

How to Use Sermon Resources

- **READ AHEAD TOGETHER** - MCG's should use the Devotional at the end of this resource as a reading plan for the week leading up to your meeting.
- **SIT UNDER THE WORD** - This resource is filled with scripture references. Read them aloud, together before you answer any questions.
- **APPLY TRUTH** - The goal is deep discussion and application, not necessarily to complete this resource. Don't squash a good discussion. If you get into something important along the way that's fine.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer [2 mins]

Use the Overview [5 mins]

- Cover any key points for people who missed parts or all of the sermon

Scripture Deep Dive [30-40 mins]

- Opening Question
- Read the scripture for each question then ask the question. Some have multiple scriptures.

Close in Prayer

- In this extended prayer time, ask others to pray as they feel led, pray in a circle, pray over one another, pray to your left, or pray for someone specific. Whatever seems best.

Split Time (if applicable)

- Men with men, women with women
- Share in a circle. "What's one thing you want to celebrate? What do you need prayer and accountability for?"
- After everyone shares, pray in a circle for the person to your left/right.

SERMON OVERVIEW

Return: Zephaniah

Title: What Are You Waiting For? The Day of the Lord in Zephaniah

Sermon Summary: Drawing from the book of Zephaniah, this sermon examines the recurring prophetic theme of the Day of the Lord — the coming judgment that every person on earth will face. Preached as part of a series through the Minor Prophets, the message challenges listeners to sit in the weight of this reality rather than give it only a passing glance. Zephaniah warns of judgment for those who practice idolatry, syncretism, and complacency, while simultaneously offering hope and rescue to those who humbly seek the Lord.

Key Points:

- The Minor Prophets as a whole repeatedly emphasize the Day of the Lord, and studying them together forces a sustained reckoning with that reality rather than a brief, passing awareness
- Every person is waiting for one of two outcomes on the Day of the Lord: to be rescued and hidden in Christ, or to be removed and separated from God
- Three markers characterize those who are waiting to be removed: idolatry (placing ultimate trust and fulfillment in things other than God), syncretism (blending loyalty to God with loyalty to false systems or beliefs), and complacency (settling into comfort and assuming God will neither act nor judge).

Scripture Reference:

- Zephaniah 1-3

Stories:

- Pastor Matt recalls being a boy in southern Indiana who insisted on wearing shorts regardless of the cold weather. His mother's solution was to send him outside to stand in the yard for ten minutes before making his final decision. This story illustrates the difference between a passing glance at a truth and truly sitting in its reality.
- A brief reference is made to King Josiah, described as a young man who became king at age eight, turned a nation back to God, and modeled a life of impact through seeking the Lord, tearing down idols, opening God's Word, and living in community
- A clip from the Little League World Series is referenced in which a coach walks to the mound to speak to a struggling twelve-year-old pitcher. Rather than offering technique or emphasizing the pressure of the moment, the coach tells the boy that whether he walks the next five batters or strikes them out, Jesus is Lord. The coach then puts the ball back in the boy's glove and walks off.

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening Question

1. When have you faced a situation that made you wonder why God seemed silent, and what keeps a question like Habakkuk's from becoming an accusation that assumes God is absent or uncaring?

Point 1: Bring questions to God

2. Read Habakkuk 1:12–13 – After God says he will use Babylon to judge Judah, Habakkuk appeals to God's eternal nature, holiness, and purity. Why does Habakkuk begin his second complaint by naming what he knows to be true about God, and how should that shape the way we pray when God's actions or timing do not make sense? (Compare Psalm 10:1 and Psalm 42:9.)

3. Read Habakkuk 2:1 – Habakkuk states his complaint, takes his position at the watchpost, and waits for God's reply. What is the meaningful difference between waiting for God after honestly praying and merely postponing obedience until God explains everything, and what would faithful waiting require from you in a current uncertainty? (Read also Psalm 27:13–14.)

Point 2: Trust God by faith

4. Read Habakkuk 2:2–4 – God assures Habakkuk that his purposes have an appointed time and then declares, "the righteous one will live by his faith." How does this passage distinguish biblical faith from passive optimism, and what action or response would demonstrate that you are living by faith rather than being ruled by what you can presently see? (Use 2 Corinthians 5:7 for context.)

5. Read Habakkuk 2:20; Romans 1:16–17 – God's declaration that he is in his holy temple comes after he addresses the evil Habakkuk sees, while Romans connects "the righteous will live by faith" to salvation through the gospel. How do God's sovereignty and Christ's saving work give a Christian reason to trust God when justice is delayed, without pretending that evil is acceptable or insignificant? (Also consider Hebrews 10:35–39.)

Point 3: Rejoice in God

6. Read Habakkuk 3:16–19 – Habakkuk describes complete material loss, yet chooses to rejoice in "the God of my salvation" and calls the Lord his strength. What does this passage reveal about the difference between joy that depends on circumstances and joy rooted in God himself, and which area of your life most exposes whether your devotion to God has become conditional? (For further context, read Philippians 4:10–13 and James 1:2–4.)