

Nahum: Enough Is Enough

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to a place that once again you may have never done so in an environment such as this. Do not apologize for going to the table of contents for the little book of Nahum takes up about three chapters toward the end of your Old Testament couched in a section that we collectively call the minor prophets.

Now if you're a guest or visitor with us today, you may be wondering why in the middle of the summer season would we be preaching through or speaking of the prophet known as Nahum. Well, we as a church body are walking through the Scriptures over about a three year plan where we're just digesting sometimes one, maybe two chapters a day, and as we find ourselves in the minor prophets today, we find ourselves again with an individual that we know very little of, in fact, one thing we do know about Nahum is that he lived about 100 years after the days and the time of the very famous prophet known as Jonah. But one thing also that we know about Nahum is this, is because the Lord is leading him to do so, he has what we might call the spirit of Eeyore, if you know what I mean. In fact, in our home this week we jokingly as we read through Nahum, we called him Nadoom because it seems like everything he says is about this end time, death, doom and destruction, and we're gonna read them but in a moment you'll discover there's only two positive things that Nahum says in all three chapters, but the purpose of Nahum for our lives today, not just to look back in time but to apply to our own lives is this: that there comes a point in life as an individual, even as a church at times, as a community, as a culture, and humanity at large, that the Lord says, "Enough is enough." There comes a point where the Lord said, "I am going to act on your rebellion. I am going to act on your disregard for my word, my will and my way," and the book of Nahum summarizes this aspect that enough is enough in three very short chapters.

For the sake of time today, we're only going to read the first chapter. That's very strategic because it's the only one with the positive statements in them, but Nahum 1, verse 1 says,

1 The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.
2 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. 3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great

in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. 4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. 5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. 6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. [Phew, take a pause.] 7 The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. 8 But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies. 9 What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time. 10 For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry. 11 There is one come out of thee, that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor. 12 Thus saith the LORD; Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. 13 For now will I break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder. 14 And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: I will make thy grave; for thou art vile. 15 Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

This theme of enough is enough, what we discover in the book of Nahum is what I would like to call today a multilayered or a layered picture.

One of the aspects of the prophets whether we classify them as minor prophets or the major prophets is they have this incredible tendency to utilize time in all of its fashion and forms, in other words, oftentimes they will reach back into the past and they will grab events and characters of the past and relate them to the events of the current day. Obviously they spent a lot of time dealing primarily with the sins of the northern kingdom or the southern kingdom or here in the book of Nahum those of Nineveh, but then a large majority of the prophetic message isn't looking back or looking at the present day, it's looking to the future, it's looking forward saying that what we're experiencing now, what we're walking through now is a picture of the days ahead. In fact, many people have called it the mountain peaks of prophecy, that as you walk through any of the prophetic messages of the Old Testament, yes, you see the events of their current day and how the Lord was responding to them, but you also see this picture of the future, this ultimate climax of the things of God.

What do we discover here? It says there's gonna come a time where the earth will be burned and everybody that dwells therein will be vanquished. Though that may have been

pictured in times past, we're gonna discuss in just a moment that is an event coming at one point in the future when the Lord says, "Okay, enough is enough." But let's deal with the particulars of this multilayered picture, so to speak. Notice the first verse, it says, "the burden of Nineveh." Now I'm gonna deal with this more specifically in just a moment but the other prophet who spoke most clearly to those in Nineveh was the prophet Jonah. Obviously the famous story of running from the Lord, then finally obeying the Lord, and then tens of thousands including the king and the animals repenting of their sins there in the third chapter of the book of Jonah. But it's not just a story of those Ninevites in the 7th century BC, for what we discover here in the book of Nahum, much like we do in the other prophetic works, is that Nineveh is a type, it is a picture of a future entity that we often refer to as Babylon, in fact, the Bible speaks in the book of Revelation 17 in those end days when humanity is rebelling against God, that Babylon is this mystery that is formed in the earth. Lest you think this is the only time in Scripture that the prophets utilize this, Hosea, the first of what we call the minor prophets, oftentimes refers to Israel as Ephraim. Now Ephraim was the tribe that rebelled into idolatry. You get to the book of Revelation 7, they're not even listed in the 12 tribes of the end days, so to speak.

Why is this important for us? Because we discover that what took place in Nahum's days was a real actual historical event but it also pictures for us that the behavior of the days past are but a slight glimpse of what we're gonna see in the days ahead, which brings another aspect of this multilayered picture, it's the parallel that we have, and when I speak of the parallel here, notice it says that the burden of Nineveh. Well, Nineveh, again Jonah went and preached to them, experienced a great revival but they fell into their wicked ways and one of the things that we discover with humanity whether humanity at large, the northern kingdom, the southern kingdom, Nineveh or our own culture, is that oftentimes the second aspect of rebellion or the third layer of rebellion tends to take it a stretch further. One of the things that I've said for years is this: what parents do in moderation, their children will do to excess, and what we see here is that the Ninevites actually took the behavior that the Lord condemned through the prophet Jonah over 100 years before and he says, "Okay, now that you've decided to ramp it up a little bit, enough is enough." And they would eventually come under judgment. Sennacherib would come in and they would face the judgment, but again a picture of Babylon of the future. There's coming a day where humanity as a whole will face the "it is enough is enough" by the hand of God. But it's a parallel to all people. What we discover is whether it's the northern, southern kingdom, Babylon, Rome, Greece, it doesn't matter who you pick, what you see in Nahum when it comes to the Ninevites is what we see in communities and cultures all throughout time, the Lord gives the opportunity to repent but when repentance does not take place, judgment naturally follows.

Now I want you to fast forward to chapter 3 for just a moment. I want you to see what was taking place in the Ninevites' life. You're gonna think that verses 4 through 6 was lifted off the headlines of today's news. It says,

4 Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot,
the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms,
and families through her witchcrafts. 5 Behold, I am against thee, saith the

LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. 6 And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock.

Now I want to work that passage backwards. "I'll set thee as a gazingstock," in other words, "Nineveh, you're gonna serve as a lesson to those who come behind you of what happens when you play around with God." You back it up into verse 5, what does the Lord say? He says, "Judgment must take place. Sin must be accounted for." Verse 4, it uses words like whoredoms and harlotry, and if you were just to take a brief glance at the history of humanity, all of the great cultures and all of the great powers of the lands of the earth have always found themselves in their last days with liberty and license when it comes to sexuality so why is it that we would think that we're gonna be the only ones to survive? Why is it that we think, "Oh, we can do what we want. After all, it's my body." No, it's not. It's not your body. God formed you. God fashioned you. And if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6 you are not your own. You've been bought with a price for the Holy Spirit dwells within you.

So we discover that the lessons to Nineveh, by the way, go and look what happened to them, utterly destroyed, look at the northern kingdom, the southern kingdom, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Romans, how many cultures do I have to talk about? And yet today if you bring up the past, what do people say? "Oh, but we're different. We know more now." That's right, we're more ignorant than we've ever been because we have the benefit of reading these stories and saying, "Well, they didn't make it through it, why would we think that we would?"

Let's bring it down and make it personal for just a moment. I mentioned it's multilayered, it's also the story about you and I as individuals as well. You know, the Bible speaks of the northern kingdom, the southern kingdom, the Babylonians, even the Ninevites, but I'm reminded of Elijah, remember the prophet that defeated the Baal worshipers on Mount Carmel, that when he came down he said, "O God, I'm the only one, nobody loves you like I do." What did the Lord say? "There are 7,000 who have yet to bend the knee." You get to the book of Isaiah 6 and he says, "O Lord, nobody's gonna listen to me." He says, "Don't worry, I've set aside a tithe, I've set aside a 10th of the people who will be faithful and true." We discover that there's always a remnant. In fact, you get to the book of Romans 2:28 it says this, "Who are the Jews or who are the Israelites? Those who have been circumcised by the flesh and the skin?" It says, "Oh, no, no, no, those who have been circumcised in their hearts." We discover that this isn't just a message of days gone by, this is not just a message of the days ahead, this is a message for you and I as well.

In fact, 1 John 5:16 makes this statement that there is a sin unto death. Let me unpack that very briefly this morning. That means there comes a time if we continue to play with sin, we continue to walk in sin, that we will face and reap the consequences. Galatians 6 says if you sow to the flesh, you'll reap of the flesh. If you sow to the Spirit, you will reap of the Spirit. And so we can easily look at our culture and our communities and say, "Oh, woe is us!" Have we not learned the lessons of those that have gone before us?

Let's turn that inwardly and look at it individually. Woe is us. That's not just cultures and that's not just communities, those are individuals as well, and we discover that the book of Nahum isn't just about the Ninevites coming out of revival and back into apostasy, it isn't just about every culture that will face the consequences of their sin, it's about us as well. We need to realize that we don't have the privilege of playing with sin and then declaring what the consequences should be in our life.

So let's talk about the parallel here. How did the Lord speak to the Ninevites through Nahum, how does he speak into our lives as well? Notice verse 2, it says God is jealous. Now this is particular here. God is jealous. You may or may not be familiar but some years ago when questioned upon her inclusive faith, so to speak, the billionaire and former television host by the name of Oprah Winfrey made the statement that even though she grew up in church, even though she grew up in an environment much like this, that she heard a sermon one day that when she heard that sermon, she could no longer worship in that manner because she said, "Why would God be jealous of me?" The problem is God isn't jealous of you, God is jealous for you is who he is. The Lord is jealous for us. In other words, he doesn't want anything competing with his attention. He doesn't want anything competing with his time. He doesn't want anything competing with the resources that he has given to us and entrusted to us and said be a steward thereof.

God is a jealous God. Deuteronomy 32 proclaims it. As the Israelites were about to walk into the Promised Land, he said, "I am jealous for you." In other words, when we look at the particular and the parallel here that God desires more than anything else for him to have the first place and the preeminent position in our lives. He is a jealous God not of us but for us.

Secondly, what do we see here? It says that he revenges. In fact, three times in verse 2 it says he's a God of revenge. I don't know about you but I think he's trying to get his point across. God is a God of revenge and we've talked about in days past walking through the minor prophets then in the book of Romans 12:19 it says that you and I don't have the privilege of revenge, that, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord." In fact, Deuteronomy 32 once again pictures this, in fact, it was the verse that led to the most famous sermon in American history, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God," and there is this picture that God revenges, God avenges sin. In fact, you get to Revelation 6, there's these martyrs under the altar of God and they say, "How long, God, until you avenge our death?" God may be jealous for us, he may be jealous for our culture, but at the same time he will avenge on sin.

We cannot ignore that fact but here's a little bit of a silver lining. It's not one of the two positive verses but look at verse 3, he is slow to anger. In fact, 2 Peter 3 says that God is not like us, he actually possesses patience and he is desirous that all men come to repentance. You know, it's interesting that anytime we as individuals, anytime that cultures experience the consequences of their sin, they always have this one statement, "If I just had one more chance. If I just had one more day." You know, it's much like Pharaoh in the book of Exodus when Moses said, "Hey, when do you want the frogs?" He

said, "Give me one more night." We always say, "If I just had one more chance. At the invitation if you just sing one more verse." For those of you who were not here last week, you saw an incredible lesson from youth, a seven year old boy as soon as we started the invitation, he ran down the aisle. He left his parents back in the back. Why? Because he understands what this is speaking of. He grasped even as his young age that God is slow to anger. You say, "Well, how slow is he?" Well, the book of Genesis, he gave the people 120 years. Poor Noah and for some of you who say, "Man, I'm getting older and my body is hurting," can you imagine being 500 years old and then God says, "I want you to build a boat without power tools." 120 years God was patient.

You look throughout even the prophets that we're reading through this season, many of them spoke 300-400 years before judgment took place. And yes, we understand that God is jealous for us. Yes, we understand that sin must be accounted for but hear this clearly, he is slow to anger but there is a time where he says enough is enough. You say, "When is that time, pastor?" I don't know. I don't know when that is in your life, you don't know when it is in my life, we don't know when it is in our culture's life but I promise you much like as alluded here, that what we know as the Babylonians were just having a good old time, sneaking in when they were having a party. Nobody knew that it was coming the next day. In fact, what does Jesus say in Matthew 24? "The day that I come, you will know not." I wonder how many people in that day, "But Jesus, if I just had one more day, if I just had one more hour." He's looking at some of you and saying, "I've given you decades. How much more time?" Interesting in Jonah the Ninevites immediately repented on the first day of a three day excursion.

But here's the parallel here, notice what it says, he'll come out of the whirlwind. It says there at the beginning of these verses, it says the rivers will dry up, it says the mountains will quake, the earth will burn. Interesting that all these passages not only speak to their current situation but to the days future. In fact, this coming out of the whirlwind, you see it pictured in the book of Job 38. I've got news for you: the Bible says in 1 Peter that there will be scoffers in the end days but Jesus Christ is coming back and how does he come back? According to Acts 1 he comes out of the clouds. According to Revelation 19 he comes from above.

So it is no wonder that he says out of the whirlwind, then what will happen? He says, "When I come out of the whirlwind, the rivers will be made dry." Read Revelation 16, what happens in the end days right before that famous battle of Armageddon? The rivers run dry. The mountains will quake, read Isaiah 41, it says when Jesus touched down on earth, it says that the mountains will be lowered, the valleys shall be raised, and it says that all the earth will be burned.

It's interesting in 2 Peter 3, it prophesies this but in Revelation 20 it takes place. It says that at his face, this is Revelation 20:10, it says that the heavens and the earth were dismissed from him which leads to a very personal aspect. Notice verse 6, "Who can stand before his indignation?" You know, I've met a lot of people throughout the years who have made this statement to me, "One day when I see God face-to-face, I've got some things to say to him." No, you don't. And I've heard people and they're well-

meaning and they say, "Well, when I get to heaven one day, I've got some questions I'm gonna ask." No, you're not. Read chapter 20 of the book of Revelation and find anybody who speaks up in their own defense. Find anybody who said, "But, but, but, God, I got a question."

What does it say in verse 6? "Who can stand?" You know, it's interesting that prophesy in 2 Peter 3, that fulfillment in Revelation 20, it says the heavens are gone, the earth is gone, I've got news for you, on that day there's nothing to stand on. "Who can stand?" It's no wonder then that the books are opened and there's this contrast between the book of life and the books of works.

We see this parallel that it's not just the Ninevites of days gone by, it's all of humanity and there comes a time that even though we've seen cultures come and cultures go, individuals come and individuals go, there is coming a day where all of humanity, the Lord says, "Enough is enough." Which leads us to the last point here. What does this mean for our individual lives? Well, I've got some gracious words for you. I mentioned that there were two positive statements in the book of Nahum, verse 7 and verse 15. Everything else is Nadoom, so to speak, but I want you to notice the particulars. Notice verse 7, "The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him." He knows those who trust him.

You know, one of the most frightening passages in all the Bible, at least in my opinion, is found toward the end of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7. Jesus has been speaking at some length and there in Matthew 7, beginning about verse 21, he makes this statement, that the day is coming, that the day is coming wherein the language that is used, the figure is as if the door of heaven is shut and it says that there is a crowd of people saying, "But Lord, why don't I get in? Why am I not allowed to enter? I did mighty works in your name. I did incredible, I prophesied in your name." Let me put it in 21st century language, "I never missed church. I gave 10% plus Lottie Moon. I did it all." And he said, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity," listen to this statement, "I never knew you." Interesting here tucked in the middle of the minor prophets, he knows them that trust in him. In other words, on this side of the empty tomb when we come to that understanding that we are the ones who are messed up, we are the ones who have sinned, when we believe that Jesus Christ is the only solution to our sin problem and we ask him to forgive us and to save us, we enter into vibrant relationship with him, he saves us, and we're now his children. That's why John 1:12 says those who believe in him shall be declared the sons or the children of God.

Oh, but there's a parallel. Go to verse 15, the other positive statement in Nadoom here. It says, "Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" You know, it's one of the great humorous jokes of our culture that every time there is a pageant, and I'll just use that term collectively, that everybody says they desire world peace. Well, you know the Bible says that world peace is gonna come but I've got news for all of us and I know this is not politically correct but I'm getting to the point in life and I've got enough gray hair, I just don't care: world peace is not gonna come at the hands of the United Nations, world peace isn't gonna come at the hands of

even stepping across the DMZ, world peace only happens when Jesus Christ shows back up again and the Bible declares it's going to happen at one point in the future. But you say, "Well, that hasn't happened yet. I live on this side of thousands of years of chaos and torment. My own life is in an upheaval." I've got great news for you. I told you it was Nadoom, it's a bunch of nay, but we're gonna close on a positive here, that even in the midst of the storm, even in the midst of the mess of life, you and I can have peace. Now there may not be peace in the community, there may not be peace in the culture, there may not be peace in the world but Romans 5:1 says this, that we are justified by faith through Jesus Christ and therefore we have peace with God.

All that we read in Nahum, it happened to the Ninevites, it's going to happen to every culture including ours if we don't repent, that goes against the Lord, and we discover that in the midst of what's happened in the past, what may happen in the future, that we can have peace with God. Our sin, our rebellion can be forgiven. Our souls can be saved. It's through the person of Jesus Christ and no system of religious behavior.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. Maybe you're that person today who said, "You know what, pastor? I need that peace. I've been looking for it in everything but Jesus and I'm ready." I've got great news for you, the Bible says in Romans 10 whoever calls on the name of the Lord should be saved.

You say, "What does it mean to call on the name of the Lord?" Well, if I were you, I would just have a conversation with God. It's not a conversation that you necessarily have to have out loud. It's not one that you would have to repeat maybe the same words that I would say or the phrases I would say, but maybe your conversation with the Lord would go a little something like this. "God, today I just want to cry out to you and I just want to admit I know that I'm the problem and I believe that Jesus Christ is the only answer. God, I believe, I believe that it is my sin that has created the chaos and the destruction of life but I desire that peace that Jesus Christ can only bring. So God, today I believe, I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much, I believe he was born on my behalf. I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much he was living to live a sinless life on my behalf. I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much, God, I believe he paid the price for my sin on his cross. And God, I believe, I believe that three days later when they found the tomb empty and Jesus alive, it made it possible for my sins to be forgiven and my soul to be saved. So God, today I don't have all the answers to the problems of the world but I do believe that Jesus Christ is the only answer to my sin problem so the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me, I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, maybe you're that one like that little boy last week who just needs to come running down the aisle in just a moment. We're here to celebrate with you. Or maybe you're that person today that that took place a long time ago. Maybe been saved not just weeks or months or years, maybe even saved for decades and you realize that your life looks a whole lot like the Ninevites. Or maybe the Lord's been whispering in your ear, "Enough is enough," and maybe today is the day where you walk out of this place dropping the baggage of sin and rebellion, dedicated whole-heartedly to living for the Lord alone.

Heavenly Father, as we come to this time of decision, thank you that just like we read in Nahum, that you are the God of second chances, God, you're the God of third chances and fourth chances and some of us would be willing to say, God, we've lost count of how many chances. Thank you, O God, that today is another one of those opportunities where we can get on board with you, that we can be where you've called us to be and do what you've called us to do. Help us, God, today to respond to you and nobody or nothing else. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I'm gonna ask you to stand with me as we have our time of decision. Whatever decision, we'll be right here at the front.