The Lord Reigns

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Open your Bible with me if you would to the book of Nahum one more time.

If you don't have a handout sheet that we had out there, you may want to slip out and get one. It's got lots of notes, information from our study the last couple of months on there.
And what I want to do is take a few minutes to kind of review and walk back through the book of Nahum in the background as we then get to the ending of chapter 3 and we find out what is ultimately going to be the demise of Nahum.
Remember that about a century before Nahum is there, we have Jonah the prophet. Jonah much more commonly known in most circles than Nahum, but they both have a similar work from the Lord in speaking a message against Nineveh.
Nineveh is the capital of Assyria. And so in Jonah's day, the Lord calls him to go and deliver this message to the people of Nineveh.
[1:21] And you'll recall that Jonah disobeyed. He ran the other way. And the reason he did that is because he expected the Lord to be merciful.

And he did not want the Lord to be merciful to Nineveh, this capital area of Assyria. And so in Nahum 1.1, which just introduces this word from the prophet, we made a connection between Nahum and Jonah.
An unhappy preacher drives a people's repentance. That unhappy preacher was Jonah. Jonah, a hundred years roughly before Nahum, was unhappy what God called him to do.
He goes to Nineveh and preaches, although he didn't want to do it. And through his preaching, the people of Nineveh repent.
The book of Jonah records for us, they did this from the kings on down. The second thing we saw is that an ungodly population demonstrate a people's rebellion.
[2:27] About a century later, as Nahum comes on the scene, the people of Nineveh, who repented in Jonah's day, have gone right back to their rebellious ways.

Which brought us to the third point that an unknown prophet, that's Nahum, declares a people's ruin. Speaking of Nineveh. So in Jonah's day, he preaches coming destruction.
The people repent. The Lord is merciful, just as Jonah expected the Lord to be, though he did not want that for the people. Nahum comes on the scene.
The people are right back to their sinful ways. And now the Lord uses Nahum to declare coming destruction to the people of Nineveh. As we go forward in Nahum 1, 2 through 8, we saw the Lord has a passion for the sake of his name.
We saw the Lord's passion for justice. We saw that God had been patient to people who were undeserving, yet his patience has a limit.
[3:36] And then we see displayed in the early pages of, early verse of Nahum, God's power. It showed his power he has over the waters, over the mountains and land.

His power over all humanity. And then we get really the purpose of the book of Nahum, which truly is true for all of Scripture. And that is that through faith the people have in the Lord, they find shelter for those who trust in him.
And there is judgment for those who oppose him. The interesting thing about Nahum is this book is all about the coming judgment on the people of Nineveh, which would serve not only as a severe word of warning and judgment for the people of Nineveh, it also serves as a kind of comfort for the people of God to let them know that in the end, evil does not win.

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Temporarily? Temporarily? It may seem as though it is. In the end, those who oppose the Lord will be judged. Those who trust in the Lord find shelter.
The end of chapter 1, verses 9 to 15, we saw the folly of trying to oppose the Lord. Those who would try to, in their own man-made strength, oppose the things of God, in the end are proven to be foolish for doing so.
[5:02] We saw the future of those who oppose the Lord. That's going to be judgment and the faithfulness of God to his people. And so you've got these two tracks running parallel throughout the entire book of Nahum.

Those who oppose the Lord find judgment. Those who trust in the Lord find shelter. Those who reject the Lord will be destroyed. And those who cling to the Lord will enjoy his faithfulness.
Chapter 2, there is a call for preparation. The Lord is not hiding or disguising what he is doing. Through the prophet Nahum, he is showing exactly what is to come.
He makes a promise of what is to come. The people of Nineveh have some sense of protection. The problem is, they are relying on their own defenses.
And the problem is, the one who opposes them is the Lord himself. Twice, we've seen the book of Nahum, where the Lord says, I am the one who opposes you and no human defenses can stand.
[6:11] The end of chapter 2, we saw this dramatic transition that's going to happen for the people of Nineveh. Remember, as Nahum gives this prophecy, Nineveh is very strong.

They're not on the brink. Chronologically, they are. But in terms of their own strength and might, the people are very strong. As Nahum speaks. So everything that he says is about to happen would have seemed like this just can't be.
But here's the prophecy. The people of Nineveh will go from arrogance to humiliation. From prosperity to poverty. From being powerful to being powerless.
From honor to dishonor. And from the hunter to the hunted. Nineveh was used to going into other cities and overpowering and conquering it.
They were the hunter. But now, as they have opposed the Lord, the Lord is coming against them.
Chapter 3. We saw a picture of the victimization of what they do.
[7:14] And this verdict that was given against them. That they are guilty. And that the Lord is coming. Chapter 3, verse 5. Behold, I am against you, declares Lord of hosts.

And then this vision is given for what is going to happen soon to Nineveh. That brings us to the end of chapter 3.
To the end of this short book in verses 8 to 19. And what we see here in verses 8 to 19 is just incredibly interesting.
Because this is the word of God spoken through Nahum. About the people of Nineveh. About the coming destruction that awaits them.
And the first thing that we see in verses 8 to 10 is the example that is given here. The example of thieves.
[8:13] It says, Are you better than thieves that sat by the Nile with water around her? Her rampart, a sea and water, her wall? What Nahum is doing here under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Is he is equating Nineveh to this other place that has just recently experienced its own judgment. Noamon means the city of Ammon.
It's the chief god of Egypt. Modern day Thebes. It was wiped out by the Assyrians in 663.
Nahum looks at Nineveh and says, Are you better than them? And reminds the people of Nineveh what happened to the people of Thebes.
This would have been familiar to them because this was in the very recent past. The similarities between Thebes and Nineveh would be strong.
[9:21] Both were near rivers. Both had prosperity. Both were capital cities. Both were protected by water. Verse 9 he says, He says, Remember what happened to Thebes?

How they were brought down in destruction? He says, That's a picture of what's about to happen to you. Now the geography to us just seems a bit random.
But let me just help you with it to see exactly what Nahum is saying. Cush, Ethiopia here provided protection for Thebes to the south.
Egypt provided protection to the north. Putt and Libya provided protection from the west. He says this land felt like they were safe. They felt like they had defenses.

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And yet, they were brought down. In the same way, as Nahum writes this, Nineveh feels like they are safe. That they have their defenses. And yet, they are going to be brought down.
[10:41] Verse 10, Yet, she became an exile. And she went into captivity. Her infants were dashed in pieces at the head of every street.

For her honored men, lots were cast. And all her great men were bound in chains. What happened here, is the Assyrians went and attacked Thebes and describes what they did.
What the Assyrians did was brutal. Unthinkable of what we read there in verse 10. And I do want to remind you that while what Jonah did in running from God was not right, and while we shouldn't see people as more worthy of salvation than others, all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, let me do remind you that Nineveh is the capital of Assyria.
And Assyria did to Thebes what was described in verse 10. These are wicked, violent, atrocious things. The most vulnerable were gruesomely killed.
They took the honored ones and treated them like property. And so the first thing we see here in verse 8 to 10 is the example of Thebes. And that example is given to show Nineveh what awaits it.
[12:21] We go then to verses 11 to 17, and we see the eradication of Nineveh. The eradication of Nineveh. And what we see is that walls are going to fall.

Leaders are going to be feeble. Preparations are going to falter. The people are going to be finished. The fighters are going to flee away. And the merchants are going to fade.
Let me show it to you here. Verse 11, You also will be drunken. You will go into hiding. You will seek a refuge from the enemy.
So Thebes was taken down in 663. Nineveh will be taken down in 612. Nahum says, If you want to know what's coming for you, just look at what you did to them.
Verse 12, All your fortresses are like fig trees with first ripe figs. If shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater.
[13:30] Again, when Nahum writes this, Nineveh seems so strong. They seem invincible. And yet, in God's eyes, Nineveh was as weak as a fig tree. The idea here is that the figs are just attracting the enemy.

You think you're safe, but you're not. You think you're protected, but you're not. And no more difficult than shaking a fig tree to get the figs to fall off is it to shake Nineveh to its defeat.
The enemies of Nineveh, the Babylonians, are going to come and shake the city. And what falls off the tree, so to speak, will be theirs. Verse 13 says, Behold, your troops are women in your midst. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies. Fire has devoured your bars. The women in that culture weren't fighters.
They weren't trained to be fighters. The idea is that compared to the Babylonians who are coming, the Assyrian armies will seem as women fighting. All of this is a picture of the fact that they will not stand against the judgment of God.
[14:51] Why? Back to chapter 3, verse 5. Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts. This is their problem. Back to chapter 2, verse 13.

Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts. The city of Nineveh that has lived in sin and wickedness and rebellion was given incredible mercy by the Lord.
The Lord sent Jonah, and Jonah preached, and the Lord was gracious. And a revival in the land broke out.
But it was short-lived. Very soon, they would go back to their same wicked, vile ways. God was patient, but his patience had a limit.
And now, Nahum explains exactly what is coming for them. Their leaders are feeble. Their preparations will falter. Verse 14, Draw water for the seed.
[16:02] Strengthen your forts. Go into the clay. Tread the mortar. Take hold of the brick mold. In other words, he says, you do everything you want to do to make your preparations.

You do everything you can to keep yourself safe. You can store up water. You can fortify your city. You can strengthen your defenses. It will not matter.
You can't do everything you can You can't do everything you can to make your plans. to make your plans. This is, this is the painful side of the gospel. In one sense, Jonah is the beautiful side.
I mean, even though Jonah itself, Jonah has a lot of hard things when you read it. You've got to deal with the fact that a prophet of God is disobeying God. You've got to deal with the fact that a prophet of God is thrown overboard and assumed left for dead.

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And then you see how God was merciful and gracious. That's a beautiful thing. And then you've got to deal with the reality that here is the same prophet given a second chance who goes right back to arguing with God. He's hot.
[17:04] The Lord provides shade. The Lord removes the shade. And the prophet gets angry about that. And the Lord says, do you have any right to be angry with me?

And Jonah says, yes, I do. And in the book of Jonah, you see both the perplexing reality of how even the people of God can be so obstinate and so disobedient.
And yet we do see grace. God in Jonah is so gracious to Jonah. Gracious in some ways that were clear and gracious in ways that Jonah didn't even know.
When you think of Jonah being swallowed by the giant fish, that feels like that was punishment. That wasn't punishment. That saved his life. Then when he was thrown up on the shore, that seems like he's kind of left for dead, so to speak.
But the truth is, that is the Lord giving him a second chance to do what he was called to do. And then you see grace all over the book of Jonah as the people begin to respond to what Jonah is saying.
[18:12] And then you're left with this perplexing reality of the prophet ends angry and frustrated. So while there are some perplexing things, you do at least see the amazing reality that the people of Nineveh repent.

And the more you understand about who the people of Nineveh and Assyria are, the more remarkable it is that God would be gracious to them. So the gospel really is seen in its beauty in the book of Jonah.
When you come to Nahum, same people a century later, you see the hard part of the gospel that judgment does come to those who reject. And then our God, who is gracious and patient, has patience that will come to an end.
So he says in verse 14, you save up all your water you want, fortify your city, you can build your fortress to be strong. It will not matter.
What's going to happen when this takes place? Verse 15, the fighters will flee. There will the fire devour you. The sword will cut you off. It will devour you like locust.
[19:25] Multiply yourselves like the locust. Multiply like the grasshopper. Now what's interesting here is the picture in verse 15 of Nahum 3 is of a fire devouring the city.

If you go back to chapter 2, verse 6, it pictures a flood. The river gates are opened and the palace melts away. This is exactly what history tells us.
The palace of Sennacherib was burned to the ground while the city was flooded. As one author put it succinctly, Nineveh fell both by flood and flame.
Exactly as Nahum prophesied. Verse 16, you increased your merchants more than the stars of the heavens. The locust spreads its wings and flies away.
Nineveh was a place of finance. Nineveh was a place where they felt strong. They felt protected. They felt safe. They felt they had natural defenses.
[20:40] They felt they had an economy that could withstand whatever would come their way. And what Nahum says is none of the things you put your hope and your trust in are any match for the Lord.

Verse 17, your princes are like grasshoppers, your scribes like clouds of locusts settling on the fences in a day of cold.
When the sun rises, they fly away. No one knows where they are. In other words, their economy will crumble.
Their leaders will be devoured. God, this is not a pick-me-up letter.
This is the word of God through the prophet Nahum saying to those who oppose the Lord, you will not stand and to the faithful remnant of God who look around the world and say, why are the wicked getting by with this to say they aren't getting by with anything?
[21:48] Not in the end. Verses 18 and 19, we see our third main point I want to show you, that's the exaltation of the watching world.

The watching world exalts in what is to come. Your shepherds are asleep, O king of Assyria. Your nobles slumber. Now, Nahum speaks to the king directly.
He's not just speaking to the city, he's not just speaking to the people, he's speaking directly to the king. Your shepherds are asleep, O king of Assyria. Your nobles slumber.

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In other words, he says, the leaders are asleep, they're complacent, they're lazy, and you wonder, how did Nineveh fall? Here's why. Their leaders went to sleep. They were complacent.
They did not do as they were supposed to do, and this is all because their rejection of the Lord brought him against them, and there is no way you can stand when the Lord is the one you fight against.
[22:52] Your people are scattered on the mountains with none to gather them. Verse 19, there is no easing your hurt.

Your wound is grievous. All who hear the news about you clap their hands over you. for upon whom has not come your unceasing evil.
In other words, he says, when Nineveh falls, no one will grieve for you. The world will not mourn. In fact, they will celebrate.
celebrate. And what he prophesied takes place in the year 612 BC.
It's interesting at the end here of Nahum, again the last part of verse 19, for upon whom has not come your unceasing evil.
[24:01] people. It's interesting because Nahum is the sequel to Jonah. Turn back just three or four pages to Jonah chapter 4.

Micah is right in between Jonah and Nahum. Look at the last verse of Jonah 4, verse 11. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, great not meaning in character, in scope, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also much cattle.
It's interesting. Jonah, the whole book ends with a question. Nahum, the sequel, chapter 3, verse 19, for upon whom has not come your unceasing evil.
It also ends with a question. Part A and part B, both ending with questions.
Jonah's generation repented. Nahum's generation continued in their sin. and then judgment fell.
[25:27] Turn with me quickly to Romans chapter 10. Before we close with Romans 10, if you're thinking to yourself, man, Nahum was short, but there's a lot of prophecy, there's a lot of cities, I'm not sure I can remember all that.

Let me give you Nahum here in about one minute. All right? Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. They were wicked and evil. The Lord sent Jonah to Nineveh to preach.
He didn't want to go. Eventually, he did. Nineveh repented. About a century later, they've returned to their sin and their wickedness. God's patience for them has run out.
And he raises up a second prophet, not Jonah this time, but Nahum, who also preaches against the people of Nineveh. He speaks through Nahum of the destruction that awaits Nineveh.
Nahum records it as though it's history, though it's yet to happen. not long after Nahum gives his prophecy, those very details happen precisely.
[26:50] And in the end, this is a warning to all who oppose the Lord and comfort for those who trust the Lord. The same warning exists today.

Those who oppose the Lord will be destroyed in judgment. Those who trust the Lord will find shelter in his promise. Romans chapter 10.
Familiar words. Verse 9 says, If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the scripture says, everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.
Let's stop for just a minute. In the Old Testament, you would often hear the word shame. And the way it's often used in the Old Testament is that those who cling to idols or trust idols will be ashamed.
[28:02] Those who trust in the Lord will not be ashamed. shame. And the idea most of the time is not so much the idea of that you would be embarrassed.

Shame has the idea of that what you trusted in let you down or failed you. If you trust in something, in an idol, you're going to be put to shame.
It doesn't just mean you're going to be embarrassed about it. It means you're going to be defeated because you did not trust in the one true God. those who do trust in the Lord will not be put to shame, meaning what they have trust and believed in will hold up for them.
And so you've got to make sure what you're trusting in is able to withstand all things. You've got to make sure that the one that you give your life to, that the one that you are hoping in is truly one who

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can save you and forgive you.
And so you go back to in the Gospels the familiar miracle of Jesus where he says to the man, rise and walk, and he says, I tell you to rise and walk because, he says, which is easier for me to say, rise and walk or your sins are forgiven.
[29:17] And the idea in that miracle is that the easier thing to say, to just say, is your sins are forgiven because who can see the heart to know if that's true.

So Jesus says the reason why I'm healing you, the reason why I say rise and walk is so you'll know that I really am who I say that I am and can do what I say I can do.
If I tell you to rise and walk and you can't rise and walk, if I don't have the authority I claim to have, you have no reason to believe that I can really forgive your sin. So the question in that moment is, this man and his friends are believing in Jesus, they're trusting in Jesus, are they going to be put to shame?
not just to question will they be embarrassed, but will they have hoped in one who can really deliver, or will they have hoped in one who made promises he could not keep?
And so Jesus says, so you know I can forgive your sin, I say to you rise and walk. And whatever happens in that very next verse tells us everything we need to know and trust about Jesus one way or the other.
[30:25] that tells us the man stood up, picked up his mat, and he walked home. And in that miracle Jesus did not merely provide mercy as far as his physical trouble, though that was part of it.

He did something much more than that. He was showing not just the man, but all who are gathered there, that he has the power and the authority to do exactly what he says he will do.
When you speak of authority in the scripture you're talking about, one who has the power to do something and one who has the freedom to do something, the right to do it.
It's the ability and the right. And Jesus says, I want you to know I have the authority to forgive your sin.
I have the right, I have the ability, I have the power to make good on that promise. And to prove that you can trust me to do what you cannot physically see, I will do to you and for you what only I could do that you could not physically miss.
[31:42] So, to the man who can't walk, rise and walk. If the man can't get up, you can't trust in Jesus. And he gets up.

And he walks away because Jesus has the right, the power, and the authority to do what he says he will do. So, when you come back to Romans 10, verse 11, for the scripture says, everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.
means he's going to come through with what he promised. He has the authority to carry out exactly what he said he would do.
For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.
For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. We saw this even in Nineveh.
[32:53] When humanly speaking, Nineveh was very unworthy of God's grace. But can I remind you, so are we. And those in Nineveh who believed were saved and those who did not believe were judged.

Verse 14, how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. But they have not all obeyed the gospel.
For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us? So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. So the Lord raises up preachers to declare the truth.
He raised up Jonah and he raised up Nahum. And the power was not in their human ability because Jonah didn't even want to do it.
[34:04] But the power was in the Lord using the proclamation of his word. And those who repented would find salvation and those who would reject would find judgment and so it is today.

The word is proclaimed, the gospel goes forth, and the same comfort that was given to the people of God in Nahum's day is alive in our day today.

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For those who reject, they will find judgment, and for those who believe, they will find shelter. As Nahum declared that truth, if you were there at that time looking at Nineveh, nothing about Nineveh looked like they were going to be defeated.
They looked strong, powerful, protected, financially gifted. but they were a defeated foe because they opposed the Lord.
And so our message today is that God is gracious to those who call upon him, and as Romans 10 says, those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.
[35:27] And those who reject will face him in judgment. will be to God. can rest assured that as you have put your hope and your trust and your faith in the Lord Jesus, while any snapshot in time, like in Nahum's day, may seem like the wicked are winning, the truth is those who have trusted in the things of this world in the end will be put to shame.

which takes us right back to Jonah, a century before Nahum, while in the belly of the fish, praying, those who cling to worthless idols, forfeit the grace that could be theirs.
Let our message be clear to those around us, that there is one way, one hope, one salvation, and those who cling to any other idol forfeit the grace that could be theirs.
It was true in Jonah's day, it was true in Nahum's day, it was true in Paul's day in Romans 10, it was true in our day and will remain true until the Lord returns again. Lord, we thank you for your word tonight and I pray that through the history and through some of the complexities that we have looked at these last couple of months that the message of Nahum would resonate in our heart, that we would be reminded that you are a God that provides salvation to those who trust in you.
And Lord, may we take comfort in the fact that even those who would oppose you and those who would oppose your people, that in the end, as Nahum reminds us, they will face you in judgment.
[37:15] That is not given to us to make us pompous or conceited, but to keep us humble and also to keep us grounded that one day all things will be made right.

Even things we don't understand, even things that are wrong, one day you will make them right. May we trust in you in all things in every season.
And may we not do what Jonah did where we decide wrongly that there would be some deserving of your grace and others undeserving. May we just simply proclaim the truth and trust your Holy Spirit to do what only he can do.
Lord, help us to not see ourselves as ones that were worthy or deserving of salvation when the truth is we have all sinned and all fall short of your glory.
Any one individual that's ever been saved is an act of grace and grace alone. And in your kindness you have saved from every nation, every people, every tribe, and every tongue.
[38:25] And what a privilege it is for those who know you to be able to join the chorus of that song and declare for all time holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty.

May the words of Nahum cause us to think deeply cause us to obey you, cause us to fight against sin, and may it also cause us to look eagerly to that day when you do make all things right and where righteousness covers the earth as the water covers the seas.
We long for that day. We look for that day. May we worship and walk with you until that day. In Christ's name, amen.
God bless you. You're dismissed. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
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