

Theme: Because of the coming of Christ, God is with us, delivering us from our enemies and saving us from our sins, as He delights in us and sings His song of love over us.

## I. Intro – The Power of Music

- A. Boston first album - back of pickup with friends
- B. Benny Hester - Nobody Knows Me - worship with friends
- C. My Girl - dancing and singing with Steph as a little girl
- D. Music is powerful and can evoke powerful emotions
- E. We are looking at Christmas Carols - singing our faith
- F. We have looked at prophets and angels songs
- G. Next week Jer will look at our song of joy
- H. Did you know God sings? His song is love to us!

## II. Zephaniah's World - And Ours

- A. Zephaniah lived in time of upheaval, war, pending exile  
The word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, during the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah: Zephaniah 1:1
  - 1. Zephaniah prophesied during reign of Josiah - good king in a bad time
  - 2. Time of upheaval as Assyria was falling - war all around - a lot of uncertainty
  - 3. God's people had been unfaithful - words of judgment from Zephaniah in much of book
  - 4. But as usual - there is also a message of hope!

- 5. Our text shows the message of hope, peace, and love!

## B. Our time is very similar

- 1. War, struggle, power shifts - a lot of uncertainty
- 2. God's people have not always been faithful!
- 3. But we should still be encouraged - there is hope, peace, love and joy for us in Christ!

## III. Zephaniah's Song - And Ours

- A. Three commands for a song of joy from God's people  
Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! Zephaniah 3:14
  - 1. Use of threefold parallelism - sing, shout, be glad
  - 2. Speaks of vibrant singing to God - not dull, lifeless
  - 3. Command to God's people - Zion, Israel, Jerusalem
  - 4. Repetition to drive point home - this must be done!
  - 5. God's people are called to be people of praise
  - 6. This is key reason we sing - it is commanded
- B. Three reasons for the song of God's people  
The 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. Zephaniah 3:15
  - 1. God has taken away our punishment - we are forgiven!

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, **the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!** John 1:29

Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Hebrews 10:11–12

- a. What the Old Covenant could only shadow and never do is now done!
  - b. In Christ the promise is fulfilled!
2. God has turned back our enemy - we are free!  
The 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. Zephaniah 3:15

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Hebrews 2:14–15

- a. Their enemies were nations - our is Satan
- b. Christ has destroyed his hold on us - we are free!
- c. He can no longer accuse us, or enslave us!

3. God is with us - we need never fear again  
The 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.** Zephaniah 3:15

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” — which means, “God with us.” Matthew 1:21–23

- a. Jesus is literally God with us!
  - b. We need never fear again - He is with us - and will never leave!
- C. All of this is a great reason to sing praise to Him!

#### IV. God’s Song of Love - For Us!

- A. The basis for all of this - God’s song of love for us  
The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. **He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.** Zephaniah 3:17
1. The reason God has done these things is His love
  2. Three phrases describe God’s heart for us
    - a. He takes great delight in us - a Father’s joy!
    - b. He quiets us/renews us - or rests in His love
      1. Hebrew is really difficult at this point
      2. But point is that God’s love is sure - He rests in it & so can we!

c. God rejoices over us in song - He sings over us!

B. God sings over us - and we can sing back to Him!

1. What an amazing thought - God sings over us!
2. This is no half hearted song - He sings **with delight**
3. This song shows the depth of His love for us!
4. When we hear this song - we should sing back to Him!

## V. Applying the Word

A. God's song of love resonates through our carols

1. Joy To the World  
He rules the world with truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love....
2. Of course most of our carols are about what God's love has done - and our response

B. Do we see God's love for His people?

1. We were God's enemies - and He loved us!
2. In Christ He has come to be with us
3. If you are not part of His people - look to Christ!
4. If you are part of His people - rest in that love
  - a. Know that you are forgiven - your sin is removed
  - b. Know that your enemy has been vanquished!
  - c. Know that God is with you - now and forevermore

d. Know that you will never be taken from Him

C. Sing praise to God for His love! (Hark! The Herald...)

### God's Song of Love

Zephaniah 3:14-17

December 15, 2013

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, <sup>17</sup> encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Sing, O Daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! <sup>15</sup>The 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. <sup>16</sup> On that day they will say to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. <sup>17</sup> The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." Zephaniah 3:14-17