



Third Sunday of Advent: The Lord Is With You *Zephaniah 3:14-20*

OUR PUREST EXPRESSION OF JOY ARRIVES WHEN WE
REALIZE THAT GOD IS WITH US

Third Sunday Of Advent - Anticipation of Joy

We anticipate the joy we will feel one day, even when we also acknowledge the world isn't what it should be...

"Thank God we can't know the future, or we'd never get out of bed."

- Tracey Letts, playwright

We fear that God is not among us—that the enemies of good are winning

We fear insignificance, political defeat, the interruption of our status quo...

We fear that God will interrupt the safety of our fears with something new.

Today's reading comes to us from an ancient Hebrew Prophet

Prophets sing God's song and sometimes interrupt the program with a change of tune

The most important thing Zephaniah declared:

"Do Not Fear... The Lord Is With You"

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Zephaniah 3:14-20

- *Written in the 7th Century BCE (640-609) - song tradition of women*
- *Name means: "YHWH Is Concealed" or "YHWH lies in wait" - Royal lineage*
- *Zephaniah spoke out against idolatry - called out the priests and rulers*
- *The prophet paints a picture of a world permeated with God's presence*
- *All within the context of fear, strife, war, shame and degradation*
- *God's living among the people releases them from fear and shame—to do good*
- *The "lame" and "outcasts" - Jesus' healing demonstrates God's presence*

How The Presence of "God With Us" Brings Joy

- *Embrace the Incarnation—"God With Us" - not just an expression, intimate*
- *Surrender our outcomes—"dropping of the hands" - power in powerlessness*
- *Celebrate in Joy—singing God's new songs, infecting others with joy*

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SERMON EXTRAS & FURTHER READING

FOR FURTHER READING:

Watch For The Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas
Various Authors

Shadow and Light: A Journey Into Advent
Tsh Oxenreider

Low: An Honest Advent Devotional
John Pavlovitz

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