

Indictment, Oppression - Micah 3:1-12
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Verse 1 of our text asks an important question. "Is it not for you to know justice?" Micah is speaking out against the leaders who were to serve God's people in Jerusalem. More than likely it is a decade or so since the first series of indictments (ch. 1-2). The first series of warnings were focused on the Southern Kingdom of Judah and capital of Jerusalem, but also contained warnings of an impending judgment coming to the Northern Kingdom of Israel and capital Samaria. That judgment came to the north in 722 BC in the form of the Assyrian conquest and deportation. But the Assyrians by that time had not made it through Judah to Jerusalem, and actually paused their conquests for a couple decades. So Jerusalem was spared and actually enjoying a time of prosperity and a bit of peace. Seeds that God had gotten their wicked neighbors but spared them. He must love them more, right?

So here comes Micah, along with other prophets such as Isaiah focusing their warnings on Jerusalem giving warnings because the rot that infiltrated Israel was working its way through the culture and hearts of God's people in Judah. And central to the prophetic warnings is the failure to do justice.

Injustice and wickedness abounds in the world. Assyria was awful when it came to human rights and dignity. The other nations around them were no better. They all fought to gain power and cared not who they harmed or how they harmed them. In fact, rape, murder, genocide was often a way of life for peoples who sought power. The outcome was always marginalized people cast out by society, living in poverty and suffering. Yet, the Hebrews were former slaves rescued by God and brought into a relationship with Himself, and given a Kingdom whose King was Jehovah. God's goal was that the world would know that He is the LORD through the holy character, different lives of His people. They were people whom God redeemed from oppression and loved deeply. Justice should matter to them because in God's justice He saved them. As a result, they were to stand with and speak for the broken, poor, and hurting people who lived in the margins of their culture. They were to care for the poor, support the widow and orphan, and provide safety and help for the refugee and immigrant (the sojourner). Their love for what we in our context call "social justice" was to be a marker that defined the differences between the Hebrews and the rest of the world.

Instead though, those in power in Jerusalem fought to keep their power, and instead of being the champions of justice they were perpetrators of the worst kinds of evil and injustice. Those with the power to act chose to make themselves more powerful and wealthy at the expense of the marginalized. Micah's language is striking as he pictures the wealthy making and eating a "poor person meat chili." The prophets were supposed to be God's spokesmen, which meant they should be the voice for the hurting against injustice and oppression. But false prophets filled the city, promising "Peace" for those who benefitted their ministry and pocketbook, yet called down the curses of God on anyone who spoke out against them. To make it worse, these false prophets were seeking a "Word from the Lord" through demonic forbidden occultic rituals. The priests were to bring God's presence near, to be an ear and the hugging arms of the Lord for the broken. The priests were to offer sacrifices to bring the mercy and kindness of the Lord to the broken. Instead, they too drew near to the people who gave them more power and money while failing to care for justice. All of God's leaders are included here, the injustice and rot had infiltrated all of them, and as leadership goes, so goes the people. So Micah speaks clearly as God's true prophet about a coming judgment for Jerusalem. It will fall someday just like Samaria because the people who were supposed to know justice detested justice.

We live in a day where much of the Western church has a very negative attitude

against the idea of justice. Yet, justice matters deeply to God, and His people are called to be an extension of His character and therefore justice should matter to God's people. Our means may not be the same as the secular world, but cries of injustice should get our attention and our response should be to be the ears, mouth, hands, and feet of Jesus to our world. This means that any cry of justice ought to get our ears, so that with compassion we hear and care. Issues of injustice should get our lips as we speak with prophetic clarity in all directions (not just in the direction that will keep our power and place). And the cause of justice should get our hands and feet. Practically, I do believe that every believer ought to have at least one area of justice and poverty care that gets energy and effort, gets our hands. This is how we represent the one who saved us from ourselves and into His mercy.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Ezekiel 34	Ezekiel 35	Ezekiel 36	Ezekiel 37	Ezekiel 38	Ezekiel 39	Ezekiel 40

Reading from this past week: Micah 3:1-12

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Family Worship

Song - *God So Loved*

https://youtu.be/PK9pljv_s-A?si=NmgqYpSjKeCoPzZf

Gospel Project

Unit: The Arrest of Jesus

Story: Jesus shared a last meal

Big Picture Question: How is Jesus our perfect Priest?

Answer: Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for sin, and He speaks to God the Father for us today.

Scripture: Matthew 26

New City Catechism

Question #42: How is the Word of God to be read and heard?

Answer: With diligence, preparation, and prayer; so that we may accept it with faith, store it in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.

Verse: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Scripture

Micah 3:1-12

- Can you find the different groups of leaders Micah speaks against? Who do each of these groups represent, and what are they doing? How does Micah speak against each group?
- Do you believe the church in our culture has an impulse to do justice? How can we better represent Jesus toward the marginalized, broken, hurting in our world?
- The Bible uses categories of the poor, widows, orphans, and sojourners when speaking of justice? What people in our culture represent these groups?
- What are one or two steps we could take to create a culture of justice in our homes and church?

Prayer

*Pray that God would give us leaders that personify justice and righteousness.

*Spend time reading, learning, and teaching your kids the Nicene Creed. Use the third stanza as a prayer declaring belief in Jesus humanity and His mission to save us. .