



January 26, 2020

“Withstanding the Test of Time”

Nahum 1 - 3

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Time can often be our enemy. Relationships can drift apart slowly over time. The same is true about our walk with the Lord. What was once joyful, exciting, and important can, over time, become common, ordinary, and unwanted. This is the case with the Ninevites in the book of Nahum. One hundred and twenty-five years earlier, the Ninevites repented under the preaching of Jonah, but now the Ninevites were under God’s judgment for forsaking him. How does the slow erosion of our faith happen over time? In this message Pastor Gary shares three threats to a sustained walk with God.

Historical Background

1. In Hebrew, the name is Nachum, which means comfort.
2. Nahum is not mentioned in the Bible outside of this book.
3. Bible scholars believe he was a prophet circa 650 B.C.
4. Nahum was an Elkoshite, which is an unknown place; however, tradition says that he was born in Capernaum.
 - a. **Nahum 1:1** - *“The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.”*
 - b. The name Capernaum comes from two Hebrew words, kaphar, which means village, and Nachum.
5. Jonah was sent by God to Nineveh about 125 years earlier.
 - a. Nineveh was the capital city of the Assyrian Empire.
 - b. The height of the Assyrian Empire was in the 7th and 8th centuries B.C.
 - c. Nineveh was located on the Tigris River in what is modern-day Iraq.

- d. In the book of Jonah God showed the people of Nineveh mercy.
 - e. In the book of Nahum God showed the people of Nineveh judgment.
6. In 612 B.C. the Tigris River flooded and overwhelmed the city of Nineveh, which compromised 2.5 miles of the city walls, and the Babylonians entered the breach in the walls to conquer the city.
- a. **Nahum 1:8** - *“But with an overwhelming flood He will make an utter end of its place...”* (Emphasis added)
7. Pastor Gary said, “How is it that the people of Nineveh went from great revival during the days of Jonah to terrible ruin in the days of Nahum? [Jonah] preached the good news and there [was] revival and there [was] fasting and prayer. The king [issued] an edict that everybody [needed] to turn to God, and people [got] on their faces before God. They [had] a sincere God moment, and there was great revival. But now... 125 years later... barely four generations have passed, and the same people are no longer walking with God. They [had] forsaken God. They [had] turned their backs on God, and they [had] gone back to their previous way of living evil, wicked, idolatrous lives. ... For those who think that God should have been more merciful to these people, I want to ask a couple of questions. How long does God have to be patient with us? How long is long enough? How long can we continue to ‘toy’ with God and get away with it? At some point... though he is a merciful God [who] is abounding in love and mercy, he will not let wickedness go unpunished. He gave Nineveh a chance. There were people who responded and repented and turned to God... but [now the Ninevites had forsaken God]. We need to understand that within the character of God [there is] mercy and justice. ... He will not allow wickedness to go unpunished forever, and time [was] up for Nineveh.”
- a. **Romans 11:22** - *“... consider the goodness and severity of God...”* (NKJV) (Emphasis added)
 - b. **Romans 11:22** - *“Consider the kindness and sternness of God.”* (NIV 1984) (Emphasis added)
8. Pastor Gary said, “God doesn’t show mercy dependent upon man staying true to God; God shows mercy for his own name’s sake. It’s not because we are so deserving, or we are so special, or we are so good... We are often unfaithful, ungrateful people, sinful to the core, and yet God [has mercy on us].”
- a. **Isaiah 48:9** - *“For My name’s sake I will defer My anger. And for My praise I will restrain it from you...”*
 - b. **Ezekiel 20:44** - *“ ‘Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have dealt with you for My name’s sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel,’ says the Lord GOD.”*
 - c. **Psalms 109:21** - *“But You, O GOD the Lord, deal with me for Your name’s sake; because Your mercy is good, deliver me.”*

9. God shows his mercy to people who are often very undeserving because that's how God does things.
- a. **Romans 5:8** - *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Three Warnings About Things That Will Hinder A Sustained Walk With The Lord

Beware Of Busyness

10. Pastor Gary said, "Busyness is a relationship killer. ... Important things are worth your time. You prioritize what you love, don't you? ... God has given each of us the same 24 hours each day. [How] do you discipline yourself for the best use of that time and what part of [each] day does God get? ... [Take time to consistently read the Bible.] ... [The] key is consistency and regularity rather than [putting unreal expectations on yourself]. ... We need the Word of God to get into our hearts and our [minds]. ... When you read Scripture... the best time to seek [the Lord] is in the morning. ... Let me tell you why this will be a helpful practice. You're going to feel the crush of your day, so you need to guard your heart and your mind in the Lord... to help you face whatever the day might bring."
- a. **Psalm 5:1-3** - *"Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up."*
 - b. **Mark 1:35** - *"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, [Jesus] went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."*
 - c. **Psalm 46:10** - *"Be still, and know that I am God..."*

Beware Of Cultural Creep And Worldly Ways

11. Pastor Gary said, "I can't emphasize this enough. Everything about the culture is trying to put distance between you and God. Worse than that, everything about the culture is trying to conform you into its pattern, its mindset, its values, and its behavior. [The] culture over time has become more evil in practice and belief... You cannot serve the world and the Lord at the same time. ... The culture will put a wedge between you and God, and you cannot serve them both. ... The encroachment of the culture threatens the foundation upon which our lives are built, so we have to take time [to] evaluate and to adjust and to make sure that we are on solid ground. We have to examine our footings. Is Christ the solid rock upon which our lives are built, or have we become more like the world, talk like the world, look like the world, [and] behave like the world? If that is true, we run the risk of being swept into the ocean of culture."
- a. **1 John 2:15-17** - *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone*

loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

- b. **Romans 12:2** – *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*
- c. Pastor Gary made reference to lyrics from a great hymn of the Christian faith, *My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*.¹
 - i. “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness... On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand all other ground is sinking sand.”

Beware Of Counterfeit Substitutes That Offer Fulfillment In Place Of God

- 12. In **John 4:1-26**, we read about the account of Jesus’ conversation with a Samaritan woman.
 - a. This woman went from one relationship to the next trying to find satisfaction, an inner peace, and fulfillment in her life.
- 13. Pastor Gary said, “The greatest and deepest longings of your soul can only and ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus. People will go in search of all kinds of things, without the Lord, trying to find that satisfaction and fulfillment. [People] will try illicit sexual relationships, [multiple relationships, money, drugs, alcohol, fame, or success]... [but] if you think that other sources and means will bring fulfillment to you, besides the Lord, over time you will drift from [the Lord].”
 - a. “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.” – Blaise Pascal²

Conclusion

- 14. Pastor Gary said, “Do not fail the test of time. Stay true to the Lord. Run the race with perseverance.”
- 15. **2 Timothy 4:7** – *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

Discussion Questions

- 1. Read **Nahum 1:1-8** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.

¹ https://hymnary.org/text/my_hope_is_built_on_nothing_less#authority_media_flexscores

² <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/801132-there-is-a-god-shaped-vacuum-in-the-heart-of-each>

2. Provide an overview of the life of Nahum. (See #1 through #6 above)
3. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the goodness and the severity of God. (See #7 above)
4. Read and discuss the Scriptures and Pastor Gary's comments about the mercy of God. (See #8 and #9 above)
5. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they've recognized the overwhelming mercy of the Lord.
6. How have you experienced the severity and judgment of the Lord?
7. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments about the busyness of life and the negative impact busyness has on a right relationship with the Lord. (See #10 above)
8. Read and discuss [Psalm 5:1-3](#), [Mark 1:35](#), and [Psalm 46:10](#). (See #10a through #10c above)
9. How is the Lord ministering to you in your personal devotional life of prayer and Bible study?
10. What are some of the changes you would need to make to prioritize your life in order to spend time with the Lord?
11. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about the danger of allowing "culture creep" and worldly ways to move you farther and farther away from a right relationship with the Lord. (See #11 above)
12. Spend time reading and talking about [1 John 2:15-17](#) and [Romans 12:2](#). (See #11 a and #11b above)
13. Provide an overview of the account of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman. (See #12 above)
14. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about a relationship with the Lord being the only thing that will bring fulfillment and joy in life. (#13 above)
15. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)