



January 12, 2020
“The Mercy of God”
Micah 1 – 7
Pastor Gary Hamrick

The book of Micah ends with a promise that God is forgiving, merciful, compassionate, and a God who casts our sins *“into the depths of the sea”* to be forgotten and forgiven. So many people hold on to guilt and shame from the past and they desperately want to feel forgiven. There is a practice today among Jewish people called “Tashlich,” in which a person stands at the bank of a river or on the beach of any ocean, and reads [Micah 7:18-19](#) while casting bread into the water to symbolize their sins being cast into the depths of the sea. As a symbolic gesture, casting bread into the water is fine, but there is a forgiveness that comes through Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all guilt and shame!

Historical Background

1. Micah’s name in Hebrew is Mikhah, which is a contracted form of Mikhayahu, and it means, “Who is like God?”
 - a. A basic understanding of the name is that God is incomparable.
2. Outside of knowing the town Micah was from, Moresheth, and a general idea about the years of his ministry, little is known about him.
 - a. Moresheth was about 25 miles due west of Bethlehem.
 - b. Moresheth was close to Philistine territory.
 - c. Micah’s ministry was during the years 750 B.C. to 700 B.C., but it’s not known whether or not he served the entire 50 years during the reigns of the three kings of Judah mentioned in [Micah 1:1](#).
 - i. [Micah 1:1](#) - *“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.”*
 1. Jotham was a “good” king.
 2. Ahaz was an “exceedingly bad” king.

- 3. Hezekiah was a “mostly good” king.
 - d. Micah ministered to both kingdoms, north and south.
 - i. Samaria was the capital city of Israel (northern kingdom of ten tribes).
 - ii. Jerusalem was the capital city of Judah (southern kingdom of two tribes).
3. Micah was a contemporary of the prophets Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah.
4. The prophet Micah is probably most known for his prophecy about the coming birth of Jesus the Messiah, which was written approximately 700 years before Jesus’ birth.
- a. **Micah 5:2** - *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the one to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”*
 - b. Pastor Gary said, “How do we know that this is a Messianic passage? ... [First], when the wise men came from the east, guided by a star, they stopped in Jerusalem [to ask for more clarity], because the star only took them [to the general region]. ... They [consulted] the chief priests and teachers of the Law. ... The religious leaders at the time Jesus was born understood [this Scripture] referred to the Messiah and specifically to the birthplace of the Messiah. ... [Second, **Micah 5:2**] tells us that this Ruler who [is to come was from “ancient times”].¹ ... [The Hebrew word] is owlam, ... which literally translates “the days beyond the vanishing point.” When there was no way to talk about time, they talked about time in terms of beyond the vanishing point, beyond anything that they could know or understand. ... This [prophecy wasn’t about an] ordinary ruler. ... [Jesus has no origins; he is from everlasting.]”

The Problem

5. Idolatry
- a. **Micah 1:7** - *“All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire; all her idols I will lay desolate, for she gathered it from the pay of a harlot, and they shall return to the pay of a harlot.”*
 - b. Idolatry of this type was the same as spiritual adultery regarding a person’s relationship with the Lord.
 - c. The people were spiritually prostituting themselves to pagan idols and carved images.
6. Injustice
- a. **Micah 2:1-2** - *“Woe to those who devise iniquity, and work out evil on their*

¹ New International Version (NIV 1984)

beds! At morning light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. They covet fields and take them by violence, also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.”

7. Deception By The Prophets

- a. **Micah 3:5** - *“Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who make my people stray; who chant ‘Peace’ while they chew with their teeth, but who prepare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths.”*
- b. Pastor Gary said, “In [this] day there were legitimate prophets and there were false prophets. Just like today, there are real teachers and there are false teachers. ... [There were] prophets who were called by God, [like Micah, Amos, and Isaiah], who were all ministering during that same time period, but you also had other prophets who were not prophets at all [but in name only]. ... Here’s what they would do. If you fed them they would tell you whatever you wanted to hear. They wouldn’t tell you the truth. They would just say, ‘Peace be unto you!’ ... It was [like] prophesy for pay! ... If you [didn’t feed them they would be violent]!”

8. Corruption Among Civil And Spiritual Leaders

- a. **Micah 3:9-11** - *“Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity, who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity: her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, ‘Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us.’ ”*
- b. Pastor Gary said, “[They] were guilty of social injustice, [social inequality, wickedness, bribery, extortion, and deception].”

9. Division Within Families

- a. **Micah 7:6** - *“For son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own household.”*

10. God’s Charge

- a. Pastor Gary said, “God was basically saying, ‘What have I done that you should act like this?’ ... God [was] saying to them as he says to us, ‘Have I not blessed you, [taken care of you, provided for you, and yet you will treat me this way in response?] ...
- b. **Micah 6:3-5** - *“O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me. For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O My people remember now what Balak king of Moab*

counseled, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, that you may know the righteousness of the LORD.”

- i. God reminded the people of the way that he brought them out of slavery under the leadership of siblings Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
- ii. God reminded the people about the time when Balak king of Moab hired Balaam, who was a false prophet, to pronounce curses on the Israelites, but all Balaam could do was pronounce blessings!
- iii. God reminded them that he took care of them all along the way, from east to west.
 1. The Acacia Grove was on the east side of the Jordan River, and Gilgal was on the west side of the Jordan River.

11. The People’s Response

- a. Do we need to sacrifice more?
 - i. **Micah 6:6-7** – *“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”*

12. God’s Answer

- a. God didn’t want the people to do any of these things, particularly the sacrifice of children, such as the pagans practiced!
- b. **Micah 6:8** – *“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”*

The Practice

13. Practice Justice

- a. God wants us to be fair and just with people, deal honestly with others and don’t take advantage of others.

14. Love Mercy

- a. Pastor Gary said, “Love mercy because God is merciful. Be merciful toward others in the same way that God has been merciful toward you. Don’t punish people for their sins or remind them of their past. Be forgiving as Christ has forgiven you.
- b. **Matthew 5:7** – *“[Jesus said,] ‘Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.’ ”*

15. Walk Humbly With Your God

- a. Pastor Gary said, "Know your place with God. Be humble about your life and what you have and what you've accomplished and who you are because it's all from the hand of God. ... God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. ... We need to be quick to repent from sin. God honors a broken and contrite heart.
- b. **James 4:6b** - *"Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"*
- c. **Psalms 51:17** - *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart - these, O God, You will not despise."*

The Promise

16. **Micah 7:18-19** - *"Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."*

17. There is no other god like God!

- a. He is a Forgiving God
- b. He is a Merciful God
- c. He is a Compassionate God
- d. He is a God who casts our sins into the Sea of Forgetfulness.
- e. Pastor Gary said, "When God forgives us of our sins, he forgives us completely and entirely and wholly..."

18. Tashlich

- a. In Hebrew tashlich means to cast.
- b. On Rosh Hashanah, which is the first day of the Jewish New Year (September on our calendar), Jews will take bread (symbolic of their sins) and cast it into a body of moving water or the sea, while reciting **Micah 7:18-19**, to remind themselves of God's promise to cast all of their sins into the depths of the sea.
- c. Pastor Gary said, "[I believe people] desperately want to be forgiven. ... [Better] than casting our bread into the water is casting our sins upon the Lord. [This] is why God sent his son, Jesus, to die for us on the cross. ... It isn't that God is forgetful because he knows all things. It means that he will no longer hold our sins against us because God accomplished forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of [Jesus] on a cross so that we might be forgiven.
- d. **Psalms 103:12** - *"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."*
- e. **Isaiah 43:25** - *"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own*

sake; and I will not remember your sins.”

- f. **Colossians 1:14** - *“... in [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”*
- g. **2 Corinthians 5:21** - *“For he made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Micah 1:1-7** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Provide an overview of the life of Micah. (See #1 through #4 above)
3. Read and discuss the Scriptures in each of the five points Pastor Gary made concerning the charges God had against the people. (See #5 through #9 above)
4. Spend time talking about **Micah 6:3-5** and Pastor Gary’s remarks about the people treating God. (See #10 above)
5. Read and discuss **Micah 6:6-7**. (See #11 above)
6. Why do you think people seem to always want to do something when they recognize they have a strained relationship with the Lord?
7. Read and discuss **Micah 6:8**. (See #12 above)
8. How is the Lord helping you practice justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with him? (See #13 through #15)
9. Read and discuss **James 4:6b** and **Psalms 51:17**. (See #15b and #15c above)
10. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they have received the promise of God as found in Micah 7:18 - 19. (See #16 and #17 above)
11. Spend time talking about the practice of tashlich. (See #18 above)
12. Read and discuss **Psalms 103:12**, **Isaiah 43:25**, **Colossians 1:14**, and **2 Corinthians 5:21** (See #18d through #18g above)
13. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)