

June 19, 2016

“The LORD is Good”

Nahum 1:7

The LORD is good,
a strong refuge when trouble comes.
He is close to those who trust in him.

The book bears the name of the prophet Nahum. His name means “**comfort**” or “**consolation**.” The city of Capernaum is named after Nahum. The Jews call the city “**Kepher-Nahum**,” or “**The City of Nahum**.”

The name Nahum, or “**comfort**,” is a strange name for this book, because the book of Nahum is a book of judgment. It is a book of harsh pronouncements of doom against a people who had abandoned the ways of God.

This book is a sequel to the book of Jonah. About 100 years earlier, Jonah was sent to the city of Nineveh, which was the capital city of the nation of Assyria. Jonah entered their city preaching a message of certain, impending judgment. When the people of Nineveh heard the message of Jonah, they repented of their sins and the Lord spared the city. Now, a century has passed and they have turned away from the commitment they made to the Lord and go back to their evil ways. Nahum’s message is one of judgment.

In **verse 1**, Nahum refers to his message as a “problem”, “**burden**.” This word can also mean “**heavy**.” His message is a heavy message because it is a message of doom, and judgment.

While Nahum’s message is one of judgment and wrath, there is one bright spot. I am referring to **verse 7**. In the midst of all the words of wrath, anger and doom, this verse stands out as a verse of hope.

I want to hang out in **verse 7** today. I want to borrow the words of Nahum where he says, “The LORD is good” for my title. Yahweh, the Lord God is good. I want to show you some **reasons** that I see in this verse that teach us that **God Is Good**.

Nahum 1:7

The LORD is good,
a strong refuge when trouble comes.
He is close to those who trust in him.

The LORD is good

First Nahum clearly says, “**The LORD is good**.” This statement is made against the clear backdrop of God’s judgment. Consider the context of **verses 2-6**.

Nahum 1:1-8a THE MESSAGE

1 A report on the problem of Nineveh, the way God gave Nahum of Elkosh to see it:

2 GOD is serious business.

He won't be trifled with.

He avenges his foes.

He stands up against his enemies, fierce and raging.

3 But GOD doesn't lose his temper.

He's powerful, but it's a patient power.

Still, no one gets by with anything.

Sooner or later, everyone pays.

Tornadoes and hurricanes

are the wake of his passage,

Storm clouds are the dust

he shakes off his feet.

4 He yells at the sea: It dries up.

All the rivers run dry.

The Bashan and Carmel mountains shrivel,

the Lebanon orchards shrivel.

5 Mountains quake in their roots,

hills dissolve into mud flats.

Earth shakes in fear of GOD.

The whole world's in a panic.

6 Who can face such towering anger?

Who can stand up to this fierce rage?

His anger spills out like a river of lava,

his fury shatters boulders.

7 GOD is good,

a hiding place in tough times.

He recognizes and welcomes

anyone looking for help,

8 No matter how desperate the trouble.

This should encourage us today, because our nation, like the ancient Assyrians, has wandered far away from God. Not only have we turned from keeping God's law we despise God's law, we have ignored God's word, and we have found countless ways to cut God out of our lives.

The turmoil in our society can be traced to our abandonment of God which will bring judgment. Even in the midst of judgment, "***The LORD is good!***"

The word "***good***" means, beautiful, best, bountiful, fair, gracious, joyful, kindness, loving, precious. That word describes the very character of God. In fact, our English word God is a shortened form of the word good. Circumstances may say otherwise, but "***God is good!***"

Regardless of the problems of life: ***finances, government, people, pain, problems, sickness, or even death, "God is good!"***

We are living in hard times, but **“The LORD is good!”** In fact, He is good to all people, in all places, in all situations, and at all times.

Psalms 145:9

The LORD is good to everyone.
He showers compassion on all his creation.

In spite of how things look, feel, or appear, **“God is good!”** That is the assurance we have in all situations, circumstances, and conditions of life. Consider what David wrote about this:

Psalms 34:8

Taste and see that the LORD is good.
Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

Psalms 100:5

For the LORD is good.
His unfailing love continues forever,
and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

Psalms 135:3

Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good;
celebrate his lovely name with music.

The fact is, **“God is good!”** All these verses teach us the same truth; they teach us that, **“The Lord is good!”** He is always good! Paul a man who hated Christians and was seeing to it that they were arrested and even killed, later became a Christian himself and wrote this:

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

It's easy for us to say, **“God is good”** when life is going well, but it doesn't change the fact that, **“God is good”** even when times are bad. The Lord is good all the time, and in every way.

Chapter 1 of the book of Nahum declares the greatness of God. But, the one word that best describes His unchanging nature is the word **“good”**. **“The Lord is good!”**

If you don't get anything else out of this message, there is one fact I want you to remember, have you figured it out yet? I want you to remember the fact that, **“The Lord is good!”**

A strong refuge when trouble comes.

Second Nahum reminds the embattled people of God that God is **a strong refuge when trouble comes**. Or **“a stronghold in the day of trouble.”** the word **“stronghold”** means, **“a place of safety, protection and refuge; a safe harbor in the storm.”**

Sooner or later, we will all need a strong refuge. Trouble/distress will come to us all eventually; those times when life closes in around us, and the pressures of life come against us. Who knew that better than Job a man who lost everything he had in one day, his family, his business, his health, and everything he owned:

Job 5:7

People are born for trouble

Job 14:1

"How frail is humanity!
How short is life, how full of trouble!

In those times, times of trouble, the people of God have a refuge. Consider these promises:

Psalms 73:1 NLT

Truly God is good ...to those whose hearts are pure.

Deuteronomy 33:27 NLT

The eternal God is your refuge,
and his everlasting arms are under you.
He drives out the enemy before you;
he cries out, 'Destroy them!'

Psalms 27:5 NCV

During danger he will keep me safe in his shelter.
He will hide me in his Holy Tent,
or he will keep me safe on a high mountain.

Psalms 46:1 NLT

God is our refuge and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.

Psalms 50:15 NLT

Then call on me when you are in trouble,
and I will rescue you,
and you will give me glory."

Proverbs 18:10 THE MESSAGE

GOD 's name is a place of protection —
good people can run there and be safe.

Isaiah 43:2-3 THE MESSAGE

When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you.
When you're in rough waters, you will not go down.
When you're between a rock and a hard place,
it won't be a dead end — Because I am GOD, your personal God ...your Savior.
I paid a huge price for you.

We have a place to which we can flee in the day of trouble; a place for rest where the hurts and horrors of life cannot follow us. There is a place of safety for the people of God.

Verse 2 say “**God is jealous**” that does not imply that God is guilty of sin. What it means, is that God views us as a precious possession. It means that He places Himself between us and those persons or events that would harm us.

Imagine taking your child to the zoo. While you are there, a lion escapes from its cage. Would you like to do everything in your power to place yourself between your child and that lion? Of course you would! But why? You would do it because you are jealous over that child. A child is precious to you, and you would pay any price; you would even lay down your very life to protect your child.

Thus it is with God, His children are precious to Him, and He will do whatever it takes to protect them. Notice **verse 3**. The Lord declares that He “**has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.**” That’s simply reminds us, that He is in control. Our God is a sovereign God. The winds and the waves obeyed His will.

When the storms of life rise against you, and the winds of adversity beat against your life, you will discover that there is a place of refuge for the child of God. You will discover that there is peace in the midst of the storm. You will discover that God is directing your paths for His glory, so ...

Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT

Trust in the LORD with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.

When the “**unmarked ways of life**” come, trust God, He is good. Job understood this truth...

Job 23:10 NLT

"But he knows where I am going.
And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold.

So did David...

Psalms 37:23 NLT

The LORD directs the steps of the godly.
He delights in every detail of their lives.

We need to learn the truth that even when we cannot see the way, He is the way.

He is close to those who trust in him.

We are told that, “**He is close to those who trust in him.**” That God is close is “**to know intimately; to know by experience.**” The word “**trust**” means, “**to flee for protection; to trust in God.**”

This phrase reminds us that God knows His people. He knows your name! He knows where you are; He knows what you face; He knows all the details of your life. He knows you intimately, comprehensively, and completely. There is nothing about you, your life, or your situation that has escaped His attention.

God knows you and everything about you. He knows His sheep (John 10:14). In fact, He knows them intimately. **Psalm 23** declares the depth of His knowledge and the comprehensiveness of His care for those who belong to Him. You may know Psalm 23, but I want to share with you a version you may not have heard before from Psalms Now, by Leslie Brandt:

The Lord is my constant companion.
There is no need that He cannot fulfil.
Whether His course for me points to the mountaintops of glorious ecstasy
or to the valleys of human suffering,
He is by my side,
He is ever present with me.

He is close beside me when I tread the dark streets of danger,
and even when I flirt with death itself,
He will not leave me.

When the pain is severe,
He is near to comfort.
When the burden is heavy,
He is there to lean upon.
When depression darkens my soul,
He touches me with eternal joy.
When I feel empty and alone,
He fills the aching vacuum with His power.
My security is in His promise to be near to me always,
and in the knowledge that He will never let me go.

- **Psalms Now by Leslie Brandt**

By the way, not only does He know His sheep, His sheep know Him too (**John 10:4–5; 27**). His sheep know His voice. He speaks, and they respond to His words. They are in a constant state of two-way communication with the Shepherd.

Just so you know, the Lords people are more than just dumb, defenseless, directionless sheep. We are elevated far beyond that. In **John 15:13–15**, Jesus calls us His “**friends**.” The word “**friends**” means, “**an associate**”. Let that sink in, He associates with us. We are His friends! They say, “**you are known by the company you keep.**” It sounds to me like the Lords people are in good company.

He is a “**Shepherd**” to His sheep. He is a “**Friend**” to His associates. But, it gets better than that. **Hebrews 2:11–12** tells us that we are His “**brothers and sisters.**”

Hebrews 2:11-12

So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy **have the same Father**. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them **his brothers and sisters**. For he said to God, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among your assembled people."

You see, He is more than the leader of a bunch of dumb animals. He is more than a friend of a gang of sinners. He has saved us by His grace, and brought us into His family. There is a heavenly acquaintance, and that gives us hope in the day of trouble.

“The same almighty power that is exerted for the terror and destruction of the wicked is engaged, and shall be employed, for the protection and satisfaction of his own people; he is able both to save and to destroy. In the day of public trouble, when God's judgments are in the earth, laying all waste, he will be a place of defense to those that by faith put themselves under his protection, those that trust in him in the way of their duty, that live a life of dependence upon him, and devotedness to him; he knows them, he owns them for his, he takes cognizance of their case, knows what is best for them...”

- Matthew Henry

Conc: I just want to remind you as I close, “**The Lord is good!**” This might be a good time to come before Him and praise Him for His goodness. This might be a good time to come home if you have wandered away. This might be a good time to get before the Lord and ask Him to forgive you for doubting His goodness in your life.

GOD is good, a hiding place in tough times.
He recognizes and welcomes anyone looking for help,
No matter how desperate the trouble.

Nahum 1:7

The LORD is good,
a strong refuge when trouble comes.
He is close to those who trust in him.