

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. (i) (Quality: Very good)

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- [0 : 00] At the Lord's help I will direct your attention to the prophecy of Zephaniah, the third chapter, the seventeenth verse.
- The prophecy of Zephaniah, the third chapter, and the seventeenth verse. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.
- He will save. He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing.
- The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save. He will rejoice over thee with joy.
- He will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing. Wherever the prophets of the Lord were directed to speak to Judah and Israel in the Old Testament times, we find that though there was no holding back in telling them of their sins and wickednesses and the impending judgments of God, there was a continual call to them to return and repent.
- [1 : 37] At the same time, there were words so full of encouragement, assuring them of the greatness of God and of his mighty power.
- We find the prophecy of Zephaniah has some very doleful words, solemn words which are spoken.
- But here we come toward the end of this short prophecy to find such a glorious declaration of their God that would surely, under the Spirit's application, inspire them, encourage them, and lift them up.
- The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. It has always been, since there was the church contained in the tabernacle in the wilderness, that God has been in the midst of his people.
- He has walked with them in the midst. He has not been visible, except on a few isolated occasions, when he took on a human form.
- [3 : 19] But generally speaking, he was with them in spirit. Those that feared God were conscious of his presence.
- Those that feared not God were not capable of being conscious of his presence.
- What obtained then, obtains in the present day, as well as in New Testament times.
- Has he not said, the Almighty God, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Words which are spoken in the Old Testament, and reiterated in the New.
- But then, we may take yet a closer view of these words, in the midst of thee. In the midst of the people, truly.
- [4 : 33] In the midst of the church, within the church. In the midst of the possessors, of grace. In the midst of, rather, in the midst of the professing church, in the hearts of those that were possessors of grace.

And this is a point. God is in the midst of the hearts of those that fear him. These, because God is there, are blessed with a knowledge and a realization of this truth.

They feel the influence of his presence, sometimes restraining, and sometimes constraining. Now, with the Lord's help today, it is our desire to exalt him.

And to do that which, by the grace of God, will cause us to humble ourselves under his mighty power.

Thus we have Peter's words, humble yourself therefore, under the mighty hand of God. We may feel this morning, some of us, at any rate, we see the necessity of being humble.

[6 : 07] and yet we are impotent in respect to the ability to accomplish it. And yet it must be accomplished. How is it to be accomplished?

by the Lord thy God in the midst of thee being mighty, and throwing down the strongholds of pride, and all that associates itself with pride.

the people of God rejoice in humility. They are happy in humility. They long for humility.

humility. And yet, how elusive humility sometimes is. and if you should feel, some of you this morning, that this is so with you, then, may it be yours to be encouraged by these words, the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, reminding us of those precious words of the scripture, that which is impossible with men is possible with God.

And God is in the midst. We should observe this. He is not afar off, but he dwells in the hearts of his people.

[7 : 46] That we should sometimes feel that he has departed from his dwelling place, is solemn indeed.

But, to the people of God, he should be a God near at hand. In our trials and troubles that may suddenly come upon us, how distressing to discover or to feel or to be tempted to think that God was afar off.

And therefore, he could not hear and he would not hear. If this is so, we are bringing the almighty God down to the level of Baal and the gods of the heathen who, though they cried and shouted and cut themselves with lancets and all sorts of things, yet, they could not make their God hear.

But what shall we say of our God? He, with heaven and earth at his command, he waits to answer prayer.

no, we need the almighty God to be the inspiration of that prayer within.

[9 : 20] Religion, real religion, is the work of almighty God. and we prove it to be so.

When we think of the apostle's words, it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure. It is the work of almighty God.

We feel, some of us have felt, I believe, that nothing else but almighty God could be effective in working in us to do his will.

And even to have a desire to do his will. If we see then our impotency and feel it, we shall acknowledge how God is mighty, yea, he is almighty because he can do that which we cannot do.

When we think about God being the mighty God, we do not confine our thinking to the works of creation.

[10 : 48] Many people may acknowledge the mightiness of God in forming the world, in setting the stars in their places, in maintaining the sun and the moon in their revolutions.

things. But there's a much mightier deed that God affects, which is hidden from the multitude of people and revealed to the saints of the most high.

And that is the mighty work that he performs within, but within the soul, causing the soul to pray by the forcefulness of the almighty God.

Vessels made leap for the master's honour are earthen vessels who are willing to acknowledge that they're earthen vessels, but are also willing to acknowledge that there dwells in their heart the almighty God, who works in them everything that is spiritual, who works in their heart the desire to worship God, who works in their heart the desire to pray and to praise.

If some of us were honest with ourselves, we should have to come to this conclusion that we should never pray at all. If it was not for God, the almighty God dwelling in the midst of us and inspiring us with prayer, not something that will appeal to the flesh, not something that when it is produced in so many words, will attract the applause of men, but that which is mighty before God, the feeblest prayer, if faith be there, exceeds all empty notion.

[13 : 13] prayer. And prayer is a weapon for the feeble. Weakest souls can wield it best.

It is true, we acknowledge it to be true, men ought always to pray and not to faint. Now, the people of God, they are always praying, but not by dint of their natural ability or propensity.

The prayers which are acceptable with God are such that is the result of the work of the Spirit of God.

Now, we have a commentary on this aspect of divine truth from the 8th of Romans we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

That is the work, that is the evidence of the Lord thy God being mighty in the midst of thee. Amen. Amen. Amen. We find how this was evidenced in our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

[14 : 48] He received the Spirit of God without measure. And we read concerning him in the Hebrews that he was heard in that he feared.

As a man, he depended upon God, upon the Spirit of God. We would speak carefully, and we would speak reverently, but how will he sympathize with you and with me unless he walked the same way.

And he was in all to points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He groaned in the Spirit. He rejoiced in the Spirit, and by the Spirit of God.

The mighty God dwelling in him. God was in Christ. That is, in this God-man. He was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

Great is the mystery of godliness, God made manifest in the flesh. The almighty God, we see therefore, in Christ.

[16 : 22] Now, the word says here, the Lord thy God is in the midst of thee, is mighty. It is because he is mighty that we prevail.

Well, we prevail in prayer. We prevail in worship. We prevail in hope. We prevail in faith. every way.

Because the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. If this should be revealed in a company of people, and therefore be malpronounced as others may observe it, yet it is an individual work of God, where the church of God here and there, as we recognize churches upon the earth, is blessed, then it is not because the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty in general terms, as much as it is because the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty in the hearts of a few or more.

And it is for this reason that God's name is honored, that prosperity is enjoyed, that mercy is received, that the praises of the Most High are sung, and that the prayers are offered are prayers of faith.

All are the result of the inward working of God, the Lord thy God, in the midst of thee who is mighty. Under such teaching of the Spirit of God, we are willing to efface ourselves completely in order that the Lord may receive all the honor and all the glory.

[18 : 36] surely this was found in the heart of the apostle, for he said, by the grace of God, I am what I am.

In other words, the Lord my God in the midst of me is mighty. We read in the scriptures of those that did our exploits.

have we been in this position? Shall we acknowledge with self-effacement that the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty?

It is not me, but God that dwelleth in me. I am nothing but a mere instrument. I am nothing but an earthen vessel.

that Christ may be all and in all. And so therefore, if we are truly to worship the most high God with acceptance, it must be a complete acknowledgement that the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

[20 : 08] Now, the church of God are well aware that they possess two natures. They didn't always.

We're not born with two natures. but when we're newborn, then we have a new nature.

We have two natures. but when we have the new nature, the old nature doesn't die. And therefore, there is a severe conflict going on within our breasts, the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

Paul himself was well acquainted with this, and sometimes we find it good to refer to the relation of his own experience in Romans chapter seven.

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal. sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not. For what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I.

[21 : 30] If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

We shall not use this as an excuse, because we are born in sin and shapened in iniquity. The human race is the personification of sin.

It's their natural bent to be sinful in one way or another, whether it's profane sinning or whether it's religious sinning.

How do we distinguish between sin and that which is not sin? The scripture tells us very clearly, that which is not of faith is sin.

And all men have not faith, that's clear, isn't it? And so therefore, that which is not faith is sin. And when this is brought to our attention, how much sin we are made conscious of in our very beings.

[22 : 52] For I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. And only the mighty God can bring us to this conclusion, because, you see, by nature we shall think that we do many good things.

The apostle thought so. He thought before he was converted that he was doing God's service. Now, we want to make this point to this stage.

Before he was converted, he was a religious man. Religion doesn't make us converted. Turning to religion doesn't make us converted. converted. Because if that is so, then Paul needed no conversion.

Because he was an eminently religious man. But the time came when he was converted. And when he was converted, after he was converted, and not before, he comes to this point.

For I know it in me that is in my flesh where there's no good thing. For the will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.

[24 : 10] And here we have the destruction of the flesh. A complete confession of complete inability to do any good thing. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not, which I would not that I do.

Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. We read in the scriptures of sin being referred to in these terms, the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

So there is something which as it were overflows in sin itself. And that overflowing was felt by the apostle when he found that he couldn't do the good that he wanted to.

Now this is not doing good to men, although it will issue from this. That will issue from this. But it is doing good to God.

Now, when we do good to men, as we may well be called upon to do and are called upon to do, it is important that we should consider as to whether we are doing good to God first in doing that.

[25 : 33] Now my meaning is this, that which we do to men, is it in faith, is it with a desire, a single eye to the honour and glory of God?

Then we shall find acceptance and satisfaction in the things that we do. But you know, sometimes the people of God have felt this, that when they desire to do good to men, honouring God in doing it, that they have had the sad discovery of the pride of their heart rising up, the desire for applause, being sought for, and in some cases, some hypocrisy arising, speaking words of negation in regard to the applause that is given and yet rejoicing in it.

Well, now all this working in by the mighty God of Israel in the heart of the apostle brought him to say this, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. God. It was the mighty God. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.

Mighty to overcome, overcome the works of the flesh, overcome the pride of the flesh, the lust of the flesh, overcome everything.

[27 : 22] God. Now, the work of the mighty God as revealed to the children of God is so different from that evidence of the mighty God which is shown to the ungodly.

Here, is there, his almighty is revealed in earthquakes, in thunders and lightnings, in dreadful things coming upon the earth.

The Egyptian magicians said on one occasion, this is the finger of God.

They couldn't imitate it. They acknowledged it. But it was something quite outward. It was a judgment. But nevertheless, it was the finger of God.

And in so saying, they acknowledged that this was the mighty God. And what we are trying to set before you this morning is something which is relative to the people of God and how they discover that the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.

[28 : 47] Mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. Mighty to the strongholds that have been set up by the flesh whether it be in a life of profanity or a life of religion.

And nothing less than the mighty God can affect it. And sometimes we discover sometimes for the first time that the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.

You are aware that there is a person a person dwelling in you that wasn't there before. Not an influence but something that is there now which wasn't there yesterday so to speak.

it's the mighty God and he's there having quickened you into life. But when did he come there?

Ah the word of God declares this the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. When the Lord comes into the hearts of poor, wretched, blind, lustful sinners he doesn't come with trumpet blowings.

[30 : 15] He comes in just the same way that he came into this world at his first advent. Into in a quiet way, in a humble way.

It may be that some might feel knowing what their heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. can ever God dwell here.

I remember reading some years ago of a missionary in Tibet who suffered a great deal of persecution at one time and he was cast into an eastern stable with all the stench that accompanied such places on one occasion.

And as he thought in his isolation about the sea and he worked out as far as he could the days, it came to him that it would be Christmas Day.

and then he thought of the Lord Jesus being laid in an eastern stable with all its filth and with all its stench.

[31 : 40] He could hardly bear it. And then he had this thought if the Lord could come in his birth into this world and could dwell and keep reserve from all the stench and filth surrounding him, then there was hope that he could come into his heart with all the stench and filth that was there and remain untouched, unholy, and remain untouched and holy.

May we not find encouragement sometimes from such a situation when we cry out can ever God dwell here? Yes, it is the mighty God.

It is the mighty God in the midst of thee. And he is mighty in the midst of thee to preserve that which is born again of the Spirit in holiness.

We need very carefully to observe the distinction between the two natures. That with which we are born will never be holy.

And that with which is communicated at the new birth can never be unholy. For that which is born of God sinneth not.

[33 : 19] So there is a preservation, a wonderful preservation, and this preservation is the result of these opening words of this verse, the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty.

Thus, there is a preservation of this holy thing which is communicated to everyone born again in the midst of filth, lustfulness, unholiness.

It's preserved and kept holy. from time to time by the power of almighty God, there is the exertion as it were in this newborn soul.

And it overcomes the devil and it overcomes the flesh and it overcomes the world. it is the mighty God that is in the midst of thee that is working.

But how is this might revealed? Well, it is revealed in this way, in several ways, but we'll take point by point.

[34 : 45] First of all, it is revealed by the almighty power of God the love of the father. We are reminded none can come unto me, that is to Jesus Christ, except the father which hath sent me draw him.

Now, what a wonderful consideration this is. Now, have we felt drawn to Jesus Christ? It is the work of almighty God.

It is the work of our heavenly father. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore, with loving kindness have I drawn thee, drawn thee to the feet of Jesus Christ.

Some of you, I'm sure, will have had desires to be like the man that was among the tombs, who was dealt with powerfully by the same almighty God and he was brought to sit at the feet of Jesus and to be clothed and in his right mind.

Oh, if we could be there sometimes. Well, it is and will be affected by the Lord thy God in the midst of thee being mighty.

[36 : 17] And what a great work this is that will bring us to the feet of Jesus Christ to learn of him. much reading is done and a reading can be profitable but what was really required in this teaching to learn of him it was to watch him to do what he did.

The apostle says whatsoever ye see in me do. Now you see this his words were whatsoever ye see in me and may not we draw these words to them the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty whatsoever ye see the Lord almighty doing in me do them also.

Now when we look at Jesus Christ we see him in all his glory leading his people into the way of truth and righteousness now this is the way of God's teaching it is looking and it is following that which we see we observe with spiritual eyes we are drawn with spiritual love to follow the Lord Jesus Christ Christ now what do we see in the Philippians we read he made himself of no reputation what teaching are we willing to make ourselves of no reputation with hearts that we have well the almighty

God yea the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty making a person willing all honour to forego but that which comes from God and you know if we are joined to Jesus Christ it will not be long before in the eyes of the world we shall have no reputation but we shall mind that if we are learning of him we read you see concerning the Lord that he learned by the things which he suffered this is as a man it's a great mystery I hesitate to venture upon it but we read this that he learned he became a servant he learned by the things that he suffered have we learned anything by the things that we've suffered it is the result of the

Lord thy God in the midst of thee being mighty we have suffered what the word of God speaks to us concerning Jesus Christ we have suffered reproach we don't have to go outside of ourselves to suffer reproach because reproach can come from the carnal mind I'm sure some of us have felt it sometimes reproach scorn especially if we should be praying unto the most high God under the power of his mighty spirit sometimes we might well have heard the laugh of our ungodly selves when we have attempted to wait upon

[40 : 42] God in prayer but nevertheless the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty and will make thee willing to suffer reproach because in so doing you're learning of him take my yoke upon you and learn of me before the Lord was exalted to the right hand of God he walked the pathway of humiliation we shall have to follow him in this and we shall only follow him in this as we watch him by faith if we come into these situations where we're surrounded with dark clouds and frettings of all sorts and wonder where the scene will end it will surely be something to hear the spirit say

I've been there I know where you are I've passed this way which will come sometimes to what Joshua said you have not passed this way here to fall the Lord may say that to us but he can well add but I have passed this way and therefore I know your down sittings as well as your uprisings now you see a sight of Jesus Christ will be strength to us and we should be able to continue on our way only thou my leader thee and we all will follow thee in the Hebrews we are exalted to run the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and that's what we've got to learn of him but it will be not the natural mind that learns that but the spiritual mind the evidence of the

Lord thy God in the midst of thee being mighty mighty to bring us down and also mighty to lift us up you know we read in the book of Job that where there is casting down there is also lifting up let us remember that you may say I've been cast down for so long I've almost despaired of being lifted up but the scripture says where there is casting down there is also lifting up the reason for this is because the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty we will leave it for this morning time