

A Stronghold for you in Troubled Times

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[0:00] A stronghold in the day of trouble. The prophet tells of his burden.! He's a burden man, a burden weighs heavy on his heart.

! His name means compassionate or full of comfort.

Now his book is mostly a divine revelation of gloom and of coming judgment. Nineveh was in for a very uncomfortable time.

Yet Nahum at the same time delivers an uplifting message of comfort and consolation to the people of God. Our judge is the perfect judge.

The wrath of God is against the wicked, against this wicked city of Nineveh for its violence and oppression of God's people. And the prophet starts by declaring the character of God.

[1:09] We see that in verse 2. God is jealous and the Lord revengeth. The Lord revengeth and is furious. The Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.

You don't often hear about the wrath of God, but it's a very real characteristic of our Lord. God is jealous. He has passion. Now jealousy is a good thing in some ways when it's God calling for exclusive loyalty and worship, isn't it?

And he deserves it. He deserves exclusive rights. The Lord is rightly jealous because he loves us so. Why is he jealous? Because of his goodness.

Because he cares. God is love. And it reads on verse 3. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power and will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

God is just, it's telling us here. And he will punish the guilty. We are answerable to him. And thankfully, God is patient that he doesn't give us that opportunity.

[2:27] He's slow to anger. He gives us time to seek him and turn unto him. God's wrath is against evil. It will come like a devastating storm.

And we have to wake up to this reality that God is real. And we have no time to waste to get right with him, to trust him. God is powerful.

We see in these words here. He's great in power. Verse 5. The mountains quake at him and the hills melt. And the earth is burnt at his presence. Yea, the world and all that dwell therein.

So, we won't touch on all the verses here, but really, it's telling of judgment to come. Of trembling at his presence. Do we take this seriously?

The reality that God is powerful. That the earth is going to be trembling at his presence. There's a global reset coming. Wrote by God.

[3:23] It'll be a good reset. Christ is coming. He's going to reset everything. And we will face God. And it reads on verse 6. Who can stand before his indignation?

And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury, it says, is poured out like fire. Think of like a volcano. And the rocks are thrown down by him.

The fierceness of the anger of God. Something we don't always think about, is it? Who can endure that? No one. God is angry at the wicked. At the wickedness of our world.

The book tells of God's judgment coming. Poured out. We should prepare. We should prepare to meet. To meet thy God.

Yet Nahum, this prophet, whose name, remember, means comfort, goes on to say this. And I want to dwell here on this verse of comfort for the believer this morning.

[4:22] Verse 7. There is no dread fear for you that know him. For the ones who trust in him. For we that believe the presence of the Lord is not something to fill us with apprehension and terror.

Actually, for we that believe, it tells us that the presence of the Lord is something we should want. Because in his presence, it tells us, is fullness of joy.

Amen. When the Bible tells of the coming of the Lord, as much as it's trepidation for the lost, for we that believe, it's actually the blessed hope.

It's a cause for gladness and praise. And we look forward to it, don't we? Believers, we look forward to that. So Nahum tells in this next verse of God's gracious protection towards us, his people.

And I want to dwell there on these thoughts in Nahum 1 verse 7. The Lord is good. A stronghold in the day of trouble.

[5:30] And he knoweth them that trust in him. Just think of the words here. The Lord is good.

In other words, he's loving, kind, gracious. He wants you to know him. He wants you to trust him. It tells us furthermore, the Lord is a stronghold.

It means a fortified place. He's like this fort, this defence, this strength. And he offers assurance and safety and refuge. Notice it says, the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble.

It's saying you can trust him no matter what. In the worst of times. In days of affliction, of days of adversity, days of tribulation, of distress. In your very worst of days.

The Lord is still good. The Bible tells you this is so. All the while, judgement looms. He's promising this blessing and joy in contrast to his wrath.

[6:36] His anger, his fury, his judgement. Yes, that's coming. But for you that believe, the Lord is good. The Lord is a stronghold for you. And he knows you.

That trust in him. If we are in Christ, we are safe. For you that place your trust in him, you have a sure stronghold and fortress.

So my first point is this. The Lord is good. The Lord is good. Amen. Can you say that? The Lord is good. Amen.

And so we ought to give him thanks. Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for he is good. For his mercy endureth forever. You know, that's a repeated theme, isn't it?

We could have a responsive reading like some of these more traditional churches than us would have. As far as responsive readings. Maybe we could do that.

[7:34] What if I say the first part and you say the last part? Oh, give thanks unto the Lord. For he is good. For his mercy endureth forever.

We've got to work on that. God is faithful. God is good. Amen. And there's something that we can personally know that God is good. It's something you can personally know.

The goodness of God. Amen. And we can know the goodness of God. Yes, even in the day of trouble. Even more so then. Now, the story told of one of God's faithful missionaries, a man called Alan Gardner.

He experienced many physical difficulties and hardships as he went to the mission front and served the Savior. And despite his troubles, he said, while God gives me strength, failure will not daunt me. And in 1851, at the age of 57, Alan Gardner died of disease and starvation. While serving on Picton Island in the southern tip of South America.

[8:37] And when his body was found, his diary lay nearby. And it bore the record of hunger, of thirst, of wounds and loneliness. The last entry in his little book showed the struggle of his shaking hands as he tried to write legibly.

And he wrote these words. I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God. The last words he wrote. I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God.

And we can know the goodness of God even in the worst of times. Even when life is hard. When we struggle. Even more at those times. Yes, more so. At those times.

In the day of trouble. We can know the one. The one who made the stars. The universe. And this little old planet called Earth. And the even smaller you and me.

That live on it. If we would but open our eyes. We would see. See the goodness of God. It's all around us. In what we see.

[9:37] With our eyes. In what he has given. It reads in Psalm 33 verse 5. He loveth righteousness and judgment. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

God's goodness is evident. If we just look and see it with our eyes. In the wonder of his creation. Now when we were knocking doors yesterday in Elizabeth Vale. We came across a man and he said.

I see no evidence for God. I thought that man's got to be blind. He's blind. He's got a case of serious blindness. He must be blind not to see the creation of God.

Right outside his front door. I said just look around you. Look around you at creation. At God's creation. Look at the world that he has made. It's right in front of your eyes.

I didn't say it in so many words. But I felt like telling him that. In so many words. And when he made the world. It says that what he made was.

[10:40] Good. Very. Good. God's goodness is for you. God is just and he will triumph over evil. God's wonderful creation. That he has made.

Of course it's been spoiled now. Not by climate change. But because of sin. The fall of man. Man has brought curse and misery upon the world.

By going his own way. But God will right. All these wrongs. He promises to. In the world ahead. The Lord is. Good. Good. He offers you salvation.

And peace in your soul. That's who he is. He for the believer is the good shepherd. And we can experience his goodness. On a personal level. Not only through the sense of sight.

Not only can we see the goodness of God. We can even use our sense of taste. We can taste it. As it reads in Psalm 34. Verse 8.

[11:38] Oh taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. Not only can we see the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

We can taste and see that the Lord is good. We can know his salvation. We can taste it. His salvation. His forgiveness. God is good.

In all our situations of life. And we can surely thank him for his goodness. The goodness of God. Psalm 107 verse 8 says.

Oh that men would give thanks to the Lord for his goodness. And for his wonderful works to the children of men. Do we use our lips to praise him? The one who is so good.

Or don't we give him thanks for his wonderful works. Just think of his goodness to you. His mercy speaks of his everlasting steadfast love and goodness towards us.

[12:39] It tells us in Psalm 103. For as the heaven is high above the earth. So great is his mercy toward them that fear him. His goodness is so great.

His mercy. His kindness. His loving kindness. God is good. Can you maybe stop and think. Can you just think just for a moment or two.

And list the ways that God is good. As to why God is good. Here's something that I thought of. God is good because God is love. He is faithful.

He keeps his promises. He cannot lie. God is for us. And you could say these words. I am blessed with every spiritual blessing.

He is the God of all comfort. He is my comfort. He is my rock. He is my fortress. He is kind. He is true.

[13:36] He cannot lie. He is our peace. My peace. He gives perfect peace. God is good. Because in him we live and move and have our being.

Think. Just think of the goodness of God. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift. It comes down from above. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

He loves us with an everlasting love. God is good because I know his pardon. You can say these words. He redeems my life. I know his provision every day.

My daily bread. He gives to me. I know his peace. Being justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He gives the gift of salvation by faith.

I've been adopted as God's child. I am washed. I am sanctified. I have eternal life. I have access by faith into his grace wherein I stand.

[14:37] I am accepted in the beloved. I am his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. He saves to the uttermost.

He brought me up out of the miry clay. He set my feet on the rock to stay. He put a new song in my mouth. He's delivered me from the power of darkness.

The Lord is good. He's given me a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. I am strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Can you say God is good?

God is good. He paid a debt we could not pay. He's made us his own precious possession. I have redemption through his blood.

The forgiveness of sins. He has purchased us with his own blood. So my first point, the Lord is good. Second point is the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble.

[15:41] The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble. It tells us here of a stronghold, our fortress. He gives protection to those who trust in him. We can find sure comfort and glad hope in this.

As I've mentioned in times past, think of the castles of England and Scotland and Wales that I saw as a youngster. And these great fortresses are still standing.

Still many strongly standing. Firmly standing. Unmovable fortresses. Cannot be penetrated. Walls hugely thick and strong and insurmountable.

And God is such to you that believe. He is a stronghold to you. And it says in him we have glad hope. Because God is our refuge and strength.

A very present help in trouble. He's a refuge. Your refuge. Your strength. And he's a very present help in the trouble. A refuge speaks of shelter.

[16:43] Of protection from danger. Think of it. You can confess I am saved by grace through faith. I cast all my care on him because he cares for me.

We are secure and safe in his safekeeping. It's not of our own doing. As if we can help God. But it's his work.

We are kept by it says the power of God. In other words guarded. He watches over us. And it says his eyes are over the righteous. And it says we are under his wings.

Under his very feathers. And we can trust in his care. He's overshadowing. Will you seek your refuge in God? Amid the storms of your life?

In the trouble. He is it says a very present help to you. Now there's been a lot of gloom and despair. You turn to the news stories. And it seems like the world's getting darker.

[17:46] Times are tougher. Look at the chaos that's Paris today. Things are looking grim. Who knows when it's going to be like that here. People lack hope.

Day of trouble. Times of trouble. People lack hope. But there is one who never changes. And he's always the same. He's the faithful God.

Amen. And he is still a stronghold. He was, is and ever will be a stronghold. Our refuge and strength. A stronghold.

Yes. In the day of trouble. And he is, brothers and sisters, our defence. And it says for you that trust him. It says the name of the Lord is a strong tower.

The righteous runneth into it and are safe. He's a strong and mighty tower. That's the blessed name of Jesus, isn't it? He's a strong and mighty tower.

[18:42] His name. The very blessed name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And within the walls of this strong tower. We are safe from every attack of the enemy. Even though we face a constant attack from the enemy.

In this day of trouble. The name of the Lord is a strong tower for you. And even in this time of destruction and chaos. If the world was to go worse. And I think it will be.

I know it will get that way. That it will get worse. Yet we have a strong tower. And we have the name of the Lord. And we can run into it. And we can be safe. God's people can know security.

God's people can know safety. And assurance. And the psalmist confessed these words. What time I am afraid. I will trust in thee.

Is it afraid o'clock? What time I'm afraid. Whatever that time might be on your clock. If it's afraid o'clock. I'm going to trust in him.

[19:42] Amen. What time I am afraid. I will trust in thee. You can say that too. It's a prayer we can pray. Isn't it? Why not say these words right now. Let's say them together.

What time I am afraid. I will trust in thee. It's a decision we can make. To trust. To trust. In the day of trouble.

What time we are afraid. When we are afraid. I will trust in thee. Faith. Faith is powerful. Isn't it? These are the words of faith.

These are words we can confess. Words we can declare. Words we can stand upon. I will trust in thee. Faith is more powerful than fear. And nothing it tells you.

Nothing can separate you. From the love of God. There is a place of quiet rest. Near to the heart of God. And he has care for us. He has care for you.

[20:38] Friends. Even in the trouble. Even more so. And when I am inclined to be afraid. Yet I can trust. He is a refuge for you. He trusts in him. And when is he a stronghold?

In the day of trouble. So don't be afraid. Or don't worry. If a day of trouble comes. Because he's right there. Right there with you.

In the time of affliction. In the time of danger. That's when he is. A stronghold for you. We can be inclined to give up. Or doubt. Or fear.

Despair. In time of affliction. Of trouble. Of despair. Of trouble. But rather believe. It's true that the choiceless perfume. Comes from the bruising.

And crushing. Of rose petals. Beautiful rose petals. We don't have any here to crush. But if I had some rose petals here to demonstrate. We could crush them.

[21:35] And actually there would be a sweet perfume. From the bruising and crushing of rose petals. And sometimes it's like that with our lives isn't it? We are at our best when life crushes us.

And we can trust. We can run to the refuge. We can run to the shelter. We can run to his name. Our holy God. When we face pressure and fear. It's all the more we can trust.

In the midst of the trials and the tests. All the more he is. And he is ever faithful. And he is the healer of the broken hearted. When we're feeling like we're crushed.

Like those rose petals. He's the healer of the broken hearted. And he does his work. And what's more. I love these words in Revelation. And it's true for you that trust him.

These words will be true for you. One day it says he will wipe away all tears. All tears. I love that promise don't you?

[22:35] Revelation 21 verse 4. And God shall. He promises. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death.

Neither sorrow nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain. For the former things are passed away. Think of it. The meaning here.

He will. Personally. Touch your face. And his hand. The hand that made the worlds. The hand that sinful man pierced.

His hand. Will wipe away. Your tears. From your face. Amen. Think of it. This one who loves you so. Surely.

Truly. The Lord is good. The Lord is good. And you can know that. Personally so. And confess it. As the psalmist cried again. I will say of the Lord.

[23:37] He is my refuge. And my fortress. My God. In him. Will I trust. He says. I will say. I will trust.

Think of the promises of God. Think of what the scriptures tell of you. Greater is he that is in you. And he that is in the world. God gives hope to the hopeless. And I love that we can also be givers of this hope.

The reason of the hope that is in you. You don't want to keep it to yourself. It's too good not to share. You want to share that hope. These words of hope. These words of the gospel.

The gospel hope. The blessed one. Who gives you the blessed hope. The one who put that hope. Of heaven inside of you. We want to share these words of hope. These words of life.

And of salvation. To everyone. Who will hear it. I will say. He is my refuge. In him. Will I trust. This is the victory that overcometh the world.

[24:37] Even our faith. Come to the refuge. He is your hope. He is the one and only hope. He is the only hope. That we have. It's Christ. Isn't it?

Our help. Our hope. It's being said. You can live about 40 days without food. Three days without water. Eight minutes without oxygen. But only one second.

Without hope. Friends. We need this hope. Don't we? We need this one. Who is the hope. The blessed hope. Christ. Our saviour. We can face stress and pressure. Crushing heaviness. Yet this is not a time for hopelessness. But for faith. That he is my hope. In him will I trust.

There's a never failing hope. The Bible speaks about a living hope. A hope that's alive. A never failing hope. It's in him. In Christ. Christ. And we are in his grip.

[25:35] Brother. Sister. Know that this morning. That trust him. My third point is. Not only is the Lord good. A stronghold in the day of trouble.

It says even more. Even more. The Lord is good. A stronghold in the day of trouble. And he knoweth them that trust in him.

The Lord knows them that trust in him. The Lord is good. Isn't he? Can you think about the goodness of God. And thank him for it.

How good he is. And you can come boldly to the throne of his grace. And find help in time of need. He's there for you. He's waiting for your prayer.

And he is a stronghold. Yes in the day of trouble. He's the stronghold for you. You that trust him. It says. He knows you. To think of that. That God knows you.

[26:30] He knows you by name. He knows who you are. He knows everything about you. He knows more than you can remember about yourself. I think that for myself. I've got to ask Julie.

I don't have a photographic memory like Julie. Who can remember dates and memories. Like a photographic memory. I've got to ask her.

She's my memory bank. But God knows me better than Julie. Better than myself. Amen. And he knows you. Now that can be a bit of a threatening thought. Can't it? God knows me so.

He knows our every weakness. And yet he still loves us. Doesn't he? With an unfailing love. He doesn't give up on us. He knows our every strength. And he wants to use us. He wants to hear our cry as we pray.

And we can get to know him. And know him more. And he knows you. He knows you people. He knows you through and through. He knows every secret. It's not a secret to him.

[27:28] He knows you through and through. And he still loves you. Think of that. He loves you no matter how you have failed. Someone has said if God had a refrigerator.

Now this is a little bit tongue in cheek of course. Because God doesn't need a refrigerator. But if God had a refrigerator. Your picture would be on it. If he had a wallet.

Your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring. And a sunrise every morning. And whenever you want to talk. He'll listen. He'll listen.

And he can live anywhere in the whole wide universe. But he chooses to live in your heart. Think of that. Surely the Lord is good. Isn't he?

And he knew you before you were even born. And he knows your future as well. And he wants to walk that journey with you. Many things about tomorrow.

[28:23] I don't seem to understand. But I know who holds the future. Who holds tomorrow. And I know who holds my hand. The book of Nahum is a theme of judgment.

We're not going to dwell there. That's the setting. The doom. The gloom. Nineveh is caught a city of blood. Full of lies and deception. Yet in all this gloom. There's a promise. A promise of deliverance. And it's a promise for you. That trust him. It tells a tyranny of turmoil. Of a yoke. In Nahum 1 verse 13. Of shackles. A picture of slavery.

And slavement. Of bondage. And in some ways. We could see some parallels. With our own world today. This world is chained. It's shackled. It's in bondage.

In corruption. In oppression. But thank God. Nahum tells how God breaks the yoke. Of the oppressor. We could think. Who's the ultimate oppressor? The slave master.

[29:22] The devil. It's the Bible tells how God shatters the chains. That control us. And the rest of the book tells of the destruction of Nineveh. It's downfall. Downfall. The good news in the book is that God will deliver his people.

God will deliver his own people. Twice God says to Nineveh. I am against thee. That's chapter 2.13. Chapter 3 verse 5.

Some people. God says. I am against thee. But then we see for the believer. It says if God be for us. Who can be against us? God is against the wicked.

But he is for. His safe people. If God be for us. Who can be against us? Which one are you? Are you in Nineveh's camp? God says I'm against thee.

There's destruction ahead. There's judgment. Condemnation. Or are you over here? If God be for us. Who can be against us? Are we a rejecter of God like Nineveh?

[30:25] Or are we those that God says. You trusted me. I'm for you. If God is against you. You have no shelter.

No stronghold. You face dread. Damnation. Wrath. Judgment. But for you that believe.

There's deliverance. There's salvation. There's victory. There's shelter. There's stronghold for you. God is just and he will punish evil. He has to. Why? Because the Lord is good.

The judgment of God is against the wicked. Thank God it is. You see what some people get away with? In the court systems you see. The corruption. The evil.

That prevails. The. Those who seem to get off scot free. And get away with it. They're not going to get away with it. No. Because God knows.

[31:23] They're not going to get away with it. God is against the wicked. Talks about the city. Of its spiritual unfaithfulness. Of idolatry. But friends we're all over here without Christ.

We're all under his judgment. Under his wrath. Without Christ. But thank God he takes us out. And he sets us free. He translates us from the kingdom of darkness. He transports us into his kingdom. And there's a warning here for those who would defy God. For those that would stay in that denial of God. Like Nineveh. They'll be brought to their knees.

And it's a warning to all of us. Not to be in this camp of denial. Of defying God. But rather to come and trust him. Because he knows them that trust him.

And so Nineveh will be brought to its knees. And all the wicked that deny him. And defy him. And God says I'm against thee. But the glad news for you people.

[32:20] People here today. People under the sound of this message.

There's time and space for you to say I trust him. I want my refuge to be Christ.

I want my shelter from the wrath of God to be Christ's blood shed for me. That God would take the wrath of God in Christ for me. Against my sin. Paying for it there at the cross.

And there is no condemnation for you now. That are in him. So the people of God can find this message that gives hope. God is good. The Lord is good.

And it tells us that God's will is good. It's good, acceptable and perfect. The will of God. No matter what the will of God is. It's good. It's good. It's acceptable.

And it's perfect. We might not want it. Sometimes. But the will of God is good. It's acceptable. And it's perfect. Trust him. Trust him.

[33:16] Consider again the Lord is good. A stronghold in the day of trouble. And he knoweth them that trust in him. And what's more it says of the goodness of God.

The goodness of God leads us to repentance. To turn. To trust. To yield. To believe. God gives protection for those who trust in him.

He knows them. That trust in him. There's an assurance in Christ. And so friends to close. We can find comfort. We can find comfort today.

In this gloomy book. In this prophet of dooms book. That tells of destruction. Of coming judgment. Yet there's comfort.

There's a stronghold here. There's a stronghold that is Christ for you. Simply trust him. Have you found refuge in God? Where will you turn in the day of trouble?

[34:10] Will you go to the stronghold? I pray you would know him. As your stronghold. He knoweth them that trust in him. And what matters is that we individually come to that place of faith.

And place our own trust in him. Trust in the Lord today. And trust your heart to him. Let's say these words together. The Lord is good. A stronghold in the day of trouble.

And he knoweth them that trust in him. Let us pray. Lord we thank you that you are such a gracious God. You are always good. Lord your will is always good.

Acceptable and perfect. Lord we pray that we would be found in the very centre of your will.

Trusting you for our salvation. Knowing your grace every new day.

Lord knowing that you're the refuge that we need. The strength, the comfort, that shelter, that stronghold. That by faith we will know, individually know, your saving power.

[35:10] And trust you, trust you ever more. Even in the day of trouble.

That our faith would hold steady and strong. Lord give grace to each one we pray. Be glorified in every life.

Be lifted up in our lives. In what days we have yet to live. That we'll walk in your paths. We'll walk in your ways. We'll walk in your truth. And help us Lord to be sharers of that hope too.

To tell others too. Of that great gospel hope. The blessed hope. Here you are. Our great saviour and God. We thank you in Jesus name. Amen.