

Discussion Questions

Date: May 3rd, 2026

Preacher: Josh Ratliff

Sermon Outline

When God Restores and Rejoices Zephaniah 3:9-20

God Is Bringing a Purifying Salvation for the Nations and His People (3:9-13)

- God is purifying the people for true worship and service. (3:9-10).
- God will save the humble and repentant, and judge the proud and rebellious. (3:11-13)
- **Question:** Followers of Jesus have changed hearts. Have you experienced the change that salvation brings? Does your life express a changed, undivided heart before the Lord?

God Restores in a Way that Leads to Joy and Celebration (3:14-20)

- God's presence with His people is a cause for our joy and God's delight. (3:14-17)
- God's restoration of his people is the ultimate reversal—from shame to singing! (3:18-20)
- **Question:** Have you experienced God's delight in you? How does the picture of His rejoicing over us with singing affect you?

Bottom Line: We can trust God to meet our deepest needs.

Talking Points

- * In the sermon, Pastor Josh mentions that chapter 3 is a "reversal of Babel." Why do you think God scattered the people building the tower of Babel in Genesis 11? How does this context add to the beauty of what is being said in Zephaniah 3:9-10?
- * Why is humility essentially a requirement in order to enjoy God and His kingdom?
- * What is humbling, yet comforting, about us needing God to regenerate us, to give us purified hearts?
- * How has your life changed since knowing Christ and submitting to Him as your Lord and savior?
- * Verse 15 declares that "the Lord has taken away your punishment." In which areas of your life do you struggle to believe this is actually true? Why does our human nature often find it harder to accept God's grace, rather than to just hold onto our own guilt?
- * What can we do to better remind ourselves, and each other, throughout the day that the Lord God is with His people? What problems can stem from us forgetting His presence with us?
- * In verse 17 we read that the Lord delights in His people. What are your thoughts and reactions to God delighting in you? How is this challenging to hear? How is it comforting?
- * How will you meditate on God's love for you this week? When will you set a part time to hear from Him, to seek Him, and to be filled up by His Spirit?

Understanding Scripture

1. Read the passage aloud.

- Question: How would the original audience have understood this passage?
- Question: What was God's desire for them?

2. Reread key verse(s) aloud.

- Question: What does this teach us about the human soul, desires, or behavior?
- Question: What does this teach us about the nature, desires, or behavior of God?

3. Ask if anything is difficult to understand in the passage, or simply point it out yourself.

- Back up from the confusing verse and reread the whole section slowly—highlight the author's flow of thought.
- Ask everyone, "What are some possible interpretations?" Encourage curiosity!
- If needed, provide clarification, but admit if you don't have a satisfactory explanation, and volunteer to research answers. Share your findings over text or at the next meeting.

4. Summarize the passage in 1-3 sentences to refocus the group ("Okay, so far we've seen in Amos...")

- Question: What does this say about our relationship with God and/or each other?
- Question: How do the teachings, actions, or person of Jesus shed light on this passage?

Prayer Requests

