

God will vindicate His people

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[0 : 00] I have no idea what I did with my Bible.

I think I left my preaching Bible.! If he's still talking to me, I'd still be talking to him.

If you have your Bibles today, I want you to find two books. The book of Hebrews and the book of Micah. Because it's Micah this week. And we're going to...

Those are the only two books we're going to be in today. Just Micah and Hebrews. But if you've got them, that's great. And look at this lovely lady. Thank you so much. It was in my office.

I did go talk to my son. Okay, so we're in the Minor Prophets. Today we are... We're going to be looking at the book of Micah. And then next week, it should be the book of Nahum.

[1 : 13] Nahum, Nahum, Nahum. It's the next one, right? So if you've got your Bible open to Micah, you're way, way, way ahead of me.

I'm going to do something that I normally don't do to start off everything. We're going to pray because I need it today. So let's do that. Merciful God, as we get started today, I just thank you for your love.

I thank you for your word. And I thank you for everyone that is here. As we endeavor to learn more of your word, learn more of who you have called us to be, as we humble ourselves before you.

Praise, honor, and glory to you. Amen. This was me this week. I spent a lot of time gold panning this week.

All right? Not literally gold panning, but in the book of Micah, I did a lot of gold panning. Because it is just filled with amazing word plays.

[2 : 25] If you're open to Micah 1, verse 13, I want to point something out to you. Okay? Micah 1, verse 13, harness the steeds to the chariots, inhabitants of Lashish.

How awesome is that? You guys don't seem to be too thrilled with that, right? If you had a study Bible and you actually read the notes on it, you would learn that the horses that are being described as being hitched to the chariots are runaway horses, not horses that go to battle.

You know, runaway horses versus let's go fight. And the idea, there's just all these sorts of nuggets in here that I don't speak Hebrew very well.

I don't know. So I trust the people who wrote commentaries. And anyways, this Micah, the whole book is filled with these sort of word plays.

You know, run away, don't fight and stay, and just different things like that. Like I said, I spent a lot of time digging in the dirt this week, panning for the gold. Just so that you know what we're talking about as far as the timing of Micah, Micah happens down here, okay, about 750 years, plus or minus.

[3 : 52] And I want you to notice all of these gray, these are different kings. You know, this king lived here, this king lived here, this king lived here. They're all gray.

Gray means not good. If you look up here, you'll see that we have bad kings. Green is good. Everything else is bad.

Red, which is during the time of Micah here in the nation of Judah, is really bad. So the nations have been going downhill.

They've been getting worse and worse, especially in the northern ten tribes. But right now there's this terrible king for the nation of Judah. And that's when Micah is preaching.

Yeah? Could you give the next time to spam that? My iPhone, I can't see. No, you're not supposed to be able to read it. I'm not trying to make it legible.

[4 : 54] That's why I'm putting the labels on it. I'm just trying to give you a sense. But I might be able to print it off. I might print it off. Yeah. Hey, the suggestion box is...

No. All right. The key idea for today. The reality is that living for God in dark days is the right call.

Not the easy call. Not the popular choice. The right call. Because God will give His people vindication.

No, don't tell me you can't read this one either, Gary. It says vindicate. And it says, To vindicate is to clear someone of blame, accusation, or suspicion, to show or prove them to be right, reasonable, or justified, to prove that what someone said or did was right or true after other people thought it was wrong.

And let me tell you something. As people who pursue God, we are maligned. We are accused. We are mocked.

[6 : 13] We are shunned. But God will vindicate us. But God will vindicate us.

Hebrews 11, verse 6. And without faith it is impossible to please Him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.

And that's the vindication. God is going to reward His children. All right. I've said all that just to get us ready to begin digging into the book of Micah.

So if you've got your Bible open to Micah chapter 1, we're going to take a look at the first five verses here. 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. For behold, the Lord is coming out of His place and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth.

[7 : 27] And the mountains will melt under Him and the valleys will be split open like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place. All this for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel.

Now, I just, I want you to stop. Because we've been going through the minor prophets here in the Old Testament. We've been reading about this prophecy against this person or this prophecy against these people or this prophet came to this region.

Who is Micah talking to? I mean, the answer is up here and it's also in your Bible in verse 1.

Everybody?

I thought he was just, you know, speaking to the Jews. No, no, no, no. Micah's prophecy is for the whole world to know. He says, hear you peoples, all of you.

Pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it. When I read that, I was like, wait a minute. This is a little different.

[8 : 44] He's not just talking to like the king of Israel or the king of Judah or, you know, like Jonah, you Ninevites. This is a prophecy that everyone should pay attention to.

Okay. And he's going to spend the next couple of chapters ripping worldly leaders.

Take a look at chapter 2, verse 1. Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil on their beds. When the morning dawns, they perform it because it is in the power of their hand. Verses 6 and 7. Do not preach, thus they preach.

One should not preach of such things. Disgrace will not overtake us. Should this be said, O house of Jacob? Has the Lord grown impatient?

[9 : 51] Are these his deeds? And then verse 11. If a man should go about an utter wind and lies, saying, I will preach to you of wine and strong drink, he would be the preacher for these people.

In verse 1, it talks about people who, on their bed, come up with plans of how to do evil and how to take advantage of others.

And when they get up in the morning, they do it because they've got the power. I don't know about you, but I really don't have that much power in my world.

You know? I'm one of the people. I'm not one of those that make the rules. If I was one of those people who made the rules, I would not have changed the setback on Chumstick Crick by 50 feet. I would have moved it so that I could build a garage. But I don't have that power. And they did that to me, and they said, bummer you, we don't care. If I had authority and if I had power, we wouldn't be building 5,000 new living spaces in Leavenworth without the infrastructure to support them.

[11 : 17] But I don't have the power nor the authority. I don't have the power and authority to say, hey, you're going to pay me more taxes. I don't have that authority or power.

But there are groups of people that have this authority and they use it. And they're not doing it for everybody else's benefit.

They're lying in their own pocket. They're filling their own agendas. They're doing it for the wrong reasons. And God ain't too happy with them. That's just in verse 1.

In verse 6 and 7, look what it says there about those people. Do not preach thus they preach. Just to help you out. There are people who will come to you and say, you are not allowed to say these things.

Like, a lot of politicians are corrupt or like, we're being taxed. You can't talk about these things. Or like, abortion is murder.

[12:21] Don't say that. Or, yeah, IVF. It's murder.

You can't say that. It's a good thing. No, it's murder. There are people who will come up to you and say, you can't say these things. Verse 6 and 7, disgrace will not overtake us.

You see, there are people who are trying to press their views on others. Here's a good one. You ready for this? There's two genders.

You're either a boy or a girl. And you can't switch them. You can't say that. That's transphobic. I'm not saying it. That's the way it is.

How many of you have ever seen this sort of oppression? Nobody? Very few people? Or are you just like, I ain't saying nothing.

[13:26] I don't want to get pressure against me. How about the cancel culture? Ever heard of the cancel culture? You don't say the right thing, you get canceled. You can cancel me because I haven't checked my Facebook page in like 5, 10 years.

I actually was talking to a friend of mine. He said, I was trying to get a hold of you on Facebook. Are you not checking that? I haven't been on social media in forever. But then look at this in verse 11.

If a man should go about and utter wind and lies saying, I will preach to you of wine and strong drink, he would be the preacher of this people.

If I was to go about saying things like, racism is real. If I was to go about and I was to be preaching against, you know, homophobia.

If I was to be preaching what they want me to be preaching, then I would be approved. You see, the worldly leaders that Micah is condemning are those people at this time who are doing what profited them.

[14:43] They were the ones who were stopping the opposition and just encouraging the people to say what they wanted to say. That's what was happening back in this day.

In verse 1 through 4 of chapter 3, incredible statement. Micah, he's writing and he says, And I said, hear you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel.

He's talking to the people who have power within their society. And he says, is it not for you to know justice?

That is know as in to knowledge, not know as in avoid it. I think they get that confused sometimes. Aren't you supposed to know justice? You who hate the good and love the evil.

Who tear the skin from off my people and the flesh from off their bones. That's hyperbolic. Who eat the flesh of my people and flay their skin for bones. Look.

[15:59] They would have people go out and work for pauper's wages, barely sustaining wages. And they'd tax them. They'd just make their lives miserable.

The power at that time got rich by taking advantage of the lower class. Here, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel.

Is not for you to know justice? Yes. You who hate the good and love the evil. Who tear the skin off my people and eat their flesh off their bones. Look what it says in verse 4.

Then they will cry to the Lord, but he will not answer them. He will hide his face from them at that time because they have made their deeds evil.

Did you know that evil people often claim to be spiritual? Did you know that? Did you know that people who go out and do wrong claim it to be good?

[17:12] And they call upon the name of the Lord? And here it says that those people who do that, God's not going to listen to them.

Not only is he not going to accept these political leaders who do evil, he is going to reject the spiritual leaders who do evil.

Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry peace when they've got something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing in their mouths.

You know people like that. As long as you scratch my back and make me feel good, it's all good. But you start opposing me, death be upon you. Right? And God rejects them.

These are the leaders in Israel, in Judah, at the time of Micah's writing. People who, all they're doing is looking for opportunities to line their own wallets.

[18 : 23] People who are looking at the common people whom they are supposed to have authority over as nothing more than sheep to be shorn. And the religious leaders are no better.

That's the climate that Micah was writing in. I just, I just, let me sum this up. Chapter 1 through 3 revealed what it was like back then.

The first three chapters of Micah is all about the evil position that's going on. All that. And we're no better off today.

Here's another graphic you'll love. I just want to, I put this up here. It's from Pew Research. You see these two colored things?

These are the quote unquote Christian members of Congress. It's about 80% of Congress historically are Christian, quote unquote.

[19 : 38] In fact, it continues in this trend today. If you look at it, the overall percent of Congress that claims to be a Christian, 88%.

What do you think about that?

88% of Congress claims to be a Christian. Is there legislation honoring God? Here's something you can read.

New York, they're spending \$81,000 per homeless individual. How many of us make less than that working full time?

How many of us in a combined income make less than that? But you want to know what the real tragedy is? How little of that money reaches the individual homeless person.

[20 : 46] The vast majority of that money is going to fund social workers doing whatever they're doing, not helping the homeless. You know, let me really paint a picture.

His entire professional life, a member of a Baptist church claiming to be a Christian.

And you know who's with him. Maybe you don't. Maybe you're too young. That's President Bill Clinton with Monica Lewinsky, who he had an affair with in the office.

Now, I just want to point something out to you. There was a man who was after God's own heart, King David.

He didn't just have an affair. He saw his best friend's wife and seduced her. And when she got pregnant, murdered her husband, his best friend.

[21 : 55] But do you know what the difference between King David, a man after God's own heart, and people like Bill Clinton is? When David was accosted by Nathan the prophet, who came up to him and told him this wild story, and David's like, off with his head.

And Nathan said, it's you. You're the guilty one. David repented. David went before the Lord, cast himself on his face in God. Against you I have sinned.

What did Bill Clinton do? Well, that really depends on what the definition of is is. Now, there are people here that are probably offended that I'm calling names like this.

I'm just illustrating that exactly as it was in the time of Micah, so it is today. That the people in authority are using their positions for their own good, and they are not bringing about justice.

That we live in a day of evil, just as they lived in Micah's time. That the people of the lower classes had boots ground into them.

[23 : 12] And God did not ignore. And God will not ignore us. Chapter 1 through 3 of Micah is exactly what we're enduring today.

But take a look at chapter 4. Chapter 4, beginning in verse 1. It shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains.

And it shall be lifted up above the hills, and people shall flow to it, and many nations come and say, Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways, that we may walk in his paths.

There is a day coming that God has promised where those who work evil will change, and they will start flocking to the Lord.

They will stop pursuing evil, and they will begin to pursue God. Verse 6 says, In that day, declares the Lord, I will assemble the lame, and gather those who have been driven away, and those whom I have afflicted.

[24 : 40] You see, there's right now people that are being oppressed. And God says that he's going to call them. He's going to pursue them. And he's also going to pursue those who he has

afflicted.

Chapter 7, verse 9. Just flip over there real quick. Micah, speaking from the voice of those who love the Lord, says this, I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.

When God here in verse 6 of chapter 4 says that he is going to gather those whom he has afflicted, you've got to understand, ain't none of us perfect can I get an amen.

All of us are sinners who have fallen away. Even those of us who love God, and we're pastors. We struggle with sin. We live in a fallen world. We're not perfect. And sometimes God allows us to endure hardship.

And that's okay. Because he also promises that there is a day coming when he's going to call the lame. When he's going to call the oppressed. When those who he has afflicted, he's going to call them to himself.

[26 : 04] And the lame, verse 7, I will make a remnant. And those who are cast off a strong nation. And the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore.

Do you understand? Yes, the reality is that there are times when evil people are oppressing others. When those who have power use it for their advantage against those who don't have power.

When those who struggle suffer. But God promises there is a day when he will stop that. When he will assume the authority.

And he will bring about justice. And those who have been oppressed, those who have been cursed, he will restore. Not only restore, it says that he will make them a great and strong nation.

There is a day God promises that he will establish justice. Not just politically, but socially as well. I didn't write this.

[27 : 07] I'm just telling you what Micah says. God also knows that for those who are caught in days of evil, that it is not easy.

Chapter 4, verse 9 and 10. Why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in you? Has your counselor perished that pain seized you like a woman in labor?

Writhe and groan, O daughter Zion, like a woman in labor. For now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country. You shall go down to Babylon.

There you shall be rescued. There the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies. Do you get that? Well, what's the problem?

Oh, you mean injustice is rampant and that the enemy is coming to take you away? Oh, and by the way, you're going to Babylon. You're going into captivity.

[28 : 12] The enemy is going to tread on you for a while. But how did that verse finish? From there, I will redeem you.

Look at verse 11 and 12. Now many nations are assembled against you, saying, let her be defiled and let our eyes gaze upon Zion.

But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord. They do not understand His plan. that He has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor.

God has a plan to deal with those who work in justice. And it's not a fun plan. Don't get me wrong. I look at these people with power. I look at these people who have positions of authority. I look at these people who have enough wealth. You know, there's a certain amount of money that you get where you don't care about other people.

[29 : 19] And common parlance is not proper for church when you have enough money to do whatever you want and you don't care what anybody else says. And I look at those people and I say, I'd like to have that money.

You guys fiddler on the roof, Tevye? If I were a rich man. Right? I would love to be a rich man. I would love to have the authority to be able to say, you have to let me build a garage.

I don't have that. And I tend to get a little jealous of those people with that until I remember that God has a plan for people who use their positions of power selfishly.

I tend to be a little bit jealous of people who can get away with things until I remember God himself, what did he say? He has gathered them as sheaves to the threshing floor.

Personally, I don't... They can have that, right? I don't want nothing to do with that. All right. So here in the book of Micah, Micah, he spends the first couple of chapters saying, look, I get the situation.

[30 : 35] People in power are abusing it and people under that are suffering. But God's got a plan. That plan's down the road. It's not going to happen right now.

Be ready to endure hardship. Just let you know, it's going to happen. Thanks for the encouragement, Micah.

What should we do? That's a great question. Micah, chapter 5, verse 2. But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be...

Wait a minute. I've read this verse. This is a familiar verse, isn't it? But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, you 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 days of old, from ancient days.

Yeah, I know what this is. This is the promise that the virgin shall give birth in here, isn't it? This is the promise that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem.

[31 : 53] I remember this when we do it every Christmas, don't we? That's right. And I want you to remember this. Where was Jesus born? Bethlehem.

Bethlehem. God is faithful. I want you to remember this. God is faithful.

God says He has a plan. God says that He is watching over the people. He sees not only those in power, but He sees those under the power.

He sees not only those who are taking advantage of others, but those who are being taken advantage. He says that there is a day when He is going to reestablish justice, not only political justice, but also social justice.

And if God says it, He is faithful to do it. When you are living under oppression and you hear the Word of God, you can trust it.

[32 : 55] God is faithful. Secondly, we need to live for God with our whole heart. In Micah 6, verses 6-8, we read this.

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He's told you, O man, what is good and what does the Lord require of you?

But to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. You see, God doesn't need us to show up with huge offerings.

He doesn't need us to come and make this big show of, oh, woe is me. He doesn't look for us to be all demonstrative and out loud with our faith. No.

[34 : 09] Love justice. Walk humbly. Love mercy. I got that order wrong, didn't I? I'll try that again.

Justice, mercy, and humility with God. Living from the heart. Remember, God is faithful.

He says that He's got a plan. Do you believe that? No, seriously. Do you believe that God is going to follow through? Do you believe that God created all things, that God is Lord over all things, that for now God is giving us freedom to behave however we want, but in the end, He is keeping record and He is going to hold everybody accountable.

And for those who turn to Him, He promises forgiveness. He promises to restore, to take care of, to vindicate them. And for those who don't turn to God, He promises everlasting torment.

All He asks is that you humbly live before Him. You don't have to be perfect.

[35 : 30] Believe that He is, and He rewards those who seek Him. That's the call. Not perfection, but to humbly live before the Lord.

To seek justice, not only for yourself, but for others. To be merciful. In this translation, it says, to love kindness.

If you love kindness, do you know what that means? That means when you have opportunity, you're kind. When you see other people doing kind things, you acknowledge it.

You say, hey, that's great. Trust in the Lord. And finally, cling to His promise.

I got news for you. I absolutely know that God is faithful. He said that a virgin would give birth to a son who would be born in Bethlehem, who would live a sinless life, who would die on a cross for sins that I committed, not He committed, that He would be buried and rose again, and I believe it.

[36 : 44] I know God is faithful. And when God says that He is going to establish justice, I believe Him. God is faithful. Do I live humbly before the Lord?

I'm working on it. Do I love kindness? I'm working on it. Do I pursue justice?

Yeah. Do I always get it right? Thank you for not a loud chorus of, heck no! Right? But that's our goal.

That's what we're striving for. But it's not easy. It's hard. Take a look at chapter 7. He's saying that it's been hard.

He's saying that He's past His prime. He's saying that He feels wore out and wrung out. The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind.

[38 : 07] They all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net. Their hands are on what is evil. To do it well.

The prince and the judge ask for a bribe. The great man utters the evil desires of his soul. Thus they weave it together. The best of them is like a briar.

The most upright of them like a thorn hedge. The day of your watchmen, of your punishment, has come. Now their confusion is at hand. Put no trust in a neighbor.

Have no confidence in a friend. Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your arms. For the son treats the 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. It's tough.

[39 : 08] It's hard to live in evil days. The weight of that drags all down. But as for me, I will look to the Lord.

I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. Rejoice not over me, my enemy. When I fall, I shall rise. When I sit in the darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. 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. My friends, the reality is this. We live in difficult days. There is evil in our world.

[40 : 13] Our society is heading down. And it feels like you can't turn around with being oppressed. God knows this.

And God gives us this promise. There is a day coming when he will reestablish justice. There is a day when he will establish justice, not just politically, but socially as well.

Look at this. You feel like society is crushing you. And Micah stood in that place. And this is what he said. I will look to the Lord.

I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. You're not in an echo chamber. Your prayers are not bouncing around the room. And they are penetrating.

God is hearing. God is aware. And he sees. Not only does he see, but he is getting ready to act. You ever feel like they think they're winning?

[41 : 17] You ever feel like they're winning? Rejoice not over me, my enemy. When I fall, I shall rise.

God will never abandon his children. He's got a plan. And that plan ends in his children's vindication. Do you realize there is a day when those who trust and wait in the Lord, who have endured hardship, and trust me, living for God in an evil day is not easy.

But there is a day coming when God is going to vindicate them. When they're going to stand over there and they're going to go, yeah! And those people who have been living high on the hog, who've been using their power for their own good, who've been making choices, that disregard God, they don't care, they're just planning evil, they're living for themselves and trying to take advantage of everybody.

And that day of vindication is going to come and they're going to say, no! No! Because the opportunity is here to choose the Lord.

He is faithful. He doesn't call you to be perfect. He doesn't expect you to do amazing things.

[42 : 39] Turn to Him. Seek justice. Love kindness. Be humble before Him. And the day of vindication will come and it will be worth it.

Without faith it is impossible to please Him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.

The day of vindication is coming. God is faithful. He has a plan and He will see it through to the end. You can trust Him.

If you are not living for God, I call upon you today, seek the Lord. Call upon Him. He will not reject you.

He will not turn away. And in the end, you will stand vindicated before the entire world for having put your trust in He who is faithful.

[43 : 48] Let's pray.