

May 25, 2025

Return: Who is Like God?

Micah 7:1-20

Vernon Advent Christian Church

Introduction... Today, we will be finishing up the Book of Micah. As a reminder, the Book of Micah consists of three cycles in which he gives warnings of God's judgment to Israel, and then a promise of hope that God will bring restoration. Each cycle demonstrates the cyclical nature of Israel's behavior: their sin and resulting judgment, followed by God's promise of restoration and a renewed covenant with them.

Micah has been crying out against both the political and religious leaders for their failures to lead the people in following the Lord and the nation as a whole for the culture of sin and wickedness that now surrounded them. Which leads us to the question, "How can we, as followers of Jesus, maintain faithfulness in a broken world?" for things haven't changed much since the time of Micah, have they?

In this final prophecy of Micah, in chs. 6 and 7, the prophet declares what God wants from his people, and it shouldn't come as a surprise. It's all summed up in Micah 6:8 which is our theme verse for the year which we covered in depth back in January, where Micah says, "He (God) has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?"

God is not asking the impossible from his people. God is not asking for a bunch of religious activity. Sometimes it's easier for us just to go through the motions of being religious than it is to actually live a life totally submitted to God and that's exactly what has been taken place. The problem is the people think that everything is okay even though their lives have been full of hypocrisy. Their voices were lifted to God in prayer and praise while their hands were full of violence, their lips full of lies and deceit and they turned a blind eye to poor who were being oppressed around them.

But now God is telling the people what he is going to do. And what God says he is going to do tells us a lot about the who he is. It will also tell us how we are to maintain our faithfulness in a broken world. If you are able, please stand as I read the word of God. [Read Passage]

The first point is very simple and goes back into ch. 6 picking up in vs. 9, even though we didn't read back that far, but it gives the background leading up to the verses we just read in ch. 7. And the point is this, God cannot continue to overlook all the sin that is being committed by his people. He cannot overlook the rich who are full of violence or the weighted scales that have cheated the poor and the vulnerable. He cannot forget the lying and deceitful tongues anymore. The Lord is going to strike them down and leave Judah desolate because of their sins, which he would do when the Babylonian's came and destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC.

But this destruction would happen for another 100 years after Micah spoke. And God would send many more prophets, many of which we will look at as we move forward in our journey through the Minor Prophets, with the same warning, "Repent! Return to the LORD before it's too late! You see, one of the problems that we have is that we, far too

often, perceive God's tolerance as permission. We think because God has not acted that we are getting away with our sin. This is what these people are doing. They do not think that there will be a judgment for what they are doing. Remember what Micah told them back in chs. 2-3, that the false prophets were telling them not to listen to Micah, that nothing was going to happen, that God would not judge his own people. And Micah calls these "utter lies" and mere "wind" and God says he has seen all the wickedness that is happening and he has come to a point where he is going to act against their sin.

Now, sometimes we can be so disturbed by all the sin surrounding us in our nation and even around the world. As with Micah, we know that God will judge the world and that Jesus will come again to execute God's judgment. We, who are in Christ, need not have any fear of this judgment but we can rejoice in the imminent return of our Lord and Savior. But I want us to see, as Micah did, that God's patience is not a sign of his overlooking sin, for he sees all, but his patience is a sign of his grace as he is waiting for people to return to him. It was true then, and it is true now, that every moment God waits to execute his judgment is God's grace, giving people opportunity to come to him for salvation. But, eventually God will no longer overlook the sins of the nation and judgment will come.

And in vs. 13-16, God says will begin his judgment by taking away their prosperity. They will not be satisfied when they eat. They will try to store up but will not have enough to save. They will plant but not have a harvest. Their labor will be for nothing as all of their economic prosperity disappears. The reason is stated again that it is because of their sin. Therefore, everything will be taken away from them.

It is important to think about what God is saying here. Who is in control of the economic prosperity of the nation? Is it the kings of Israel? Is it the people or how hard they work? No, God says he is in control. Now all the people's work will go for nothing and there is nothing the kings of Israel can do about it. God's judgment will come.

This background now leads us up to the passage we read this morning where we now find Micah lamenting over what he sees in his country. The first few verses of ch. 7 gives us the image of being unable to find any good fruit in the land. The faithful have disappeared and there is no one left who is upright (vs. 2). This sounds a lot like Elijah's complaint to God in 1 Kings 19 when he said, "I am the only left" after the encounter with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. Do you ever feel like that? That you are the only one in your circle that follows after God?

Well, Micah certainly did and with good reason. The people are killing each other and their hands are skilled in doing evil (vs. 2-3). Officials are bribed, the powerful do what they want, and justice is being perverted (vs. 3). Even the best of the people, he says, are like a thorn bush (vs. 4). The faithful have been surrounded by the wicked and are swept away.

In fact its gotten so bad, and the evil is so great, that you cannot even trust a friend or have confidence in your loved ones. Micah says in vs. 6 that "the son treats the father with contempt. The daughter rises up against her mother. The in-laws are against each other and your enemies are the people living in your own house." What is the upright person supposed to do when they live in a culture that looks like this? What is to be the response of those who are trying to follow after God when they are surrounded by wickedness, even within one's own family? Look at verse 7. [Read]

The faithful look to the Lord. [Anna] The Psalmist reminds of this truth in Ps. 105:4 which says, "Look to the LORD and his strength. Seek his face always." Micah knows the answer is not going to come from within himself. He is not going to be able to change this situation. Only God can change a wicked nation. So Micah will look to the Lord. Not only will Micah look to the Lord but he says he will also wait for the Lord. None of us like to wait for things, do we?

He will look to God to answer his prayer concerning the horrible wickedness in the nation for his hope is in God. This is such an important reminder for us when our culture seemingly falls deeper into wickedness. Brothers and sisters, our hope is not in a leader or a political party. Our hope is not in a movement or any other activist group. Our hope is in the Lord for he is our only source of help.

You will notice that this is what Micah expresses in vs. 8-13. God is going to be the one to let the faithful rise again. The Lord will be my light (vs. 8). He will bring me out to the light and bring me vindication (vs. 9). The enemies who were against him will be covered in shame (vs. 10). Further, Israel is prophesied as being fully restored in vs. 11-13. The earth will be made desolate in judgment for its deeds, yes, but the people of God will be restored.

The example is clear, when we are surrounded by wickedness, we look to God to be our vindication as we continue to walk in faithfulness to the Lord. We do not cave to the culture around us. We do not model our thoughts and actions after what society says it right. For the Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world," literally 'do not let the world put you into its mold,' "but be transformed by the renewal of your mind..." in Christ Jesus by the Word of God.

Even if we can say, like Micah, that there is no one left who is faithful and the best person is nothing better than a thorn bush, we must continue to love, serve, and be faithful to the Lord. Even when things are falling apart all around us, we look to the Lord for help and rescue.

Let's zero back in on vs. 9 for a second. I want us to notice what Micah says here. He says that he, himself, has sinned against God. [Read] He is lumping himself in with the guilty, that he too has sinned and he will bear the indignation, the wrath, of God. It's important to see that Micah does not picture the faithful here as perfect. He fully realizes that "no one is righteous, not even one" and that he is included in that "no one." The same is true for you and I.

Nor does Micah say that because he has sinned that he cannot look to the Lord in hope. Sin does not stop us from hoping in God. Our failures do not keep us from being able to trust in the Lord for vindication and rescue. Our failure and our sinning are not to cause us to turn away from God but to drive us to call out to the Lord all the more. Our hope is in his grace, the fact that the Lord will vindicate his people. Keyword here, "his people." The text says that he will plead my cause even though I have sinned against him.

This is only true for the believer and this reminds me of one of my favorite passages in scripture, 1 John 2:1-2, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, or the righteous one. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." What a picture! We can still hope in God even after our failures. But we must continually look to him and seek his face.

Finally, we can put our hope in God because Micah makes the point that there is no one like him. The question is asked in vs. 18, “Who is a God like you,” and the answer is no one. In vs. 14, Micah calls for the Lord to shepherd his people once again and to show them his wonders. Micah ask him to do the great works for your people just like you did in the past when you rescued them from Egypt (vs. 15). Let everyone see the power of the Lord and turn to the Lord in fear and awe (vs. 16-17) But listen to the words of Micah as he tries to impress us with who God is. [Read vs. 18a]

We have seen in this prophecy that the people are worthy of God’s judgment and wrath. There is wickedness and injustice everywhere. But Micah’s point is who is a God like the God of Israel, Yaweh, who pardons our sins and forgives our transgressions? We have a God who does exactly the opposite of what we deserve! That’s called grace.

Listen to more about his character in rest of vs. 18b. He does not stay angry forever but delights in showing steadfast love. Steadfast love means a love that is constant, unwavering, and loyal, enduring through all circumstances. God does not delight in anger. He does not want to have wrath toward us for he delights in showing mercy. God delights in being faithful to his word and faithful toward us. Now, its important for us to realize that these promises, again, are only for those who are in Christ. For outside of faith in the work of Jesus and trusting his salvation, the truth is, you are still under the penalty of your sin against a holy God.

But for those of us who are in Christ, he will have compassion on us again and tread our iniquities underfoot as Micah says in vs.19. [Read] God is pictured here as taking our sins and walking on them, destroying them under his feet. Further, as another analogy of doing away with our sin, God is pictured as throwing our sins into the depths of the sea. When you throw something into the depths of the sea, it is not coming back up again. Our sins are pictured as permanently lost in the seas. This is the God we have. The Psalmist also picks up on this thought when he says in Ps. 103:12 “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

God does not say that you have no sins. Rather, God says that he sees our sins but he tramples them under his feet and casts them into the sea. Your sins are gone, never to be seen again. This is the faithful, steadfast love of the Lord. Any time we have doubts, we are to remember that God is faithful. God always does what he says.

As we come to the end of the Book of Micah, what has God said about himself in these last few chapters? God says he cannot overlook sin forever. Judgment will come. And what are we to do in the meantime, while we live in a world that is increasingly becoming more evil. We need to remember the words of Micah, when he said as he was surrounded by the wickedness around him, “But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.” We need to continue to be faithful and point the world to look to a faithful God who loves them.

All of us are in need of salvation. Even Micah says that he is worthy of judgment and will bear the indignation of the Lord because of his sins. But God will pardon those who come to him. God will show steadfast love because he delights in showing his faithfulness. He will show you compassion and throw your sins into the sea if you will come to him. Who is like God who shows compassion and forgiveness to those who have sinned against him? There is none. Let's pray.

Benediction: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. 2 Cor. 13:14