**Message Notes 6-18-2023 Majoring in the Minors – Nahum**

Well, you may or may not know, but my favorite book series by far is the *The Chronicles of Narnia*. If you’ve never read them, they are full of biblical imagery. C.S. Lewis, the author of these books, said that each of the stories are about Christ. I would highly recommend these books to anyone of any age.

In one of these stories, there is this character who is a very evil person named Prince Rabadash. Throughout the story he is shown to be a power-hungry, male-chauvinistic type of person, but by the end of the story, his selfish and evil plans have unraveled.

And with this we read:

Aslan was among them though no one had seen him coming. Rabadash started as the immense shape of the Lion paced softly in between him and his accusers. (Aslan is this Lion in these stories who represents Jesus Christ).

“Rabadash,” said Aslan. “Take heed. Your doom is very near, but you may still avoid it. Forget your pride (what have you to be proud of?) and your anger (who had done you wrong?) and accept the mercy of these good kings.”

Then Rabadash rolled his eyes and spread out his mouth into a horrible, long mirthless grin like a shark, and wagged his ears up and down (anyone can learn how to do this if they take the trouble). He had always found this very effective in Calormen. The bravest had trembled when he made these faces, and ordinary people had fallen to the floor, and sensitive people had often fainted. But what Rabadash hadn’t realized is that it is very easy to frighten people who know you can have them boiled alive the moment you give the word. The grimaces didn’t look at all alarming in Archenland; indeed Lucy only thought Rabadash was going to be sick.

“Demon! Demon! Demon!” shrieked the Prince. “I know you. You are the foul fiend of Narnia. You are the enemy of the gods. Learn who *I* am, horrible phantasm. I am descended from Tash, the inexorable, the irresistible. The curse of Tash is upon you. Lightning in the shape of scorpions shall be rained on you. The mountains of Narnia shall be ground into dust. The-“

“Have a care, Rabadash,” said Aslan quietly. “The doom is nearer now: it is at the door, it has lifted the latch.”

“Let the skies fall,” shrieked Rabadash. “Let the earth gape! Let blood and fire obliterate the world! But be sure I will never desist till I have dragged to my palace by her hair the barbarian queen, the daughter of dogs, the-“

“The hour has struck,” said Aslan: and Rabadash saw, to his supreme horror, that everyone had begin to laugh.

They couldn’t help it. Rabadash had been wagging his ears all the time and as soon as Aslan said, “The hour has struck!” the ears began to change. They grew longer and more pointed and soon were covered with gray hair. And while everyone was wondering where they had seen ears like that before, Rabadash’s face began to change too. It grew longer, and thicker at the top and larger eyed, and the nose sank back into the face (or else the face swelled out and become all nose) and there was hair all over it. And his arms grew longer and came down in front of him till his hands were resting on the ground: only they weren’t hands, now, they were hoofs. And he was standing on all fours, and his clothes disappeared, and everyone laughed louder and louder (because they couldn’t help it) for now what had been Rabadash was, simple and unmistakably, a donkey. The terrible thing was that his human speech lasted just a moment longer than his human shape, so that when he realized the change that was coming over him, he screamed out:

“Oh, not a Donkey! Mercy! If it were even a horse – e’en-a-hor-eeh-auh, eeh-auh.” And so the words died away into a donkey’s bray.

“Now hear me, Rabadash,” said Aslan. “Justice shall be mixed with mercy. You shall not always be an Ass.”

Friends, I share this story with you today because it reminds me of the Book of Nahum. Like the prophet Jonah 150 years earlier, the prophet Nahum was sent by God to proclaim a message of judgment to the great city of Nineveh. But while the Ninevites of Jonah’s generation repented of their sins and put their trust in the living God to forgive them, the Ninevites of Nahum’s day did not.

Now Nineveh was a vast and powerful city. Here are some interesting things about Nineveh. Nineveh had an immense palace with parks around it, the city had a zoo and it even had a botanical garden. This would have been an enormous city that looked state-of-the-art for its time.

The Assyraian had conquered nations far and wide. God had even used the cruel Assyrians to conquer the northern kingdom Israel for its many sins.

But the pride of Nineveh grew greater and greater as their nation kept expending and growing. By the time of Nahum, in the mid-7th century BC, the Ninevites became unwilling to humble themselves before God. The hour of God’s judgment against Nineveh was about to strike. And by the year 612 BC, Nineveh had been overthrown by other nations.

Let us now here these sobering but important words that the Lord inspired Nahum to write. We will be highlighting Nahum chapter 1, verses 1-9.

**1 A prophecy concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. 2The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath.
The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies. 3The Lord is slow to anger but great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet. 4He rebukes the sea and dries it up; he makes all the rivers run dry. Bashan and Carmel wither and the blossoms of Lebanon fade. 5The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it. 6Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him.
7The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him, 8 but with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh; he will pursue his foes into the realm of darkness.
9Whatever they plot against the Lord he will bring to an end; trouble will not come a second time.**

Friends, it is very true that God is a God of love. God indeed loves people and wants what is best for everyone. But passages such as this remind us that God is also holy and just. In fact, I do not believe that God would be fully loving if He was not also fully just. To look the other way at sin is not loving. God is too good and cares too much to look the other way.

As this passage teaches, God is slow to anger. God is not quick to pounce on people, like sometimes He is described as being. And God always desires mercy over judgment. The Lord didn’t want to have to punish Assyria, but eventually the hour would strike. Eventually, God had enough.

But while the nation of Assyria would soon be punished for its vile sins, God’s invitation for any Ninevite to come to Him seeking mercy remained.

Verse 7 of chapter one states, **“The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him.”**

As Nahum would proclaim this message in Nineveh, God’s invitation for mercy was open to all.

God would be a refuge to any person who puts their trust in Him. The invitation was to whomever would remember what had happened in the time of Jonah a few generations earlier and put their faith in the living God, to make God their refuge, their peace, their savior. And our merciful and compassionate God would be quick to forgive any such person.

Sisters and brothers, what are we to make of the Book of Nahum for us today? And I believe that the main thing to remember is this - **This book reminds us that because God is good, God is also holy and just and He takes sin very seriously.**

This has a few big implications.

**First, sin is not something that God can sweep under the rug as being insignificant.**  Rather, sin of any kind is very serious to God. Sometimes this truth is forgotten today. Sometimes God is viewed as a grandparent type figure – as someone that can spoil us and typically doesn’t do much to discipline or punish.

But this is a false understanding of God. While He is our perfect, loving Heavenly Father, He does discipline us and He does punish sin. Sin is very serious to our holy God. Yes, He is patience and slow to anger and full of mercy.

And all of us have sinned in a way that it was necessary for Jesus to be our innocent substitute. In God’s goodness, He also arranged things to take the punishment upon Himself. Jesus suffered and died as a perfect sacrifice for humanity’s sins, for our sins.

If sin wasn’t a big deal, Jesus would not have had to go through what He did. In Jesus we see that God took the weight and burden for all of humanity’s sin upon Himself. And anyone who puts their trust in Him is forgiven, is cleansed, is made whole.

**Second, this book of Nahum is a reminder that we are called to live holy lives unto the Lord**. *If God takes sin seriously, we must as well*. It is a call to examine ourselves. It is a reminder that everything we do in life is meant to be an expression of worship to God. If it is something we can’t do at worship, then perhaps there is sin involved in some way.

And we live a holy life by following the Holy Spirit and seeking to live according to God’s holy Word – the Bible.

It is important to practice holiness and faithfulness to God in the seemingly little things. The seemingly little sins will undoubtedly lead to bigger sins. But we are to take even the little things seriously. We are to be intentional in living with integrity with the little things.

**Third, the Book of Nahum is also a reminder that Jesus is coming back to earth** **as judge**. Jesus will bring justice to the earth. He is aware of everything unjust in the world today and when He returns, He will deal with everything. Just as the hour struck on Nineveh, the hour will strike on all who are living in rebellion to God when Jesus returns. In a sense, then, the Book of Nahum is a foreshadowing to the return of Christ described in the Book of Revelation.

**And this leads to our fourth and final point, the Book of Nahum is a calling to let the light of Christ shine through us in this world**. Not everybody will respond. But we are called to keep trying. For example, Angie here at Chestnut Grove has been actively trying to find a venue outside of our church building where our book club can gather. The purpose is to reach new people with the good news of Jesus Christ. Angie has been turned down because some people are afraid of having anything Christian at their location.

But just because some people are opposed to the light of Christ, we are not to become weary in doing good. Angie is continuing to explore other possibilities.

And so, like Angie, may we seek to let the light of Christ shine in this dark world. Jesus is the One we all need. Let us seek to be bold in this world in shining for Him. Anyone who turns to the Lord Jesus will be saved.

Again, **“The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble.”** Friends, God is good. We can trust in Him. This world can be a confusing and challenging place. May our Lord Jesus Christ be our refuge, our strength, our protection, our peace, now and always, Amen.

Resources: [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

Prophets course handout: Nahum – Evangelical Seminary