

Micah 5:1-15 "Reclaiming Shalom"

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Preacher: Ron

[0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

Open your Bibles, wherever it is found, to Micah. This morning we're going to be looking at chapter 5.

Micah chapter 5, we're going to read through from verse 1 through 15. So follow with me as we read God's inspired word of truth.

Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops. Siege is laid against us. With our rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.

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.

[1 : 18] Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who was in labor has given birth. Then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. 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, 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.

They shall shepherd the land of Assyria with a sword, in 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.

Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass, which delay not for a man, nor wait for the children of man.

The remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among beasts of the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep, which, when it goes through, treads down and tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver.

[2 : 47] Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries, and all your enemies shall be cut off. And in that day, declares the Lord, I will cut off your horses from among you, and will destroy your chariots.

I will cut off the cities of your land and throw down all your strongholds. And I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes.

And I will cut off your carved images and your pillars from among you, and you shall bow down no more to the work of your hands. And I will root out your Asherah images from among you and destroy your cities.

And in anger and wrath, I will execute vengeance on the nations that did not obey. Let me lead us in a word of prayer as we approach the study of God's word.

Father, your word is truth. Your word is given to us as a gift. Your word is real food for our souls.

[4 : 06] But we need your help. We need your spirit that we might, that it might taste sweet to us. That we might long for it to be planted deep in our hearts.

So would you come and speak to us through your word this morning by your spirit? And would you draw us into your great heart of mercy and grace?

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Now I've been excited about this journey we are taking through several of the minor prophets.

I love the Old Testament. I love the minor prophets. But I also know, especially when we get into some of these places, it can create some confusion.

If, you know, we read, the confusion can come when we read God promising to his servants, God promising to David, promising to Abraham that his people will be his people, that God will be their

God, and nothing will take them out of his hand.

[5 : 17] He tells David that you shall never lack a king who sits on the throne. And then we come to the minor prophets. And we're told how God is basically going to uproot his people and throw them out.

The kings will be, in a sense, removed. The Assyrians will come and rule. And for all intents and purposes, for hundreds of years, Israel will be wiped off the face of Palestine.

So how are we supposed to read that? Which is true. Is it the unconditional promise? Or is what we see? Well, when we read the prophets, we have to read it on two different levels.

On one level, there is more of the individual level, where God deals with individuals within his nation who are disobedient, who reject his covenant, who prove themselves to be not covenant keepers, and those individuals, God brings his wrath and his anger and destroys them.

Which he's about to do here in Jerusalem. But there's another level. Because Israel is often, is spoken of in the prophets.

[6 : 56] We see it in Isaiah 62. Israel is spoken of as his bride. Back in Hosea 11, Israel is spoken of as his son.

And when he deals with Israel as a nation, it's one entity. In a sense, they are representative of us. And that son and that bride, though he may deal with harshly, he will never destroy.

He will never cast off forever. But he will come and he will deal with them and his, it is his loving kindness for his son and for his bride that's actually driving him here.

So when we read Micah, don't just read, this God is ticked off and now he's coming to bring retribution.

Read this from a lover who will go to no lengths, who will go to any length necessary to bring his true love back to himself.

[8 : 21] Micah is a letter of love, not anger and hate. So as we read Micah, and we're going to see that in particular in this chapter.

So let's look at this situation. We get a glimpse of it in the very first verse. It's a tragic situation. In the first verse, we are told that siege is laid in Jerusalem, the Israel's judge is struck on the cheek with a rod.

Basically, what we have is David's heir, Hezekiah, on his throne, who is being abused, belittled, shown contempt for by the Assyrians.

And not only Hezekiah, but God himself, but Israel's chosen, Israel's rightful king, the heir of David, is being put to shame by these Assyrian hordes.

And so this is this dire circumstance, and so what is Israel to think? When you think about the covenant promises, when you think about what God has promised them all these years, so what are they to think?

[9 : 38] So this is the situation, and to this, then we see God's promise of a coming Redeemer. The coming Redeemer, we'll walk through this a bit last week, so we won't go into it in a whole lot of detail, but that Redeemer is going to come, he's going to come from very humble circumstances, but he's going to come and save his people, and he is going to come, and reestablish his rule, and that rule is really going to involve two things.

One, it is going to restore kingship over his covenant people, and it also is going to involve reclaiming his chosen bride.

So let's look at what we see here. First, let's look at how he comes to restore his rule over his people, reclaiming the throne.

In verses two through six, we see, again, after that situation, we see the salvation is coming, and what he makes clear is the king is going to come and save them.

But again, as we read the prophets, you have to read it, in a sense, on a couple of different levels. one, he mentions the Assyrians in particular here in these verses, and we see what God is going to do to Assyria, and Will alluded to that.

[11 : 18] We're going to see, you see it spelled out in Isaiah, but also in Kings, how over 180,000 Assyrians are going to be dead, and Israel didn't lift a finger.

The Assyrians, at least at this time, will not set foot in Jerusalem because her king is going to do battle and restore.

But Micah is also pointing to something else much greater. God is not just a human king, but a redeemer is going to come and establish ultimately God's rule over all things.

He will bring security, and I like what he says there in that fifth verse, he says, and he will be their peace. He will be their shalom.

I love that word shalom because it basically says that God is going to restore things and make them be what they're supposed to be. That Israel will be protected and live security the way she should.

[12:39] And all her enemies are going to be put down and destroyed. In fact, they will themselves come and worship at the feet of Israel.

And when I see this, I mean, this is such good news. You know, as Peter mentioned a while ago, you see all these events that are going on in Hong Kong.

But we know that in China, if you've followed any reports of how the church is being treated in mainland China over these last year or so, you know that they have been put under heavy stress, a lot of persecution, elders, pastors, members have been jailed simply because they're elders and pastors and church members.

And China is doing their best to destroy and put down the influence of the church. church. If you read stories through the Middle East, you will see similar things where people who have the name of Christ, they get baptized in the name of Christ and they're put to death.

We might even feel it here in our culture sometimes where we feel like society has just laid the church under siege, where we are pushed out of society.

[14:11] We're pushed out of the marketplace. We're pushed out of respect everywhere within our culture so that we are ridiculed, we are at best ignored.

But if what Micah says is true, all these nations and cultures and people can fight against God's people, but a day is coming when the king will restore order, the order he intended.

The king will put down every nation, every force, everything that would stand against his people and raise up his people as those who are now ruling over all things with him.

We see in this text where God is going to raise up a shepherd which is redeemer, but he also says there are going to be other shepherds that are raised up with him and are going to be ruling and shepherding with him.

And the church will take its rightful prominent place and we'll have peace. We will have shalom.

[15:35] No more threats, no more insecurity, no more pressures, no persecution. the king will be on his throne and the nations will come, but not to threaten.

They'll come to bow in worship, in homage to the true king. Would that day come soon?

We long to see that day because we long for shalom. So for God's people that is going to be a glorious, glorious day.

For the unbeliever though, and that may be some of you, you don't have that promise. We are told in many places like in Philippians 2 that every knee shall bow and declare him Lord.

Every knee. And so when the king comes, we will bow in worship either with glad rejoicing or under compulsion that we cannot resist.

[17:09] And he will be king. And so what Micah is doing here and what God is doing here through him is showing us his mercy and kindness by giving us this warning.

Here's the trailer of what's to come. And we can see it. And we can repent. repent. Repent of our rebellion.

Repent of our resistance. Repent of our self determination. And come to the one who is opening his arms to all who would come to the king.

Because in him and him alone, though he will come to judge, he also comes to all who come to him with shalom and peace.

So the king, the redeemer will come to restore, to reclaim his throne. But that's not all he's going to do. He also is coming to reclaim the heart of his people.

[18:24] people. The enemies of God's people are not just out here. I think the worst ones are in here.

When we get to verse 10 of this text, sometimes you continue to read this as simply more of God's judgment on his people and he's going to tear down their cities, he's going to do all this stuff.

But that's not what's going on. If we take a little bit closer look, we see the pursuit of loving kindness for his beloved.

And as we get to verse 10 and 11, the focus is on how God's people have turned from him and towards counterfeit sources of security, their chariots and their fortresses.

And God says, I will destroy your chariots and I'm going to tear down your fortresses. These are these false security places that you think are going to save you.

[19 : 33] And then he gets to verse 12 and points to the fact that they're trying to get understanding and they're trying to get a knowledge of reality through their sorceries and so forth.

And God says, no more. going to cut them off. Then in verse 13 and 14, in some ways he points to the core of the problem.

And twice there it's mentioned, it says, you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands. Jesus. And this is the insanity of idolatry.

They go cut down a tree with their hands, they carve it to make an image that is somehow attractive to them in some way. And then they set it up in a temple and they go bow the knee to it thinking that image is going to give them security, going to give them help, it's going to save them from the day of trouble.

That image is what is going to give them peace. Yeah. But we're all insane.

[20 : 58] Because that is the heart of idolatry. things that we make with our own hands, things that we achieve by our own efforts, things that we erect by our own abilities to give us security, to give us peace, to give us hope, to give us identity.

All of these means of idolatry are produced by our own hands. But when the king comes, he's going to restore his rule, but he's also going to restore and reclaim his bride.

He's going to reclaim the heart of his bride. And before he can do that, his bride must be purified. he is not going to enter into a marriage with her, an intimate marital relation, while her rivals are still present.

They have to be removed. And that's what he's talking about in these verses. see, here's the great truth of repentance.

One of the great truths of repentance is that repentance will not and does not originate with us. Repentance comes because of the initiative that our true love takes to win us back to him.

[22 : 44] And here we see this great picture of it. He's coming. He's going to root out these enemies in our heart. And these enemies, these idols are so deeply rooted inside us, we can't root them out.

We won't root them out. We don't even know what to root out. Because these are the things we trust. This is where we get our sense of security.

And I'm not going to throw that away unless I'm convinced that there's a better way.

And this is what the Redeemer does. He comes to declare war on our idols. He's coming to set us free from the deadly effects of those idols.

And when he does, sometimes it feels like death. It feels like he's trying to do us harm.

[23 : 50] All the while, he's winning us back that we might know in the fullest extent possible, his deep love and affection for us.

You know, I can look back on all these years of my life, particularly over this last 20 or so, and I've seen some really hard times.

I've been through a lot of hard times. And when I get in the midst of those hard times, the first thing I want to do is to blame God. I go to him in prayer and say, what are you doing to me?

I thought you loved me. And then he says, I do.

And that's why I'm doing this. Because he's willing to do hard things to show his real goodness because he's not interested at all in some facade of goodness.

[24 : 57] goodness. He's not interested in some surface relationship. He doesn't want just a little bit of me. He wants it all.

And he wants to bring shalom to me. And in order to do that, he's got to start uprooting and cleaning house of all of these rivals.

All of these other things. So what's going on in your life right now? It might feel like punishment.

You're having some hard times and you think, well, God is now giving you what you deserve because you've done some bad things or you've got habits you can't quit.

I had a guy in my church years and years ago that he and his wife were infertile. And he just knew that God was making that happen because of his pornography addiction.

God was punishing him. Well, here's the question. Is that all there is to punish? Is that the only idol?

[26 : 17] Is that the only problem? What about all the other sins that you don't know about? What about every... listen, if God is going to come and punish you for your sins, you have no hope.

Because when are you ever free? When do you ever have a moment, a thought, where you love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength?
when is there ever a time like that? So when God comes to us, it's never punitive.
It is always corrective. And he picks and chooses. And he starts working and starts cleaning house and breaking our grip that we have on these idols so that we would be set free.
Let's picture it like this. When we come to Jesus in repentance, it's like we're coming to him and in our hand is this big rattlesnake.

[27 : 49] and we don't have a hold of it by the head. We've got a hold of it down in the middle. But for some reason, we think this rattlesnake is going to give us some sense of security and in some way it's going to be a help.

Well, I guess it would give you some sense of security because nobody's going to get close to you if you've got a big old rattlesnake in your hand. But we're gripping this snake and clinging to it. all the while it is biting us. It is causing pain to us, though the Redeemer himself is actually guarding us from a lot of that.

But when we come, he says, throw it down. Throw it down. You don't need this. It's killing you. But we can't because we're putting too much stake in this snake and so we cling to it. And so what he does then is maybe allow the bites more and more to get through.

[29 : 04] Maybe we feel more and more of the pain that that snake creates. or maybe he grabs our fingers and starts to peel him back.

And that hurts. We think he's killing us. He's setting us free. free. He's setting us free from the very thing that will destroy us.

And he's unwilling to do that. And so he comes. And sometimes it feels like hell itself.

But his work, even in the pain, is the path to our freedom and joy and shalom.

This is what he comes to bring. This is the love of our redeemer for us.

[30 : 19] He's not against us. He's fighting for us. How do you know that you can trust him to do that? As Paul wrote in Romans 8 32, he who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not now with him freely give us all things.

Why can we trust him, let go of these idols, and let him do in us whatever he needs to do? Because he's already done it to himself.

We are not going to be punished for our sins. He was. paid. I don't have to pay the price for all of the times I've failed.

He paid. All of God's anger directed towards my idolatry and sin and unbelief was poured on the innocent one who loved the father with his whole heart.

And he was glad to take it so that I would not have to bear it. This is how he can say to us, come to me, come in repentance, come throw your idols down.

[32 : 11] They're killing you. Come to the one who has loved you to the nth degree and he will cleanse you and purify you and make you into the beautiful spotless bride that he intends you to be.

This is the promise that we have as believers. We have a redeemer who is going to come and fight for us to set us free from all of our enemies but also to set us free from the internal enemies that we might be made his and his alone.

But for those who are not in Christ, that's not the promise you have. The pain you feel is not necessary, may not be his working to cleanse you, it may be the beginnings, the foretaste of what is yet to come.

In his mercy, he is allowing you to feel his judgment. But in doing so, in warning you, he's inviting you, come.

Don't pay this yourself. Come. Come. Come to the one who has already stood in for you. Come. You're desperately trying to find shalom and peace in all of the wrong places.

[34 : 10] Come to me. All who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest. And I will give you peace.

peace. Do you want peace? Do you want to know shalom? Hear the invitation that the prophets give us.

Come to the Redeemer who will save to the uttermost and destroy all of our enemies.

and make us the beautiful bride ready for her bridegroom.

Come. Let's pray. Oh, Lord Jesus, would you come?

[35 : 19] Would you work in our hearts? Would you give us understanding that it's not going to come from us? We are too, we're clinging too tightly to all of these things.

Would you break our grip? Would you come? Set us free? Break the stranglehold and give us peace.

Give us peace in your lovingkindness and grace and mercy. In Jesus' name, amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org.