

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Zephaniah 3:14-20**.
- B. Everyone needs some kind of crutch. We need something to hold us up. For some it may be **alcohol, drugs, excuses**, or even **religion**.
- C. Atheists have contended for years that religion is "the crutch" people use to get from one Sunday to the next.
- D. But when one compares the meanings of the two words; religion and crutch I think we will find religion is the best crutch we can have.
 1. **Religion:** faith in... walking with... a relationship, serving, worship.
 2. **Crutch:** something that holds up, depend on, rely on, strengthens, supports and helps.
- E. In our scripture reading I am focusing in on 3:17 as translated in the NIV.

I. THE LORD IS IN YOUR MIDST.

- A. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV).

"**The Lord you God is with you**, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you in singing."
- B. Many times in our life we think God has left us; especially when trials and persecutions come upon us.
- C. But rest assured God is in our midst always:
 1. Psalms 139:7-10 (David describes the omnipresence of God).

Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? **8** If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. **9** If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, **10** Even there Thy hand will lead me, And Thy right hand will lay hold of me.
 2. Philippians 4:5 (The Lord is near).

Let your forbearing *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.
 3. Hebrews 13:5 (The Lord... will never leave us or forsake us).

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"
 4. Acts 17:27 (God is never far from us).

...that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;
 5. Matthew 28:20 (...and lo, I am with you always).

"...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- D. Do not think God is in heaven, a place so far away he is not touched by the feelings we have. He is as close as we need him to be. **The Lord is the crutch I need!**

II. I AM MIGHTY TO SAVE (A Victorious Warrior).

- A. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV).

"The Lord you God is with you, **he is mighty to save**. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you in singing."
- B. Our God, He is able!
- C. Note the following scripture texts:
 1. Genesis 18:14 (Is anything too difficult for Jehovah?).

"Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son."
 2. Matthew 19:23-26 (with God all things are possible).

And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. **24** "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." **25** And when the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished

and said, "Then who can be saved?" **26** And looking upon *them* Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

3. Hebrews 7:25 (God is able to save forever).

Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

D. God is also able to keep His promises made to man (2Tim. 1:12; Heb. 2:18 with Jude v24).

(2Tim 1:12) For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

(Heb 2:18) For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

(Jude v24) Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

E. **God is the crutch I need!**

III. **HE WILL TAKE GREAT DELIGHT IN YOU.**

A. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV).

The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. **He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you in singing.**

B. God's pleasure is in His people.

C. We go looking for pleasure so many different ways. God has a singular delight... His people.

D. A good illustration is that of **parents and their children**. Parents take great pleasure, delight and pride in their children, just as God delights in us.

E. As we worship, live and pray God is happy.

F. **He is my crutch!**

IV. **AND HE WILL QUIET YOU WITH HIS LOVE.**

A. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV).

"The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. **He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you in singing.**"

B. God's peace is a healing force. Remember as Jesus calmed the storm He also calmed the disciples (Phil. 4:6-9).

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **7** And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **8** Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. **9** The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

C. Something to hold on to with the troubles of life.

D. There are many things we do not understand about this life, but we must understand how the love of God can quiet our fears (see Psa. 27:1-14).

E. **God is the crutch I want.**

V. **AND HE WILL REJOICE OVER YOU WITH PRAISE.**

A. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV).

The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. **He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you in singing.**

B. See the love, power, greatness and rejoicing in Eph. 1:18-19.

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, **19** and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might...*

C. "We praise thee O God... Revive us again!"

D. **God is the crutch I want!**

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Reread Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV).
The Lord you God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you in singing.
- B. God, and religion, is my something to hold on to, my crutch.
- C. It needs to be your crutch too!
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.