

Read Nahum 1

The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means leave *the guilt* unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet. Nahum 1:3

Some things don't mix...like my food. I've never been cool when my food is touching, and even as a kid my mom would explain to babysitters that my chips and my ravioli had better maintain their boundaries. I'm not sure what freaked me out about it, but at buffets or potlucks I've always had less on my plate because of the possibility of food touchage (yes I made that word up).

In my world it is clear when something should not mix. However, as I read Nahum 1, verse 3 shows again why God is so unique and incredible. He is both slow to anger and great in power. How does that work? These are such opposites, and we know that God's anger is kindled by ungodliness, so He's never without a good reason. And yet He's slow in His anger. When I was growing up, I always sized up an opponent. If I thought I could take them physically or verbally, I did. God can best any opponent, and yet He chooses mercy and patience. **Why can't we learn from this? What would our world, families, and churches look like if we just chilled out? We take offense at the smallest of infractions, yet God is slow to anger even as we deliberately choose sin that we promised to leave behind. He shows us mercy and grace, so why can't we show it to others? People will fail to believe the message of Christianity based on the lifestyle of unforgiving and uncaring Christians. Is there grace and mercy you need to be showing to someone?**

Read Nahum 2

For the LORD will restore the splendor of Jacob like the splendor of Israel, even though devastators have devastated them and destroyed their vine branches.

Nahum 2:2

At the end of World War II, President Harry Truman was in Europe helping to shape the borders of the post-war continent. While he was there, he asked to see the city of Berlin. As they drove through, he was completely overwhelmed by the devastation that existed in the city as a result of years of bombing. In fact, the entire continent for the next two years after the war suffered from food shortages, a lack of shelter, and a very slow rebuilding process. Eventually the U.S. gave billions to help Europe back on its feet, but there were times it looked as though the nations of Europe would be unable to bounce back.

As the Lord promises restoration, I'm sure some in Israel looked around and said, "God, are you sure you've got the right place?" After years of oppression and destruction, I'm sure restoration seemed like a long shot. And therein lies one of the cool things about God: He can restore anything and anyone. There is no situation that God could not restore. And there is no person that God cannot do the same with. God never expects to have perfect people to accomplish His will. In fact, our reading of the Bible shows God using some of the most flawed of His people to accomplish His purposes. **What situation do you feel is beyond God's power to restore? Perhaps a damaged**

relationship with a friend or family member? Or do you wonder if God can restore you from the choices of sin? He absolutely has the power to do so. It's not as hard as you think; you simply have to be willing to let the sin go so that God can do a permanent work in you. If you're not willing to repent, you're not ready to be restored.

Read Nahum 3

I will throw filth on you and make you vile, and set you up as a spectacle.

Nahum 3:6

We have an art museum in our house; it's called the refrigerator. From a very early age, our children understood that mommy would take their works of art and cover the fridge with them. Sometimes it got to the point that opening the door meant picking up papers that were too heavy for the magnets we had. Now as the kids are getting older, the fridge isn't quite as covered as it once was, but there are still recent works on display. We like to show off what we've done well. When we're young we show off for our parents, and as we grow older we like for our spouses, children, or co-workers to take notice of our accomplishments.

Ninevah had been a great city in the eyes of men, but now their shame was on full display. Their greed and sin had led to this moment that they found themselves open for all to see in light of their evil deeds. When we do right, we should be content with the admonition and encouragement of God. But when we do wrong, we find that God is just as attentive to our lives. And if we fail to live a life of righteousness, God will do what is necessary to get our attention. In this life, we don't get to always choose what goes on display. If your desire is more for man than God, then He will show you for what you are to those around you. **Sin leads to nothing good. Any advantage or benefit that we think we receive, will be just as likely to turn to shame in our futures. Do you have something in your life that you fear may come to light? Instead of living in fear of that day, you can repent! We can choose to make the change and live differently than we have before. In doing so, we strengthen our relationship to the Lord, and preserve our testimony before men.**