

God's Tough and Tender Love (*Zephaniah*)

July 28, 2024

God is a God of love. But most prefer to think only in terms of God's tender love.

God wanted and expected of the kings of Israel to lead the people in the ways of God. To lead them to fulfill their calling to be a chosen people, different from the other nations.

The people were exhibiting a self-sufficient spirit. They felt no need to trust in the Lord.

Zephaniah says they do not draw near to the Lord. In other words, they are not concerned with living a holy life. As a result, the Lord warns that a self-centered, self-worshipping society is being formed.

The same characteristics are apparent on every hand in our society today.

The people embraced others gods and other religions as a means to justify sinful actions and behaviors. Today, we do the same thing. We continue to create our own gods as well...and they are us.

We have decided that we, not God, are the ultimate determiners of what is right and what is wrong largely so that we can justify and continue to do whatever we want.

Throughout this book, and throughout the minor prophets, this is the recurring theme: The Lord is in the midst of a rebellious, unbelieving people. This righteous God is calling people to turn from their rebellion and their pagan ways and to live rightly before him.

Under Manasseh, the Word of God had been completely lost and abandoned; forgotten and covered in dust.

One generation is all it took for the Word of God to be completely removed from the land.

"Be silent before the Sovereign Lord, for the day of the Lord is near..."
Zephaniah 1:7

A day is coming for us when God says, "Enough!"

Be silent...means there are no more excuses and no more arguments. Be quiet and listen to me. I am God. I am not going to put up with this any longer.

Perhaps the most significant issue of unbelief in our culture today, and even within the church, it is that we do not believe in a holy and righteous God. We embrace the tender love of God, but we simply refuse to believe in a God whose love will also hold us accountable for our rebellion against his laws and statutes.

If God does not take sin seriously, if God does not ultimately judge sin, then why was it necessary for the promised Messiah to die? Why does God the Father offer his Son to be crucified on a Cross? What is the reason and the purpose of the blood of Jesus Christ?

Notes:
