

PULPIT DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP



*Gray & Gold by Jack Rogers Cox;
3' by 5'; Oil on canvas; 1942; The Cleveland Museum of Art.*

A study of the book of Micah

The Incomparable God: A Story of Forgiveness & Fidelity

Purpose of Micah

"To call Judah to repentance and hope during the Assyrian crisis and to prepare Judah for the Babylonian exile by announcing God's judgements against sin and his promise of restoration."

-Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible

“GOD’S PURIFYING JUDGMENT”

Micah 1:1-7 ESV

The word of the Lord that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. 2 Hear, you peoples, all of you; pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it, and let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple. 3 For behold, the Lord is coming out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth. 4 And the mountains will melt under him, and the valleys will split open, like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place. 5 All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? 6 Therefore I will make Samaria a heap in the open country, a place for planting vineyards, and I will pour down her stones into the valley and uncover her foundations. 7 All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, all her wages shall be burned with fire, and all her idols I will lay waste, for from the fee of a prostitute she gathered them, and to the fee of a prostitute they shall return.

Historical Context

“The second half of the eighth century witnessed the most affluent period in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah since the break-up of the single nation after the death of Solomon...both capitals – Samaria in the north, Jerusalem in the south – had begun to enjoy immense prosperity. In the face of this wealth and godlessness which walked with it, prophets of boldness and incisiveness spoke ‘the word of the Lord’ to both parts of the divided nation: Amos and Hosea in the north, Isaiah and Micah in the south...Micah deals with the Judean version of the development of a commercial and ‘secular’ culture.”

Big Idea

If God’s purifying judgment is certain to come to the household of faith, then hearing and heeding His call to a life of repentance and faith in the Gospel is critical to our worship, witness, and wellbeing.

Outline

1. A Historical Word (verse 1)

2. A Universal Word (verse 2)

3. Contextual Thought: The difference between God's judgment on the world and His judgment of believers is that one is *punitive* and the other is *purifying*.

4. A Word of Judgment (verse 3-7)

5. Conclusion

PRAISE TO JESUS

We can praise God because of our union with Christ. We are an object of God's intense love. And in that intense love He doesn't ignore the sin that is ruining our witness, worship and wellbeing but is dealing with it through His purifying judgment and discipline.

REPENTANCE THROUGH JESUS

To repent of our sin of indifference towards God and his calling in our life...for the ways that riches and prosperity have caused us to ignore God and His great purposes.

CONSECRATION FOR JESUS

To speak to our hearts in a culture full of wealth and prosperity and say that God is the great treasure of the universe...that His purposes are good, pleasing, and perfect...and to rededicate ourselves to a life that loves God for who He is and what He is doing in the world.

DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH DISCUSSION

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What does the word “purify” mean? What is meant by “God’s purifying judgment?” Am I or is my family or church going through a “purifying” time?

2. In verse 1, think about the historical context of the people of Judah. What does our culture share with the culture of people of Judah?

3. In verse 2, what are some other ways to think about the word “universal” (besides thinking about the cosmos)? Micah’s message is for whom?

Theologian R.C. Sproul said, “This might be hard for us to understand or accept, but the Bible is clear that even the people of God will be judged at times in this life, even though Christ has borne the full penalty for all of our sins. In our day it is quite easy to find people eager to remind us that ‘God is love.’ However, the love that many people have in mind when they trumpet this attribute of God often does not understand that God’s love also included His judgement.”

How do we misunderstand the word “love”? How can God’s judgment be viewed as loving?

DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH DISCUSSION

4. It is ironic that we know that the source of our wealth is God; how then can wealth often cause us to turn away from God? What was the purpose of God's judgment in the time of Judah and in our time today? What was God's escape plan for Micah and what is God's escape plan for us?

5. Praise to Jesus – **Reflect:** Recall a purifying time in your life. Take some time to share how the Lord has or is shaping you through that. Offer praise to God for our union with Christ in the past, now and always for his intense love, that God doesn't ignore sin. **Each day:** In the morning, why not make space to praise God for his purifying love.

6. Repentance through Jesus- **Reflect:** Can you think of a time when you were indifferent to God? What caused you to be indifferent? Am I indifferent to the plight of folks who don't know Jesus? **Pray:** Take some time in silent prayer to confess sins of indifference. **Each Day:** In the middle of the day, take a break, to reflect and if needed, repent, if indifference returns.

7. Consecration for Jesus - **Reflect:** What are the messages I've been telling my heart lately? **Each Day:** At the end of each day, speak to your heart and say that God is the great treasure of the universe...that His purposes are good, pleasing, and perfect...and as you go to bed ask the Lord to wake you up in the morning to live the day in a way that loves God for who He is and what He is doing in the world.

DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH DISCUSSION

For Families and Young Children

If you want to connect with our family ministries, contact Pastor Ken (kenc@fpcrome.org)

At the beginning of time together as a family, why not put away all of the devices and for a few minutes spend some time discussing the sermon together.

1. Ask your children what a prophet is. The most common understanding of prophets is that they predict future events. While that is partially true, the best understanding is that prophets deliver messages from the Lord. The prophets were God's messengers to God's people to bring words of judgment and deliverance based on the covenant that God made with His people. Talk to your children about how Jesus was the Great Prophet as He is called the "Word" in John 1:1-18.

2. What does the word "ignore" mean? At school a student ignores the teacher when a teacher is explaining a math problem what might happen to the student? Is it ok for the teacher to let the student ignore her? How might the teacher get the student's attention? Why does the teacher want to get the student's attention? The sermon is about a time when the people of God, the tribe of Judah ignored God. God would not let his people ignore him, because He loves them. They ignored God so there were consequences.

3. The people of Judah were ignoring God. They were paying attention to all of the things that they owned instead of God. In addition to going to worship God in his house they worshiped their things. How do we pay more attention to other things than paying attention to God? When we worship other things instead of God we call this idolatry.

4. This passage and this book show God delivering a word of judgment against His people, the Israelites. We get a picture of God that is often misunderstood by our culture. It is a picture of the God of love bringing judgment on His people. Talk with your children about why and how someone who loves a person would correct him or her. You could talk about why parents have to punish their children sometimes. It is important to talk about God's correction and punishment as perfect while we as humans sometimes get it wrong.

Scriptures for further study: Hebrews 12:4-11, Romans 8:29, Philippians 1:6

DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH DISCUSSION

For Students

If you want to connect with our student ministries, contact Student Ministry Director Jimmy (jimmyl@fpcrome.org)

1. The book of Micah begins with a description of the coming of the Lord that is rather unsettling. What comfort do you gain from Jesus' promise to guide and lead his people?

2. Look again at verse one. During Micah's time, both Samaria (Israel) and Jerusalem (Judah) were in sharp decline. What does our culture share with the culture of that time in Judah?

3. God's condemnation of Israel serves as an example of the judgement he will bring upon all people that forsake the Lord for other idols. What are the idols that you are tempted by? What is it that you are tempted to treasure more than Jesus?

4. The Lord's character and the people's sins demand judgement (1:2-5; 6:1-2) Do you view God character as both loving and just? Why or why not?

5. Why is it important to understand God's character as both just and merciful?

DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH DISCUSSION

For Non Believers or New Believers

If you want to know more about Jesus and Christianity, contact Pastor Jonathan (jonathans@fpcrome.org)

1. Many non-believers struggle with the idea that God judges people. In fact, people often say, "I cannot believe in a God who would judge" (or any other word we might use to fill in that blank). But does this not say more about us than it does about God? What we are really saying is that we will not accept a God who would do anything contrary to our personal beliefs or values. What this implies is that we want a "God" who is made in our image, which then means that we have placed ourselves at the center of the universe. Discuss further.

2. God is a holy God who does indeed judge people for sin. But he is also the God who is rich in mercy and love, and who sent his one and only Son Jesus Christ, to willingly take upon himself our sin and the judgment we deserved, and to give us his righteousness in exchange. (2 Corinthians 5:21) Would you like to receive this gracious gift of God? If so, would you please come and talk with me or any other person who knows and follows Christ!

DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH DISCUSSION

For Non Believers or New Believers continued

If you want to know more about Jesus and Christianity, contact Pastor Jonathan (jonathans@fpcrome.org)

3. As believers, we know that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). So when God judges Christians, he does so for the loving purposes of producing repentance, renewal, and righteousness in our hearts and lives. (Read Hebrews 12:4-11 for amplification of this point.) In what ways has God lovingly disciplined you in the past? In what ways is he lovingly disciplining you right now?

4. Much of the Book of Micah deals with God's judgment against his people for the ways riches and affluence caused them to ignore God (and mistreat others). Be honest and real: what are you treasuring the most? Is it God, or is something else capturing your heart instead? Pray for God to change and redirect our hearts.

Scriptures for further study: Hebrews 12:4-11



ADULT DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY

GOD'S WORD • GOD'S PEOPLE • GOD'S MISSION

What is Pulpit Driven Discipleship?

"Discipleship from the pulpit to communities therein pressed into the head, heart and hands of image bearers of God every day."

Pulpit Driven Discipleship is the name of a process of discipleship. Discipleship begins on Sunday with the sermon faithfully preached by our pastors then the message of sermon is digested and pressed into the heart throughout the week through prayer reflection and discussion in the home or in smaller discussion groups. It is in this context that life transformation and growth occur.

The pastoral leadership team and the Adult Discipleship Ministry Team are excited to walk together this Fall through the message of the Book of Micah. Please prayerfully consider incorporating PDD as your primary means of discipleship. We believe that PDD is appropriate for individuals, couples, families, and groups of all kinds. This great resource can be found in the bulletin on Sunday, and will be available on-line and via email each week.

Director of Adult Discipleship Rob Davis welcomes discussion, questions, and comments of all kinds. Rob Davis 706-252-5216, RobD@fpcrome.org

About of the artwork

The artist painted Gray and Gold shortly after the United States joined the Second World War, and its image of amber waves of grain threatened by ominous storm clouds likely has symbolic overtones. The painting's foreground features an intersection of two dirt lanes, as well as a telephone pole emblazoned with political campaign posters. The artist seems to imply that American democracy is at a crossroads during this time of combat against the spread of fascism in Europe and Asia. Interestingly the work was inspired by the landscape around Cox's hometown of Terre Haute, Indiana, a location nicknamed "The Crossroads of America" due to the junction of major north-south and east-west national highways within its city limits.¹

¹<https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1943.60>