**Message Notes 7-9-2023
Majoring in the Minors – Zephaniah**

Quick show of hands. How many of you have heard the saying “when the chickens come home to roost?” What does that mean? Anybody? (allow time for a response or two).

It is a proverbial type pithy saying. And I understand it to mean that what people do in secret will eventually have a major impact on one’s present life and circumstances – particularly the negative or sinful things will eventually come to a head and have to be dealt with. Eventually, God will bring everything to the light and consequences will come swiftly. That day is when the chickens come home to roost. Maybe we can think of examples from our lives or the lives of others where this has happened.

But as Christians, we are to understand that the chickens do not have to come to roost in our lives. Why? Because we believe in the grace and mercy of God. We do not believe in karma, which is a graceless perspective. Instead, we believe that God’s will is always to extent grace and mercy to people. God gives people many opportunities to turn to His Son, Jesus Christ. He gives us many chances to turn from our sins to not reap what we have sown.

Damien, whose birthday we celebrate today, is a powerful example of God’s grace. The chicken did not come home to roost in the way that it appeared that they would. And as Damien shared last week, God’s transforming grace over his life has become so evident that the DA greatly lowered his sentence to a probation. Praise be to God! And now God is giving Damien a platform to bless others.

And I hope we can all identify. God’s grace and mercy have broken into our lives many, many times, preventing the chickens from coming home to roost.

I share this today because these themes of the chickens coming home to roost and God calling His people to follow His path are the central themes of the Book of Zephaniah. Now, as you might of guessed, Zephaniah does not use the term “The Chickens coming home to roost,” as that is a rather recent expression. Instead, Zephaniah uses the phrase, “The Day of the Lord.”

Over and over again in this short book found in the minor prophets is this phrase, or some similarly worded phrase used.

But before we dive more into this powerful book, it is helpful to set the context a bit. Last week we looked at the prophet Habakkuk. Zephaniah was likely the generation after Habakkuk. He was likely born during the reign of King Manasseh and then he ministered during the reign of King Josiah. At the time of this prophecy, things were very bad in Judah. The chickens were on their way home. The Day of the Lord was at hand.

But things were adverted for a time. God’s grace & mercy broke through as people turned to Him with repentance. In fact, many scholars believe that Zephaniah’s ministry and book may have been one of the things that led King Josiah to seek the Lord. It was King Josiah that actually led Judah in one of its biggest revivals in their history. It is very possible that God gave Zephaniah a platform to influence the young King Josiah and hold back the chickens coming to roost in Judah for several years.

One other interesting thing to note is that in the beginning of Zephaniah, the prophet gives his genealogy going back four generations. And it appears that he was the great-grandson of godly King Hezekiah. And this would mean that Zephaniah would have been related to King David.

But throughout most of the book of Zephaniah, we read that the LORD is on the verge of bringing judgment. The Day of the LORD is at hand, certainly for Judah, but other nations are also told in similar words that the Day of the LORD was at hand for them as well. For the Philistia, for Moab, for Ammon, for Cush, for Assyria. For all these nations, God’s patience had about run out and the chicken were preparing to come home to roost, so to speak.

There is idolatry that is rampant. There is pride and an unwillingness to be corrected. And even leaders of the great city of Jerusalem are referred to as wolves, the prophets as being unprincipled and treacherous and the priests as profaning the sanctuary and doing violence to God’s Law.

In short, things were bad. The chickens were about to come home to roost. They were on their way.

But that changed. God’s judgment was delayed as Zephaniah’s words were heeded by the King and the nation turned to God.

Eventually, however, the revival fizzled out and the nations turned their backs on God. But not everyone. There was a remnant.

As we turn to our highlighted passage from Zephaniah today, we see that our gracious God was offering mercy and grace to the remnant of people that are choosing to be faithful to God. There is always a remnant.

Let us hear from Zephaniah 3:9-17

**“Then I will purify the lips of the peoples,
    that all of them may call on the name of the Lord
    and serve him shoulder to shoulder.
10From beyond the rivers of Cush[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Zephaniah+3%3A9-17&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22831a)**]
    my worshipers, my scattered people,
    will bring me offerings.
11On that day you, Jerusalem, will not be put to shame
    for all the wrongs you have done to me,
 because I will remove from you
    your arrogant boasters.
 Never again will you be haughty
    on my holy hill.
12But I will leave within you
    the meek and humble.
 The remnant of Israel
    will trust in the name of the Lord.
13They will do no wrong;
    they will tell no lies.
 A deceitful tongue
    will not be found in their mouths.
 They will eat and lie down
    and no one will make them afraid.”**

**14Sing, Daughter Zion; shout aloud, Israel!
 Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
    Daughter Jerusalem!
15The Lord has taken away your punishment,
    he has turned back your enemy.
 The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you;
    never again will you fear any harm.
16On that day they will say to Jerusalem,
 “Do not fear, Zion;
    do not let your hands hang limp.
17The Lord your God is with you,
    the Mighty Warrior who saves.
 He will take great delight in you;
    in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
    but will rejoice over you with singing.”**

These words teach us many things about what God was looking for from His people. His people were to be humble and teachable. His people were called to be walking in truth instead of speaking lies. His people were to put their trust in the LORD and call on God’s Name and worship Him and Him alone.

Even in those dark days, God made a way for people to not only avoid the chickens coming home to roost in their life, but also to live an abundant, God-filled life.

And verse 17 is so profound. Let us hear it again. **“The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.”**

Just let that sink in for a moment. This was God’s will for the remnant of Israel that would choose God’s way. And Zephaniah was encouraging this remnant that as they choose to be all in for God, they can know that God is taking great delight in them and He actually is rejoicing over them with singing. Picture that, God singing over someone. That is a picture of love. You may be thinking of a parent singing a lullaby over their child or a spouse or a person singing over their beloved. To sing over someone would be one way that someone would take great delight in them.

And so we fast-forward to today. The biggest take away from this book of Zephaniah is to be all-in for the LORD no matter how many people around us are choosing to be all in for God.

God continues to have a remnant in this world. We call this remnant The Church or Christians or The Body of Christ.

To be a devoted follower of Jesus is as against the grain today in many places as it was during the time of Zephaniah. The way is broad and wide that leads to destruction. For those, the day of the Lord will be a day when the chickens come to roost and they face the consequences for their sins and their rejection of Jesus Christ and God’s offer of grace and mercy.

But because we have said yes to Jesus, God’s Messiah, we can take heart that God takes great delight in us and that He rejoices over us with singing. Isn’t that amazing? You are God’s beloved. You are God’s child.

Moreover, this book of Zephaniah should spur us onward to a life of complete allegiance to the LORD. We are to pursue a life of meekness (gentleness), of humility, of being a passionate worshipper of the Lord.

And please know this as well, we have a platform. Each of us as individual Christians have a platform from God as well. We may not see it or realize it, but we do influence others.

And God’s will is for us to use our platform for point people to our great God. God’s will is to rejoice over everyone with singing. But His rejoicing over people is connected to their embracing of His plan and His will.

As we share God’s goodness and grace towards us and the mission of Jesus and seek to live a holy God-pleasing life, please know that we will be impacting others in Jesus’ Name.

May the truth, that as we live as God’s faithful remnant today and that He rejoices over us with singing, spur us onward to shine brightly for Jesus in this world.

Let’s pray…

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

[https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/chickens+come+home+to+roost](https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/chickens%2Bcome%2Bhome%2Bto%2Broost)

 The World And the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament