

I REMEMBER

Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Monday, December 10, 2018

I remember. I remember in the months following the births of our sons, holding them, and marveling over them. They were tiny and new and miraculous. I remember standing and rocking them, swaying on my feet, and singing to them, overwhelmed with the love I felt for each of them.

If you've held a newborn, I imagine you can understand and relate to this. When they are so small and so new, they are innocent and amazing. We hold them close and sing over them in joy.

The book of Zephaniah is set in the time of King Josiah of Judah. Josiah was king of Judah just before the invasions by the Babylonians that ultimately caused the fall of Judah and the exile to Babylon. The words of Zephaniah are prophecies meant to warn the people of Judah of coming judgment and consequences. Zephaniah 1:17b says, "because they have sinned against the Lord, their blood shall be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung." Read the book, but be warned that it is not very pleasant.

It is a book of judgment against Judah, but at the very end, in the verses of our reading today, it is as if God says, "I remember."

"[The Lord] will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival." (Zephaniah 5:17b)

What is grace? I think this verse is an example of what grace is. Even though God knows – and completely understands – the wickedness and disloyalty of his people, God remembers that they are his. God remembers what it was like to create these children in his own image. God remembers how much God loves us – the people of Judah and us. That memory of love is so much stronger than anything else.

As you move through Advent, remember: The Lord rejoices over you with gladness. The Lord renews you with his love. The Lord exults over you with loud singing, As if it were the day of your birth.

And when you are angry or upset or disappointed with someone else, remember these words. The Lord rejoices over ALL of us with singing – yes, even that person.

Remember that, as God remembers us.

Prayer: Creating, loving, sustaining God, remember your love of us. Recreate us daily in your own image so that we can see others as you see them, and remember the love you have for our neighbors and for us. In your son's name we prayer together, Amen.

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