

NAHUM: WHERE IS GOD'S JUSTICE?

How to interpret Nahum today:

Nahum 1-3

Nineveh and Israel are symbols for Nineveh and Israel.

Nahum gives the hope and encouragement that:

God has great power.

God will judge the wicked.

God will bless those who stay faithful.

How it applies to us today:

Psalm 73, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, 1 Chronicles 6:31-39, 15:16-19, 16:1-7, 37-38, 25:1-2,
2 Chronicles 29:30, Nehemiah 11:17-22

I have to change the all about me and all about now attitude.

Focusing on others will depress us.

Psalm 73: 2-12

Focusing on self will disappoint us.

Psalm 73: 13-14

Focusing on God will:

give us an eternal perspective.

Psalm 73: 16-20

show us who we really are.

Psalm 73: 21-22

show us who he really is.

Psalm 73: 23-24

show us what we really have.

Psalm 73: 25-28

Something to think about:

Do I measure God's blessings by the prosperity of life,
or my closeness to him?

Growth Group Homework

For the week of April 29, 2012

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching *Nahum: Where Is God's Justice?*, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. We heard this weekend how we have a choice during hard times on what we focus on – others, self, or God. When you are going through a tough time, is there one of these you tend to focus on more than the others?

What has been the outcome of focusing on that one?

2. We saw in Psalm 73 that Asaph, Israel's worship leader, was able to be honest with God about his struggles with what God was doing. What have been some of the struggles you've had in your life when it comes to trusting God in the midst of difficult times?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Two weeks ago Chris shared a quote from author C. S. Lewis about how God uses hardships as a tool to get our attention ("God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world"). What can you learn from the following passages about how God wants to use our pain and suffering as tools for our benefit?

James 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3] because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. [4] Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [NIV]

Hebrews 5:7-8

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. [8] Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered [NIV]

1 Peter 1:6-7

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. [7] These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. [NIV]

2 Corinthians 1:3-6

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. [5] For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. [6] If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. [NIV]

How do you think our attitude affects our willingness to accept trials as God's tools to benefit us?

2. The Apostle Paul had many challenging experiences in his life and it would have been easy for him to quit. Yet he was consistently able to maintain an eternal perspective instead of giving up and throwing in the towel. What do you see in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 that helps explain how he was able to persevere in the face of difficulties?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. [17] For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. [18] So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. [NIV]

Paul mentions his “light and momentary troubles.” In 2 Corinthians 11:21-29, he lists some of the difficulties and challenges he had been through. How do you think he was able to describe the things he lists as “light and momentary?”

2 Corinthians 11:21-29

To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

What anyone else dares to boast about--I am speaking as a fool--I also dare to boast about. [22] Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. [23] Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. [24] Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. [25] Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, [26] I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. [27] I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. [28] Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. [29] Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? [NIV]

3. Psalm 23 is one of the best-known and well-loved passages in the Bible. It has been a source of comfort and hope for many going through difficult times. As you read this Psalm, what points of hope are we given that could be of help in the midst of challenging times?

Psalm 23:1-6

A psalm of David.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

[2] He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

[3] he restores my soul.

He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

[4] Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

[5] You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
[6] Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever. [NIV]

Is there one of these points of hope that is more important for you to hear than the others right now?

TAKING IT HOME

At the end of his message, Chris asked the question, “Do I measure God’s blessings by the prosperity of life, or my closeness to him?” How do you answer that question?

Is there anything you need to do to help you develop a clearer perspective of God and how he works in your life through trials?

2. The lessons of hope and encouragement from Nahum are that God has great power, he’ll deal with the wicked, and he’ll bless those who trust him. Is there an area of your life where you need to be reminded of one or more of these truths?

Prayer Requests:

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