

What God Thinks of Us

Series: Majoring in the Minors – Week 9

Text: Zephaniah 3:8–20

I. Introduction: The God Who Sings

- We spend a lot of time wondering what others think of us.
- Many grow up in families where love was not easily expressed → leads to questions:
 - Am I lovable? Do I belong? Am I wanted?
- Those same questions creep into our relationship with God.
 - **Formal belief:** “Jesus loves me, this I know...”
 - **Functional belief:** God must be angry... disappointed... just putting up with me.
- **Key Truth from Zephaniah 3:** God doesn’t just *love* you—He *likes* you.

II. Background & Setting

1. **Name Meaning:** Zephaniah – “The Lord hides / protects / treasures”
2. **Historical Context:**
 - Great-great grandson of King Hezekiah.
 - Ministered during King Josiah’s reign (~630 BC).
 - Josiah: Last good king of Judah → spiritual reform (2 Kings 22–23).
3. **Purpose of Zephaniah’s Ministry:**
 - Addressed **Idolatry** (1:4–6) and **Complacency** (1:12).
 - Book flows:
 - Judgment on Judah (ch. 1)
 - Judgment on all nations & Judah (ch. 2–3:8)
 - Hope for a humble remnant (3:9–20)

III. The Turning Point – Zephaniah 3:17

*“The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.”*

- **God delights in you.**
- Message version: *“Happy to have you back... delight you with his songs.”*
- The Creator of the universe has a song about you.

IV. How This Changes Us

When we grasp that God delights in us, it reshapes life in at least 3 ways:

1. It Changes How We Respond to the Father

- Moves us from **Shame** → **Singing**.
- v.14: “Sing aloud... rejoice with all your heart!”

- v.19: “Change their shame into praise.”
- **Guilt** = I did something bad. **Shame** = I *am* bad.
- Conviction addresses sin; shame attacks identity.
- In Christ, our identity is hidden (Col. 3:3 – “your life is hidden with Christ in God”).
- **Zephaniah’s name** points to our refuge in Christ from God’s wrath.
- Heb. 4:14–16 – We approach God with confidence because He delights in us.

2. It Changes the Posture of Our Hearts

- Moves us from **Pride** → **Praise**.
- v.11–12: God removes the proud, leaves the humble & meek.
- Meekness = strength under God’s control.
- Humility = God-reliance instead of self-reliance.
- 1 Pet. 5:6 – God exalts the humble in due time.
- Jesus’ heart (Matt. 11:29) – “gentle and lowly.”

3. It Changes How We Treat Each Other

- Moves us from **Looking Over Our Shoulder** → **Serving Shoulder to Shoulder**.
- v.9: “Serve Him with one accord” (*NIV*: “shoulder to shoulder”).
- v.12–13: A community marked by humility, honesty, justice, safety.
- This is what a **gospel-centered community** looks like.

V. Conclusion: Let This Sink Deep

- Zephaniah’s final vision: A people gathered, restored, and delighted in by their God (v.20).
- God is not reluctant toward you—He rejoices over you.
- The God who saves you is also the God who sings over you.
- You make God sing when you come to Him.

Key Questions:

1. Do I believe—deep down—that God delights in me?
2. How would embracing that truth change my response to Him this week?
3. What would our community look like if we lived shoulder to shoulder in humility?