

In Our Midst

- Opening Announcements
- Opening Prayer

Q: How do you "know" God is "with you"?

Q: Does that bring you comfort? Does that make you afraid? Why or why not?

Zephaniah 3:14-20 "Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. ***The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;*** you shall never again fear evil. ¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. 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. ¹⁸ I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. ¹⁹ Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰ At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the Lord."

Q: According to verse 15, what has the Lord done?

Q: So, according to verse 14, what should be character and quality of the response?

Q: What's interesting about verse 17?

Q: What are the promises of verses 18-20?

READ: Psalm 31:19-20 "Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind! ²⁰ In the cover of your presence you hide them from the plots of men; you store them in your shelter from the strife of tongues."

Q: I reference this psalm in the sermon today. What is the "theme" of these verses?

Q: How is it like Zephaniah's?

Q: WHY do you think God encourages us like this?

Q: What are ways YOU'VE experienced encouragement in your life (from either God, or others, OR....God...THROUGH others?)

Q: WHY is encouragement so important?

APPLICATION Thoughts:

Q: Who is someone in your life, that needs encouragement?

Q: How might YOU be the means through which, God encourages them?

Q: What might be the "content" of our encouragement to others? (Ex: hope, comfort, peace, forgiveness, freedom, reconciliation, restoration, rejuvenation, etc.?)

READ: Psalm 31:21-22 "Blessed be the Lord, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city. ²² I had said in my alarm, "I am cut off from your sight." But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help."

Q: What's the problem/challenge with a "besieged city"?

Q: Have you ever felt "trapped" by your situation?

READ: Psalm 31:23-24 "Love the Lord, all you his saints! The Lord preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride. ²⁴ Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord! "

Q: What are the themes of the psalmist's exhortation?

Q: What are the implied "warnings"?

Q: What is hard about "waiting"?

Q: Why is waiting KEY in your spiritual development? Why do so few grow in this area?