

Sermon Series: The Minor Prophets

Sermon title: Book of Micah

Scripture reading: Micah 6:6-8

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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I want to say thank you to all of you for being a part of our 25th Anniversary Celebration last week. It was a great time to fellowship with one another and celebrate what God has done in the past 25 years.

We return today to our series in the Minor Prophets.

Let's begin with a word of prayer.

I need to begin today with a bit of a history lesson and an explanation of the general situation in the book of Micah.

The book's structure is quite difficult (at least for me) and I will be patching together a mosaic today to help us understand what's going on.

The date is 931 BC and David and Solomon have died. The kingdom of Israel is divided. There's the Northern Kingdom called *Israel* and the Southern Kingdom which is the big tribe of *Judah*.

After about 100 years a king named Omri comes to power in the North and he built a city named Samaria.

His son, AHAB took over after he died and married a woman named Jezebel. He was a wicked man and he led the Northern Kingdom of Israel into idolatry; into the worship of Baal and Ashteroth.

Samaria became his capital and the spiritual center of the North. You'll remember Ahab was the king in the days of Elijah.

Fast forward another 100 years and we have the time of Micah. It's about 735 BC. So, 100 years after the time of Elijah and 150 years before the exile to Babylon.

Micah is from Judah, in the Southern Kingdom and Baal worship has trickled down from the North all the way to Jerusalem. They've become infected.

It's a wicked time. The king of the Southern Kingdom is Ahaz (with a 'Z' not a 'B') and he has led Judah to become like the North. **2 Kings 16** tells us that he:

- did not walk in the ways of the LORD.
- walked in the ways of the kings of Israel.
- burned his son as a human sacrifice.
- worshipped idols, not Yahweh.
- took silver and gold from the temple to pay the mighty Assyrians to make an alliance with him. Later this would prove to be costly.

So, let's look quickly at how Micah shows us how Judah (in the South) has become infected by the ways of the North.

- **1:5**

Then in verses 6 & 7 he explains the wicked practices that have come down from the North.

- **1:9**

- **1:12**

- **1:13**

Very clear in verse 13, “for in *you* were found the transgressions of Israel.”

So, that's the situation.

Let me summarize it like this:

Infection from the culture around them, has led to people into **idolatry**. Idolatry has led them to become indifferent toward their fellow man. And their **indifference** toward their fellow man has led to **injustice**.

- **Infection**
- **Idolatry**
- **Indifference**
- **Injustice**

The kings and the leader's have become **infected** and led the people into **idolatry**. Because infection is what leads people astray. People relax. Become unfocused.

Become busy with other things.
Get spiritually lazy.
Stop worshipping and start sleeping in.
Stay up late and watch movies.
Go out on the town.
And little by little the ways of those around us start to infect us; start to trickle down into our lives...
And....before you know it you are neck deep in IDOLATRY.

In chapter 2 and 3 of Micah we see him preaching against the leaders for their **Injustice**.

He addresses the leaders in chapter 3 verses 1 and 9.
“Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel.”

What were they doing?

- Taking away people’s land and houses **(2:1-2)**
- They were crooked **(3:9)**
- They took bribes **(3:11)**
- They ‘hate good and love evil’ **(3:2)**

But it wasn’t just them! It was also the prophets and priests who were unjust.

- They led people astray. **(3:5)**
- They taught for money. **(3:11)**
- Yet, they thought everything was just fine. **(3:11)**

In chapter 6 and chapter 7 we see the people's relationships are horrible. They are indifferent toward one another.

6:11-12 we see they cheat each other.

7:5-6 we see how bad their relationships are.

“Put no trust in a neighbor; have no confidence in a friend; (verse 6) for the son treats his father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.”

In Micah's day, that's the general situation.

- **Infection**
- **Idolatry**
- **Indifference**
- **Injustice**

So, God comes to confront them about their sin. And the main passage is Chapter 6:1-8. It's like a court case. God is going to defend himself.

[Read Chapter 6:1-8]

God says, “What have I done to you to make you forsake me and forsake my commandments? I delivered you from slavery. I have provided good leaders for you. Don't you remember when wicked sorcerers came to curse you? What happened? I made his mouth bless you instead!

And then we have the people's response.

"What does God want us to do?"

"What does he want from us?"

And they list these extravagant religious practices that are way over the top.

- A calf a year old (very costly)
- Thousands of rams
- Ten thousand rivers of oil.
- Give your firstborn son as an offering (abomination)

"Come on...what does God want from us?"

So.... Micah the prophet...*(and remember...a prophet's job is to remind people of the covenant)* says, "He's already told you what he requires."

Deuteronomy 10:12

what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and to keep the commandments and statues of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?

18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Sounds a lot like **Micah 6:8**

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you...but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

God tells them that the way to repentance is to stop doing what you're doing.

Instead of idly becoming numb to the things of God...and being infected by the culture around you....
renew the covenant..rededicate yourself to God.

Instead of worshipping Idols, return to the Lord and walk humbly with him.

Instead of being indifferent to their fellow man, which led them to injustice....they should DO justice and to love kindness.

Repentance is to stop doing what you are doing.

But notice, they want to do something else.
And I think we are more like them than we realize.

We all want to do more religious practices.

We try to cover up our sin with being more busy in church. Maybe it makes us feel better. Attend more Bible studies. Join BSF. "See God...I am doing better."

We can serve in the church, pay our tithe, give to the WMO and yet mask our sin with all that religious stuff. You see, it's possible to be VERY religious and still be living in grievous sin.

We can be very religious.....[PAUSE]

While we owe people money.

While we steal software and download things illegally from the internet.

While we cheat on tests.

While we lie on our taxes.

While we lie on our PHD research.

While we live indifferent to the poor, the refugees and our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We blow our money on things we don't need with no regard for helping others.

We buy 2 new coats when we already have 6 because it makes us feel more handsome.

Do you remember what John the Baptist said to the people when they asked him what repentance looked like?

Read (Luke 3:10-14)

We buy another home when we know good and well that there are people looking for a place to live.

We use our relationships to help us make more money.

But thousands of rams or rivers of oil or attending church more often is not going to wash our sin away or make us better.

Not on our own.

We need something better.

We need help.

So Micah gives us hope and tells us what we really need.

1. **Micah tells us we need a better King; a better leader; a better example.** In chapter 4 he talks about a later day when a new king will arise and make everything right again.

Micah even tells us where he will be born.

Micah 5:2 says that he will be born in Bethlehem in 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.”**

He’s the kind of ruler, king, prophet and priest that is really needed. He will be just, loving, merciful and holy.

2. **Micah also tells us that we need our sins washed away.**

[read Micah 7:18-20]

The bad news is that God has a very high standard.

We CAN'T do what God requires.

The people of Israel struggled and stumbled.

They sinned.

We are just like them.

We need a better king and we need to be forgiven for our sin.

Jesus Christ handles both of those.

If you are not a Christian today, there is hope!

He will **“cast all your sins into the depths of the sea.”**

And he will...like a kind, gracious KING....teach you to walk in his ways and to do what is right.

But for those of us who are Christians, we DO have the Holy Spirit living in us.

We DO have the power to live a life pleasing to God.

Unbelievers need to turn to Christ.

We, his people are the ones who need to repent.

Christian,

have you let the world trickle down into your life?

You being infected by the culture around you?

Are you shaping the world or is it shaping you?

Are you serving idols?
What's most important to you right now?
What do you talk about most?
What do you lay in bed thinking about? GOD?

Are you indifferent toward others?
Don't even think about others?
Indifferent toward your wife?
Indifferent toward your kids?
Is your heart hard and cold toward others?

Are there any ways you are abusing people?
Living unjustly? Not fair?
How are you treating your employees?
Are you treating your helper in a way that honors Christ?

The way to repentance isn't to become more churchy!
The way to repentance and change isn't to try to smooth
it over with religious busyness.

The way to repentance is to stop doing what you're doing.

Let's pray.