

"Walk Humbly"

Micah 6

1:1 The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah—the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Micah's ministry spanned the reigns of the southern kingdom kings, Jotham 750-735 BC (a pretty good king) through Ahaz 735-715 BC (a bad king), through Hezekiah 715-687 BC (a good but ended poorly). Most feel the timing of Micah's main message is after the Assyrians defeated the Northern kingdom captive and now they were working their way towards Hezekiah in Jerusalem around 701 BC. The details of this are found in Is. 36-39 and 2 Kings 18-20.

The book of Micah can be divided into three sections based on the repeated reference for Judah to "hear".

1:2 Hear, O peoples, all of you, listen, O earth and all who are in it, that the Sovereign Lord may witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple.

3:1 Then I said, "Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel. Should you not know justice, ² you who hate good and love evil; who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones; ³ who eat my people's flesh, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot?"

6:1 Listen to what the Lord says: "Stand up, plead your case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say. ² Hear, O mountains, the Lord's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth.

Micah mixes in reminders of hope and the coming of the Messiah to rule from Jerusalem in Ch's 3-5. When we come to Micah 6, we return to warnings that judgment is coming because they have broken God's many laws given at Mt. Sinai. God warned them in Deut. 28-29 they would be exiled from the land if they failed to humble themselves before God. V. 8 is key to this chapter and the book: it summarizes what God wanted Judah and Israel to do; walk humbly with Him. God wants a relationship with His people and He often describes this as 'walking with Him, walking as we've seen means living consistently in a unified relationship through obedience.

Even though Hezekiah was good and had to undo a lot of bad practices his father Ahaz had brought in, there was still idol worship, leaders selfishly taking advantage of the poor by forcing them to sell land cheaply and showing no care for those in need (which is why they were selling their land, something you weren't supposed to do in Israel). God described this as a different kind of walking in Ch.2

2:3 Therefore, the Lord says: "I am planning disaster against this people, from which you cannot save yourselves. You will no longer walk proudly, for it will be a time of calamity. ⁴ In that day men will ridicule you; they will taunt you with this mournful song: 'We are utterly ruined; my people's possession is divided up. He takes it from me! He assigns our fields to traitors.' "

God charges Israel with breaking the covenant, presenting incriminating evidence and then pronounces judgment. He confronted them with their sins giving them an opportunity to repent and change before it's too late.

While the threat of exile is not looming over the us, the church, God warns us through discipline in places like Hebrews 12 to help us walk rightly with Him. If we're to walk humbly with God, what do we need to be doing?

Listen and Watch for All the Ways God Loves Us **(6:1-8)**

God uses the word 'hear/listen' as a call for Israel to remember what God's Word says. Jesus Himself cited Deut. 6 as the greatest commandment which begins with

6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your strength.

Remember, listen and read what God's words say on a consistent basis. God says through Micah to Judah,

6:1 "Stand up, plead your case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say. 2 Hear, O mountains, the Lord's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the Lord has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel.

3 "My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me.

God challenges them, 'Have I been an overbearing, and unfair to you? Creation itself stands as my witness as to how I have treated you.' Why does He say plead your case to the mountains? The mountains are an immovable object that has been there since God created the world and have 'seen everything. Idol worship usually took place in the mountains, what is often called the high places. God gives describes the mountains as His eyes as to all He sees. Essentially He was saying, 'Really guys? Have I really burdened you that you would turn to dead idols to give you what you need?'

He has shown us grace when we didn't we didn't deserve it (vv.1-3)

God had been gracious to them as He is to us. Israel didn't do anything to earn God's favour that He chose them to be His people through whom He made many gracious promises. Same with us. We didn't earn His favour to warrant being created, let alone being saved. He doesn't zap us when we blow it. He is amazingly patient with us yet we still dabble in spiritual adultery. Choosing the world's ways or its things more than God. He sees and knows all that we do. The 'mountains' don't literally give witness but the One who put them there knows. So God reminds Israel

How He mercifully saved them before they served Him (v.4)

He recalls the rescue from Egypt where they were slaves ('Oh yeah I forgot'), through chosen leaders Moses, Aaron & Miriam ('oh yeah, right, them') which involved the miracles of the plagues, the Red Sea, manna, etc. Did God rescue them because they were faithfully serving Him? God didn't wait until Israel got their 'act together'. He saved them out of love and mercy.

God has never saved people because they were serving Him; that's a salvation by works philosophy which the world has bought into. We don't deserve saving. Paul says this often and in various ways, like here in Titus 3:4

⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Even while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God saves His people by grace (we don't deserve it) and by mercy (we deserve judgment). Micah reminds those who should have known better that God loves you, saved you and watches over His people. So they/we

Should be thankful for His commitment to us (v.5)

Now God mentions the incident of Balak who hired Balaam the prophet to curse Israel yet God reversed the curses. Instead of cursing Israel, he blessed them and reiterated many of God's promises to them. Most likely when Balaak hired Balaam to curse Israel, Israel was probably totally unaware of this at the time. They learned of it afterwards.

Isn't that like God, to be so committed to us that He watches out for us when we're not even aware of His presence. In our present comfort, we forget how we got here. He mentions Shittim and Gilgal. Shittim was the last place Israel camped before crossing the Jordan and Gilgal was the first place on the other side where they arrived. In other words, look at your life; you're here and you have what you have because of God's miraculous and gracious acts in your life. So before we ever complain God has been burdensome, review His hand in your daily life. The big things God has done but also the many small things He does in our life everyday to remind us of His gracious acts of kindness.

We can see that the people weren't really repentant. In v.6, Micah quotes the people who basically say, 'Fine. With what do I need to bring to you to get you off my back?' They had forgotten that its not sacrifices that automatically makes one right with God.

Ps. 15:1 Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? ²He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart ³and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman, ⁴ who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the Lord, who keeps his oath even when it hurts, ⁵who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.

God's words through Micah in the rest of the chapter tells God's people, all of us need

Take Repentance Seriously (6:7-16)

The people suggest more sacrifices, or better sacrifices (1 year old lambs) or their firstborn – which shows you how they were allowing the pagan influences into their thinking. God never, ever ordered Israel to offer their firstborn!! That's idol worship. That's what Ahaz did (Hezekiah's dad) and that's what! Manasseh would do also (Hezekiah's son). Of Ahaz we read

2 Kings 16 *In the 17th year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, became king. ²Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he*

did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God, as his father David had done. ³ But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and he even made his son pass through the fire, in accordance with the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel. ⁴ And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

To take repentance seriously,

This requires heart work, not easy solutions (vv.6-7)

We can't bribe God with an extra offering, a 'fine I'll serve by doing this to get God off my back' mentality. Sometimes we think, 'I better apologize or ask forgiveness because that's what I'm supposed to do', as if the act is what God really wants.

God wants our heart. So He reminds them in v.8,

⁸ He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

'These things are already in My Word, God' was saying. Treat people fairly, show God's faithful love and to humble themselves before God. In other words, love others like God is living in us and through us. When we take repentance seriously,

It results in growing God-like (v.8)

When did God say this before? Deuteronomy of course.

^{10:12} And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

God doesn't need our sacrifices; He wants our hearts being submissive to Him. David said in Ps. 51

^{51:16} For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, God, You will not despise.

Sacrifices were a reminder of the price of sin – death – and a picture of God bringing the ultimate sacrifice in Christ for us. Knowing God loves us that much should humble us to love others like God. To "act justly". Israel was guilty of a lot of injustice. Ch. 2 elaborates on how the rich were treating the poor unjustly. Buying their land off of them at ridiculous prices probably because they were in debt. Israel's land was sacred; it was God's gift to the people. Even if you did sell it, it had to be returned to the owner in the Jubilee year. Something we have no evidence that Israel ever practiced.

Treat others the way we would want to be treated.

"Love mercy". Mercy is the Hebrew word 'hesed' a word God uses to describe His loyal love. Be forgiving. Stay committed to each other like God is to us. Give and serve without expecting anything in return. Show kindness to the mistreated of the world. Forgive when someone hurts you.

When we're walking with God, we can't be anything but humble. Letting Him lead us and take us where He wants to go instead of fighting His will or making excuses. We can't really be 'with' God when we're thinking we know better than God. Jesus may have been alluding to this passage when He said,

Matt. 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

A yoke joined two animals together to do the work of plowing the field. There is greater strength in two. When they work together they can get more done. When one leads and the other follows, it goes smoothly and goes straight because the one leading knows what it is doing. When we choose our own way, we are essentially saying I can do this on my own. I have a better sense of direction. I don't need God's help. Which is not humble. I'm going to barge ahead of God or I'm going to fight back. The result? An unproductive, directionless, arrogant and selfish life.

The last 8 verses explains this very thing: if they won't humble themselves before God, life is going to be very hard. He gives them one more challenge before he lists the destructive results of living an arrogant life:

⁹ *Listen! The Lord is calling to the city— and to fear your name is wisdom— "Heed the rod and the One who appointed it.*

Treat people kindly out of a healthy fear of God (vv.9-16)

He begins with "listen" again. "Listen" recalls Deut. 6:4, ⁴ *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

It's an appeal to be wise and return to God. Listen to His words not the words of the culture or even your own words. We may not even be aware that we are following our words or words others place before us everyday. We can get so caught up in our agenda and not even realize we didn't involve God in any of it. "Love the Lord with all your heart, soul and strength." Not compartmentalize God into your timetable. All means involve God in every area of your life.

For Israel, it was very evident that their obedience was tied to rain and fruitfulness of land. We don't have the same equivalent promise in the church but there is an overriding spiritual principle and that is contentment based on met needs. When we're walking with God we sense His presence, we are willing to trust His leading in our life because even in the negative things, we are right with Him and we are resting in His guidance.

⁸*Lord you have shown us again, the good that you want us to do in our life that reveals to people You are leading us. Help us by Your Spirit and through submissive obedience to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with you.*

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If you have any comments or questions about this message, please contact us at oliviet@rideau.net