Change is Coming

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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. It's always a sweet sound on Sunday evenings to be able to just hear the noise of conversation and fellowship.

And we're thankful for the many friendships we are afforded in the body of Christ. It really is a beautiful thing just to be able to talk to people that we love, people that we get to worship with and serve with, and thankful for each of you who are back tonight.
If you would find your way to Nahum chapter 2. Nahum chapter 2. We're going to be in the second half of Nahum. We did an overview sermon of it. There are three chapters.
We're spending to be about eight weeks in total. So we are nearing the end here of chapter 2. And Lord willing, we'll complete that here this evening.
But while you're finding Nahum 2, just listen, if you would, to the words from Psalm 2. It says, Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
[1:16] The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.

He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord holds them in derision. And there He will speak to them in His wrath and terrify them in His fury, saying, As for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.
The picture in Psalm 2 is of this reality that there are nations on the earth and kings on the earth who would make their plans and make their schemes, trying to thwart the plans of God, trying to carry out their opposition to the things of God.
And the picture in Psalm 2 of the Lord is of a God who reigns, a God who rules over all things, even a God who laughs at the attempts that men would make to try to stop His plans and His purposes.
When we come back to Nahum, just a quick reminder of what's going on in context here. It was about a century ago that Jonah, the prophet, went to Nineveh.
[2:50] Nineveh is the capital of the Assyrian Empire. It's a wicked place. It's a place of torturous evil. And Jonah does not want to go to Nineveh because he knows God will be merciful and gracious.

And Jonah tells us himself he did not want to see salvation come to the people of Nineveh. The Lord ends up calling him there.
Of course, Jonah rebels. The Lord is gracious, gives him a second chance. Jonah then shows up, goes to Nineveh, essentially preaches what in English would be a five-word sermon, yet 40 days, Nineveh overthrown.
That's his message as he walks across the city back and forth, yet 40 days, Nineveh overthrown.
And just as he thought would happen, the Lord in His grace inclined their hearts to repent.
The people do repent. And from the king down to the lowest in the city, they repent. And this revival breaks out.
[3:58] About a century later, here's another prophet, not Jonah, but now Nahum. And Nahum, when he is on the scene, the people of Nineveh have gone back to exactly where they were before.

Whatever revival or repentance was true a century ago has long since subsided, and the people are right back to their wicked ways. And the message of Nahum is of coming judgment against Nineveh.
Again, Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. Remember, it's the Assyrians who in 722 have overpowered that northern kingdom of Israel.

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And now, here is Nahum who is going to speak of coming judgment and destruction of Nineveh. When Nahum gives this prophecy, Nineveh is as strong as it's ever been.
It seems completely beyond comprehension when you look at Nineveh and Nahum's day that they would be defeated. But when you read Nahum, what we read last week, the first half of chapter 2, it reads as history, though it is yet future as we read it.
[5:15] This was prophecy of what will happen, spoken of as prophecy that has happened because if the Lord has decreed it, you can rest assured it will come to pass.

We come to Nahum chapter 2, the second half, verses 8 to 13. And the title of the message tonight is Change is Coming.
Change is Coming to the people of Nineveh. Four specific changes that are mentioned here that will happen to them. Let's just look at these four changes and actually when we get to the end of it, I believe this actually will be a perfect text to set our hearts and our minds to receive the Lord's Supper together.
The first change that is coming is they are going to go from arrogance to humiliation. From arrogance to humiliation. Verse 8, Nineveh is like a pool whose waters run away.
We looked last week at how Nineveh was surrounded by three rivers. And because of that, the Assyrians made Nineveh the capital city. It not only provided a source for beautification and nourishment to the land, it also provided what they assumed would be safety and protection.
[6:38] But as we looked at in the text last week, Nahum mentions these dams will break, whether by natural causes or by the work of the Babylonians who are soon coming after the Assyrians.

Those dams will break and the water, which had been their pride, and actually a sense of arrogance as they thought that it made them safe and impenetrable, that water is going to be released as the dams break and the city will flood.
Halt, halt, they cry, but none turns back. This is a picture of the leaders here of Nineveh calling on their soldiers to hold their positions.
As chaos happens, as the flooding begins, as the invading armies will come. Remember, this is prophetic. It's speaking of what's going to happen in the future, but it pictures it as though it's happening right now in real time.
The leaders are going to yell out to the soldiers, hold your places, halt, stop, don't retreat. And yet in the chaos, the soldiers are fleeing, looking for safety.
[7:45] The people, the city, are looking for safety. The verse in verse 8 again says, none turns back. No one is staying where they were supposed to be. They are all fleeing in the chaos.

Here's the point. That once fortified city that looked impenetrable and safe, now is getting crushed. And the people that felt proud and arrogant now flee in humiliation and fear.
Their arrogance turns to humiliation. Now I do want you to notice that what happened historically to Nineveh is a picture of what will happen to all who reject the Lord.
Those of this earth in whatever time period they live who reject the Lord thinking they know better, thinking they don't need the Lord, thinking they've outgrown their need to follow the Bible, thinking they don't have to pay attention to the gospel, whatever it may be, rejecting the gospel for idolatry, for false religion.
[8:54] In their arrogance, they reject the Lord. And when they meet the Lord, their arrogance will turn to humiliation. There's a second change that's coming and that's prosperity to poverty.

Verse 9, plunder the silver, plunder the gold. There is no end of the treasure or of the wealth of all precious things.
The picture here is the people of Nineveh running in fear. The Babylonians who are invading are now coming in and seeking out the treasure of Nineveh to haul it off. For about two centuries, the Assyrians had made a steady practice of going into a land.
They would go into a land, they would then capture their riches, their wealth. They'd bring it back for themselves. They would take the precious things and in other lands, their temples or places of worship, take the precious metals back, use it to decorate their own pagan temples.
They had plundered other lands and now they themselves will be plundered. This is particularly striking as Nahum would record this to the people because again remember, it wasn't that long ago, 722 to be exact, when the Assyrians did this to Israel, that northern kingdom.
[10:24] The people knew what it was like to see something nearby being plundered. And the word of the Lord says, plunder the silver, plunder the gold, there is no end of the treasure or the

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wealth of all precious things.

Assyria had been so powerful and amassed so much wealth and the picture now is of another group, the Babylonians coming and joyfully cheering as they take from the Assyrians that which the Assyrians had taken from others.
And now this Assyrian empire whose capital is Nineveh, the wealthiest around, will soon be reduced to poverty.
The takeaway is that all the silver and all the gold in the end belongs to the Lord, right? In the end, you can earn it, you can steal it, you can cheat, you can manipulate, you can amass the fortune however you want.
When you take your last breath, it is all left behind. And yet, as the prophet Haggai says in chapter 2, I will shake the nations and the treasures of all the nations shall come in and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts.
[11:49] The silver is mine, the gold is mine, declares the Lord of hosts. All these treasures that people wear themselves out to amass, the Lord says that's all mine.

Everything of the earth is mine. This is why Psalm 2 pictures God in the heavens doing as He pleases. And so Nineveh, the Assyrians, they've plundered, they've stolen, and they've amassed quite a fortune.
But soon, they will be plundered. And soon, they will go from prosperity to poverty.
And they who rejected the Lord, amassing their silver and gold, will have nothing. And the Lord says, the silver is mine, the gold is mine, all within the earth is His.
There's a third change coming to Nineveh, and that is they're going to go from being powerful to powerless. Powerful to powerless.
[13:00] Verse 10. Desolate. Desolation. And ruin. There's a play on words here in the original text.

You can see it in the original language with the words. They're very closely, the three words look almost the same, with just a small fractional difference in their spelling.
Desolate. Desolation. And ruin. It's a picture of total destruction. It's a picture of something that is going to be destroyed, getting destroyed, and now is destroyed.
It's a picture of being completely wiped out. Going from powerful to powerless. And it really is amazing because again, as Nahum writes this, Nineveh is not on the brink.
At least not as you would expect. They are on the brink in that the Lord is about to make this come to pass. But humanly speaking, nobody would look at Nineveh in Nahum's day and assume they were teetering.
[14:10] They didn't look weak. They were strong. They didn't look poor. They were rich. And yet soon, because God is in the heavens and does as He pleases, they will soon go from powerful to power less.

And this same group that desolated Israel to the north will now be the same group who themselves will be made desolate.
This group who emptied the kingdom of Israel to the north will now be the group themselves who will be emptied by the Babylonians. Hearts melt, verse 10 says, and knees tremble.
Anguish is in all loins. All faces grow pale. This is the obvious result of defeat when it comes. Despair, fear, hearts are melting, knees are trembling. It says anguish is in the loins. It's as if they are in the pain of childbirth, unable to do anything else.
[15:26] If you have a lady who is in the process of being in labor to have a baby, it's an amazing, incredible, beautiful thing she's doing, but if you said to her, hey, would you mind going to cook dinner?

She can't. If in that moment you said, would you be able to go and mow the lawn? She can't. Because in that moment, that work, that pain, all of what's happening is so all-encompassing. There's, beautiful as it is for that lady having the baby, there's nothing else they can do. And the picture here is of hearts melting, knees trembling, anguish in the loins as if they're in childbirth, unable to defend themselves.
And all faces grow pale. You see somebody who's just received terrible news?
You may have seen it yourself, or if not, you've heard the expression where like it says all the color drained from their face. Like the life just went from them.

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[16:40] There's really two ways we speak of someone being pale. One is if they are temporarily sick or even maybe with disease, physically sick with something that has changed their color.

It's actually changed, it's taken away all the life and the glow from their face because of sickness or disease. The other way we speak of that is momentary when, again, when someone maybe receives some shocking news in either place, you know something is wrong because the color is gone from their face.
That's the picture in Nahum. Their hearts have melted. Their knees are trembling as if they are in childbirth and their loins in complete anguish and their faces have grown pale.
This is a picture of complete destruction that's coming. This nation that was so arrogant will be humbled.
That was so prosperous will be driven to poverty. That was so powerful will soon be powerless.
[17:58] a fourth change that's coming as they will go from honor to dishonor. From honor to dishonor. Verse 11 says, Where is the lion's den?

The feeding place of the young lions. Where is the lion and lioness went? Where his cubs were with none to disturb.
What is verse 11 talking about with the lions here? Well, the lion is an animal of honor. King of the jungle. And Nahum asked, Where is the lion's den?
Where is the strength of the lion? The gathering of the lions? It's a picture here of the mighty men of Nineveh who have been defeated and have either been killed in battle or have now been carried away as captives.
These men who were so strong, so powerful, so feared. I've told you before, part of what Nineveh would do is go into another land and they would take their kings or their subjects and drag them through the streets, oftentimes putting a hook under their bottom lip and just pulling them not only for pain and torture, but absolute humiliation and to make a mockery of the land they have invaded.
[19:27] They were as if lions in the jungle devouring their prey. And Nahum pictures the judgment and destruction that they're about to endure.

And now looking across the land, he says, Where are the lions? lions? If you go out into the jungle, you see a lion, he takes an animal and he devours it, he consumes it, he stands over it, and he has conquered it.
And Nahum, looking prophetically across the landscape of Nineveh at their soon coming destruction, he says, Where is the lion's den?
there are no mighty men. They were killed, well, they will be taken captive. Then he asks where the young lions are.
So think with me, what would this mean? If the lions are a picture of the mighty men, who would the young lions be? Well, these are the young men that would be in training. These are the men that would have grown up to be soldiers and commanders, leaders in their army.
[20:48] The future. Where are the lions? Where are the ones to take their place? They're nowhere to be found. Then he talks about the lion and lioness, the cubs.

It's a picture of the entire family. Where are the people who were the inhabitants of Nineveh? These who are arrogant, prosperous, and powerful.
Nahum now looks across the landscape and says, I don't see any leaders. I don't see any leaders in training. I don't see any families enjoying all the wealth that's been amassed.
This is the devastating effects of the judgment that is to come. Verse 12, It's quite a picture, isn't it? Because this is exactly what Nineveh would do. The Assyrians go into a land, conquer it. Take what they wanted. Take the people.
[22:03] Take the wealth. Take the silver and gold. To the northern kingdom of Israel in 722, the Assyrians conquered them and drove people out, took people from other lands, brought them in.

They just had their way with the land. Picking up on that theme of the lions, Nahum says, Nineveh, you were like a lion that would tear enough for your cubs.
You would strangle your prey to feed the lioness. You would fill your caves with prey and your dens were filled with torn flesh. The lion would conquer any animal it wanted to provide for itself and its family.
He says, your caves, your city, were filled with prey. Treasure from conquered cities. And your dens were filled with flesh.

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In other words, all that they needed to prosper as they thought. But now, the Ninevites, once like honored lions, are dishonored and defeated.
[23:16] Used to be, the lion would conquer, strangle its prey, feed its cubs, feed the lioness, and store whatever he wanted in the cave.

Using that metaphor, Nahum says, where are the lions? Where are the young lions? Where are the lions and cubs?
Your caves are empty. This is a picture of complete dishonor and defeat that awaits Nineveh.
There's one more change he mentions in verse 13. That's that they're going to go from the hunter to the hunted. Verse 13, this explains all of it.
Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts. This is Nineveh's real problem. The real problem is the Lord is against them.
[24:32] Now, in history, how's it going to play out? Dams will break. Floodwaters will rage in. The Babylonians will pursue. The Babylonians will conquer.

But their problem, ultimately, is not the flood, and it's not the Babylonians. The problem is the Lord is against them. And here, again, becomes a picture for anyone in human history who would oppose the Lord.
The Lord is against them. this is the real problem. If you're here tonight and don't know Christ as your Savior, your biggest problem is the wrath of God is upon you.
Whatever problem you think you have with your family or your school, whatever problem you think you have with your health or your finances, all of those problems are less because all those problems go away the minute you die.
The problem that does not go away the minute you die, if you're an unbeliever, is the Lord is against you. This is everyone who does not repent of their sin.
[25:49] They face the same foe. Verse 13, Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will burn your chariots in smoke. Their chariots were organized.

They were fortified. Look back at chapter, we looked at this last week, verse 3 of chapter 2, The shield of His mighty men is red, His soldiers are clothed in scarlet, the chariots come with flashing metal.
Chariots will be of no use. I will burn your chariots in smoke and the sword shall devour your young lions.
In other words, the leaders will be killed or taken captive and those who would take their place will be destroyed.
I will cut off your prey from the earth. For two centuries, the Assyrians ruled and conquered and the Lord will bring them to ruin.
[26:59] Interesting end of verse 2, I will cut off your prey from the earth and the voice of your messengers shall no longer be heard.

The Assyrians would send people into other lands and nations making demands and threats.
If you don't do what we say and give us what we want, our army is coming and you know what we do when we come to invade a land. Their messengers were feared because of the fearful message they would give.
And the Lord says, I'm destroying your lions. I'm cutting off your young lions. And the voice of your messengers shall be heard no longer.
No more threats. No more victories. They are going from being the hunter to being the hunted. It's quite a contrast here.
[28:04] The voice of their messengers will not be heard. They opposed the Lord and they were brought to ruin. He tried to defeat the people of God in totality.

And yet, when you go to Mark's gospel, chapter 1, the very beginning, in fact it's verse 2 and 3, quoting from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, how does Mark's gospel open?
behold, behold, behold, I send my messenger. Behold, I send my messenger before your face who will prepare the way, saying, prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
Do you see the contrast? Nineveh opposed the things of the Lord. He says, you think you're strong like a lion, you'll be devoured. You think you're rich because you're silver and gold?
You'll lose it all. And even the people who would come up underneath you, they will be cut away and I will devour even the messenger.

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[29:16] And you thought you could defeat me, but when I have silenced your messenger, guess who I'm sending? My messenger who will prepare the way for the coming of Messiah.

A very obvious contrast here in Nahum 2 between the purposes of God and those who are the enemies of God. And the enemies of God are soundly defeated and the Lord himself and his will prospers.
And in the end, it's interesting that the Lord through Nahum uses this metaphor of the lion because when you get to the end of your Bible in Revelation 5, verse 5, here's what it says.
You know the words. One of the elders said to me, weep no more. Behold, the what? Lion of Judah, the root of David has conquered.
Your messengers gave threats and the Lord brought them to ruin. God's messenger spoke of salvation.
[30:29] You were strong and powerful like a lion, Nineveh. You will be destroyed. But the Messiah, the Lion of Judah, will rule and reign.

You see it in Nahum. You see it in the Gospels. And you see it in all faithful gospel preaching. that sinners' biggest problem is they stand in opposition to God.
And for a moment on this earth, they may seem to prosper. But just like happened in Nineveh is exactly what will happen to any and all who would oppose the Lord.
In the moment that they stand before the Lord, their judge, they will go from arrogance to humiliation, prosperity to poverty, powerful to powerless, honor to dishonor, from the hunter to the hunted, and they will be brought to destruction.
And yet, the Lion of Judah will rule and reign because it is Christ, the Lion, who has conquered all things.
[31:48] Christ, like a lamb, laid down his life. But upon paying the debt for our sin, one day, like a lion, will return and to rule and to reign.

And when we come to the Lord's table, we are remembering both the lamb who was slain and the lion who rules.
We remember both the sacrifice of Jesus and the power that is forever his. your God is your God is your God is your God is your God is your God is your God is your God is your God is your God is your God is your God is your is your God is your God is your God is your God is your God fathers fathers fathers as our who are fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers fathers promise

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