

12/19/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On that day they will say to Jerusalem, “Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp. 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 with singing.”
Zephaniah 3:16–17

There are some songs that everyone knows. That’s especially true this time of year. I’ll prove it. Complete the following lyrics. “I’m dreaming of...” (pause) “...a White Christmas.” Here’s another: “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer, had a very... “(pause) Everyone knows it’s “shiny nose.” One of the reasons we all know these songs is that we love to sing them.

What if I told you that there is a song that God loves to sing?

Zephaniah told us that when God looks at mankind, he often sees us fearful. What is it that is making you afraid? Is it fears about your financial future? Are you frightened by the state of our world or country? What about death? Does the thought of dying scare you? Maybe what scares you is that you’re wrestling with some sin. You know that God sees that sin every time you commit it, and that thought scares you.

Zephaniah told us that when God comes to us in those scary times and he quiets our fears with his love, it makes him so happy, he himself bursts out in joyful song.

If you think Christmas makes you happy, my friends, think about how happy it made your God. Because when Christ came to earth, he took away everything we fear. You fear your financial future? In the future, you will live in Christ's very own mansion. You fear for the state of our world? Christ is going to make a new heavens and a new earth. You fear death? Look into the empty tomb. You are going to be raised, just like Jesus. You fear your sin? Jesus paid it all. In your baptism, you were washed clean. When God looks at you, he sees the perfection and holiness of Christ. You have nothing to fear! Absolutely nothing.

That all is good news of great joy which the angels sang about on that first Christmas Eve. We hear that good news, and it quiets us...it calms our fears. We rejoice in Zephaniah's promise: "The LORD your God is with you." That is what Immanuel means, "God with us." We sing that this time of year too. "Oh come, oh Come, Emmanuel." When God hears that son, when he sees that his grace has calmed our fearful hearts, he sings for joy too!

Prayer: *Dearest Jesus, thank you for taking away our fears. Fill our hearts with the joy of our salvation, and we will sing your praises, now and forever. Amen.*

(From the WELS)

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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