day of destruction. The day of desolation.

The day of darkness and gloom. The day of clouds and thick darkness. The day of trumpet and battle cry. Zephaniah visually described. This very descriptive language draws us into the story.

He doesn't just make us imagine, he makes us think. He makes us feel the moment. He makes us feel as a part of that story.

He makes us realize the seriousness and the urgency of the day of the Lord message. But he doesn't just leave us there. He wraps everything up and brings us to conclusion in a revealing to us the primary reason of it all in the team scripture that we just read, it doesn't leave us perplexed. He shows us the other side, the hidden side of the story, the underlying motives for this story.

Let me illustrate this with a short story I came across recently.

It was late at night in the outskirts of one of the big American cities. A child lay restless in her bed. A man with a stern look entered her bedroom. The moment the girl saw him, a terrified look came

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over her face. She began to scream.

Her mother rushed into the room and went over to her. The trembling child threw her hands around her mother. The man hastily called someone then tore the child from the mother's arm and ran out to the waiting car. The child was screaming and crying. He drew madly down the street, street after street until he finally stopped in front of a large sketchy looking building.

All was quiet and dark.

Mostly dark except one room upstairs with a light on it. The child was quickly taken inside up to that room and the door was shut. The end of story. What a terrifying story. Perhaps your reaction at this moment is.

I hope they they got this this criminal called that this is this little girl. However, there is more to this story than meets the eye as some details can be misread or misunderstood. Let me tell you the same story from another perspective. From a different perspective, a little girl had awakened in the night with a severe abdominal pain. She had suffered such attacks before and the doctor told her parents to watch her very very carefully.

It was her father who had carried into Berlin. When he saw the suffering on his little girl. He immediately called family doctor and arrange an emergency meeting in a private hospital. He then rushed this girl down to the hospital and handed her over to the surgeon who looked who took her into the operating room and performed a life saving procedure. Through it all, every move, every act of the father was of tender love, care and wise decision.

The father, out of love and concern for his child on that dark night, took her to the hospital and entrusted in the hands of a doctor, the father left his locker room on that dark night as he loved her the next day when he brought her flowers and candy. Just like he loved her the next week when he he brought her home and delivered her into arms of her mother.

The day of the Lord. The Sapanah prophesies will ultimately result in the blessings of God's presence among his people. The actions of our Father can easily be misunderstood. When we don't understand the purpose his actions can be misread. When we don't know what is, when he does what is absolutely necessary out of tender love, out of care and wise decision.

The Lord our God is in our midst. The mighty One will say he will rejoice over us with gladness. He will quiet us with his love. He will rejoice over us as with singing. What a beautiful and energizing summary of God's underlining motives and motives and objectives.

Not only that God is all powerful and mighty to say, but God rejoiced over us, and we are told that he rejoiced over us with singing.

Did you know that God is singing over us? Did you know that God sings over you? Can we even imagine that God rejoices over us with singing?

The word rejoice is translated from the Hebrew word that strong defines as a spin around under influence of strong emotions, and I love this visualization that comes to our mind when we read the scripture. God is portrayed as a mighty one, singing and dancing over his people. He describes how the warrior in the Old Testament must have felt after winning a hard fought battle and realize his victory. For generations, singing and dancing has become an ultimate expression of joy.

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Yet we often perceive God as very stern and serious. But prophet Zephaniah portrays God as glad and joyful and delight in his people, and as the bridegroom rejoice over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you, says Isaiah 62. 5.

The expression sings over is also very interesting. Did you ever think what it means that God is thinking over or dancing over to rejoice over something or to sing over something? I believe it expresses the thought of repeated and continuous motion, manner enduring forever. Something that does not have an ending, that does not cease. But why is God saying Him?

Why? We use words to tell a story, just like I told you a story. We use words to share information, to awake our imagination in us or in others, to draw a picture in our mind. We use words because all of us use an abstract way of thinking.

But how can we describe things which are spiritual, things which are beyond our abstract way of thinking, beyond our imagination? How can we describe God, who is invisible and eternal and infinite?

When we try to express things that are deep in our heart, our feelings, our emotions, we discover that words are not always enough. We need something more, something more direct, something more direct than the spoken word. That is why God sings over us. He sings to reach the depth of our heart. He touches our heart.

And he sings over us that we might remember him continuously, remember what he has done and Remember what he's doing. We human beings have grown into a very short memories span. Collectively, we quickly forget the vital things is indispensable for continuance of life. People may be impressed by something they witness and experience one day, but is quickly forgotten as they stretch into months and years. Children quickly, quickly forgot what has happened to their fathers.

For instance, God knew that the Israelis had to repeat the Passover celebration every year. Or they would quickly forget what remarkable things he had done to them.

Recently we watched a very sad but very intriguing and factually correct Holocaust drama called Song of Names.

This picture has none of the usual scenes of the Jewish ghetto. No graphic images of starving prisoners, no combat scenes or even eventual uplift of liberation. None of it. Instead, there is the music. Lots of beautiful music that serves as a remembrance and lamentation of those lost.

And to affirm the degree to which songs and memories are linked. Jewish are known for keeping detailed records. However, in Treblinka concentration camp, it was virtually impossible to keep the record of those who have perished. So in order to do so, they have designated individuals who have memorized the names of the deceased in a form of a song. Once the name was added, it become part of the song.

Song of remembrance, the Song of Names.

I think music might actually be most powerful vehicle to have for remembrance, said the movie director in an interview. I think he said, I trust music more than words. That might be a very personal thing. But one thing, one thing for sure is that power of music captures state of mind and experiences where words stay on us. Will never need subtitles or translation with music because it reaches beyond borders.

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End of quote.

At the heart of the Zephaniah message is the day of the Lord. The day they will bring salvation, joy and blessing to all. But before this can be realized, the entire present social fabric has to be demolished. He will rejoice over us with gladness. He will quiet us with his love.

He will rejoice over us with singing. He touches your heart. He provides for your longing. He is your melody. He equips you in your distress.

He is your strength. He puts meaning and good purpose into your life. You rejoice over us with singing. Let us hear at this convention. Listen to this melody.

God is our song. He is our melody.