

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

October 17, 2021

“LITTLE BETHLEHEM”

Micah 5:2-6 ESV

2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. **3** Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. **4** And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. **5** And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men; **6** they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances; and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border.

Historical Context - In chapter 4 Micah's book made a sudden, turn. Micah encouraged the righteous remnant in both Israel and Judah to hold on to hope because God has a future plan to rescue and restore them. One day the Messiah will reign on earth, and Israel will receive the complete fulfillment of Abraham's covenant promises. Micah continues to develop this important, hope-producing theme in chapter 5.

One scholar summarizes it this way – “In Micah's day, Israel would be handed over by God to suffer and be purified. They had turned their hearts to idols, so in the care of idols they would fall into ruin. God would give the people up to all the travails of bondage and affliction, for the purpose of readying Israel's heart for the Savior.” – Richard Phillips. The enemies of God were primarily physical enemies. That is armies and countries, that surrounded the people of Judah. Therefore, they used physical swords and other weapons to strike out against the evil threats around them. When Micah's original audience first heard these words, they would have been thinking that when these words are fulfilled it would be done in a physical manner.

“Bethlehem was a little town, so insignificant that it was not even mentioned in a list of place-names in Judah when Joshua divided the land. When we realize that 115 towns and cities were named, ‘with their villages’, which remained without a name, it becomes plain just how insignificant Bethlehem was.” - David Prior

Big Idea

The great hope of God’s people is based on His peculiar promise to send a Shepherd-King who could do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Outline

1. Introduction
2. A Peculiar Promise
3. An Important Person
4. The Good Fight
5. Conclusion

Gospel Applications:

Repentance through Jesus -To repent of the many ways that we have given ourselves to things that we think can give us what we want...we have given ourselves to things that we think will make us strong...idols are attractive but always let people down.

Praise to Jesus - That through the person and work of Jesus Christ we find that weakness is not a failure but a virtue...that Jesus is the redeemer of weakness and calls upon all those who are weak and wounded to find strength in Him...God has provided His people with strength, not in themselves, but in His son.

Consecration for Jesus - To rededicate yourself to looking to God’s appointed shepherd Jesus Christ...and to the under shepherds He has raised up who seek to feed you the Word of God...a work that equips you with strength to fight the good fight of faith.

Scripture Memory: "Micah expressed confidence that God would plead his cause and execute judgment for him (Mic. 7:9), he could not have seen how radically and truly God would do this—by sending his own Son to have judgment executed upon him." Gospel Transformation Study Bible

Through memorizing scripture be reminded moment by moment of God’s forgiveness and of the hope that he will deliver!

Micah 7:9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication. (ESV)

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

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. Recall a time in your life when you had to rely on someone else in some way. What great comfort did it provide to know that your need would be met? Was it evident that this need was met for you by God even if the means of provision seemed very ordinary?

2. "The way of true spiritual strength, leading to real fruitfulness in Christian life and service, is the humble, self-distrustful way of consciously recognized weakness in spiritual things." – J.I. Packer

We live in a culture which takes enormous pride in self-sufficiency, status, physical stature, strength, and power. How can we remind ourselves that God takes pride in and raises up the weak and lowly? How does recalling the character of Christ and what He has done for us remind us of what character traits are most important to Him? Are there folks in my church family whom model Christ-like character with whom I could spend more time? This week meditate on John 10:27, John 6:35, John 4:14, 1 Peter 2:24-25,

3. We can connect to the people of Micah's day...for like them, our hearts turn to idols and we look to them to provide the safety and security to which only Jesus can give. Do I find myself in a place where I've been letdown by the things of this world, where I've been disappointed in people...where something has shattered my sense of peace and confidence? How did I or am I responding? Do I see these disappointments as good? Do I recognize that this is God's way of truly loving me...loving me enough to hand me over to taste the emptiness of idols in order to ready my heart for the fullness of life and peace in His all-satisfying son, Jesus?

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

4. "God provides an adequate and abundant supply of holy leaders who under the promised Messiah would defend their territory and strike back against evil" – Richard Phillips. Have I let cynicism regarding leaders in culture in any way color the view that I have of my leaders in my church? How can I change a distrustful perspective? To what extent do I believe that leaders are chosen by God? Romans 13:1-7. What is true of the Christian church is also true in the Christian home. The health of a home is found in how large or small one's vision for the significance of God's Word. What is the role of God's Word in the rhythms of daily life in our home? If God's Word doesn't have a place, or doesn't have the place it should, what is one change we can make to give God's Word greater prominence?

Praise to Jesus - Reflect: What are my weaknesses? Praise the Lord for these pathways in my life which He has used to bring me to Himself?

Repentance through Jesus - Reflect: What are habits that I can form which would set me up better for a posture of quiet trust in Jesus through-out the day?

Consecration for Jesus - Reflect: This week: "False prophets spoke peace while ignoring the sins of the people. Micah speaks of the peace to come when the Shepherd-King deals decisively with the people's sins (cf. Eph. 2:14) by canceling sin's debt and defeating the only powers that can really harm us in this world." Gospel Transformation Study Bible. How is the Holy Spirit speaking to me about how I am fighting the fight of faith? Is there someone in my life who loves me most and knows me best who can help look plainly at areas of my life where I allow lies or half-truths to comfort me rather than allowing the truth of the Gospel to deal decisively with my sin? If there isn't someone like this in my life, reach out to a pastor or elder at FPC to connect you with a soul-shepherd.

Additional verses: 2 Corinthians 12:10, 1 Timothy 6:11-12,
Ephesians 2: 14, Colossians 2:14-15, Romans 5:8-11

DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH DISCUSSION

For Families and Young Children

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

1. In Micah 5:2, the prophet tells of the coming Messianic King that will be from Bethlehem. This is about 700 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem. Talk with your children about how the various prophecies that God gave us in His Word show the divine nature of the Bible and how it can be trusted.
 - Ask your children if they can predict what they will have for dinner today or what presents they will get for their next birthday.
 - Ask your children how God knows what will happen in the future.
 - Take time to marvel with your children at how amazing God is.
2. Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13 with your children. Talk with them about David being from Bethlehem and how he was the youngest of Jesse's sons.
 - Ask them what qualities you would expect the greatest King of Israel to have.
 - Ask them why God would choose to pick the King of Israel in this way that goes against what we would expect.
 - Talk with them about God getting the glory and honor in all things in life.
3. Read 2 Samuel 7:8-17 about the covenant God made with David. God gave His Word that David's Kingdom and Throne would be established forever.
 - Talk about how this prophecy in Micah 5:2 is a part of God fulfilling His covenant promise with David.
 - Talk about how Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of Micah 5:2 and of the covenant made with David.
 - Read Matthew 2:1-6 with you children.
4. Read Micah 5:4 and ask your children what kind of King is being described here. What qualities does He have?
 - Ask your children to describe sheep and a shepherd.
 - Ask your children to describe how a King can be a shepherd.
 - Read John 10:11-18 and ask your children to describe the good shepherd to you and how Jesus is the good shepherd.
 - The end of Micah 5:4 says that this King "shall be great to the ends of the earth". Ask your children how Jesus fulfills this.

Scriptures for further study: John 7:42, Psalm 23, John 6:35, John 4:14

DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH DISCUSSION

For Students

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

1. Do you ever struggle with wondering if God cares about you? How might these verses help to answer this question?
2. How would you finish this sentence - "If only God would come and give _____ to me?"
3. What kind of outlook or perspective would you have on life if you knew that God had already dealt with your ultimate problem?
4. How does this section make you more excited as you look ahead to next Christmas?
5. Do you tend to over-focus on Jesus as humble and weak, or as powerful and strong? What difference does this make to your life when you sin...when things go wrong...when you need help?

*Borrowed and adapted from Stephen Um, Micah for You, ed. Carl Laferton, God's Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2018)

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. Christians believe that this passage is a clear prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ. First, we learn that He would come from Bethlehem, which was a small and humble town. What does this suggest about the kind of person Jesus would be and the kind of people He would desire to reach?
2. Micah 5:2 speaks of a coming “ruler over Israel whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” Many believe that this refers to the ruler’s divinity. But we also know that this ruler would be born a man (verse 3). What are the implications of the Christian belief that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man?
3. Note that the coming ruler would be a strong shepherd over his flock. According to Micah 5:4-6, the result of good shepherding is that people dwell securely, people experience peace, and people find deliverance from enemies. In other words, Jesus offers security, peace, and victory. Are you looking to anything other than Christ to find these blessings?
4. God’s way of salvation (from His birth as a child, to His death on a cross), is contrary to the expectations of man. Therefore, some find it all very foolish. But to those who believe, we understand that it is the power of God leading to our salvation (1 Corinthians 1:18). In one sense it does sound crazy, but would you be willing to trust in the wisdom of God for your salvation?
5. God achieved His will through Jesus humbling Himself. Don’t be discouraged in thinking that God cannot use you, or that you don’t have much to offer. Instead, know that He chooses to do great things through humble believers obediently doing His will. Believe it!