

Micah 4-7

Good evening, Church. It is great to be here with you all.

Before we get into the Word, I want to remind you, men, that this Saturday is the Men's Breakfast at 8 am over there in the Children's Ministry Sanctuary.

Come on out for a hot breakfast, a time of fellowship, and getting into God's Word together.

Also starting this Saturday is our marriage series, led by our Elder Steve Soto and his bride, Bianca.

Please sign up online; it is a 10-week class... Jess and I have taken this class multiple times, and we love it.

It is so good to pour into your marriage, no matter where you are in your relationship.

So, let's pray, and we will get into our teaching tonight...

Tonight, if you have your Bibles, please turn to Micah Chapter 4. We will be finishing the prophet's writings.

When I was a boy, growing up in Phelan, my father was the school police officer.

Often, in those early days, when he patrolled, he could be the only police officer on patrol in all of Phelan.

I would sometimes get to go on ride-alongs with him...

I remember one night being the first emergency vehicle that responded to a fire.

The house was old and being remodeled; no one was home, but by the time Phelan's finest got there, all that was left was the foundation and a giant brick chimney.

Everything was destroyed... I will never forget what my father told me that night, when we watched the firefighters pull up too late... He said, "These men have not lost a foundation yet, son."

Now, to their credit, most of the roads in Phelan are long dirt roads, and there was no city fire department then; they were county trucks coming from the middle of town.

It was the cost a person was willing to pay to escape city life... the closest neighbor was pretty far away, and any real help was even farther.

My father could see my bummed-out face. The destruction was pretty remarkable; that was the first time I had seen the destructive power of a fire like that.

I definitely was not going home to play with matches after that demonstration.

So my father put his hand on that brick chimney, slapped it a couple of times, and said, “The foundation is still good, it has not gone anywhere, they will rebuild this place.”

The loss was immense; those people would come home to see all their belongings burned to ash, their furniture, keepsakes stored in their dresser drawers, and so on. It was all smoldering.

But the foundation was there, and at the sound of that, hope filled my young heart...

Well, this will be Micah’s message tonight...

Chapters 1-3 are the fire – judgment on all the corruption, injustice, false prophets, and spiritual compromise.

But in our final chapters tonight, 4-7, we will walk through the rubble and discover something pretty amazing.

There is a future hope for the nation...

A future mountain for the Lord.

A coming Shepherd-King from Bethlehem.

A courtroom where God will plead His case.

A prophet who sits in darkness but waits for light.

And finally, a God who delights in mercy.

Jerusalem would fall, the leaders would fail, and the people would suffer consequences.

But the foundation, God's covenant faithfulness, would still be standing.

The final chapters teach us that when God sends fire, He is not trying to destroy His people; He is clearing the ground to rebuild them.

So, as we get back into the prophet's writings, remember, there is a series of three sermons.

The first sermon started in Chapter 1, verse 2.

The second sermon started in Chapter 3, and we will be in that sermon until Chapter 6.

The messages that God spoke through Micah began with judgment and condemnation, but ended with God's love and comfort.

Last week, we concluded the judgment portion of the second sermon, and we will now move into the comfort portion.

Micah will look ahead to the distant future and see an age where the Lord will reign from the hills of Jerusalem.

Look now at verse 1 of Chapter 4...

The LORD's Reign in Zion

(cf. Isa 2:2-4)

4:1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days

That the mountain of the LORD's house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And peoples shall flow to it.

2 Many nations shall come and say,

"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,

To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion the law shall go forth,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
3 He shall judge between many peoples,
And rebuke strong nations afar off;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.

Micah here gets a wonderful look at a future time, during the thousand-year reign of Christ.

Remember briefly the timeline of prophecy, from where we are sitting now...

Currently, the Church Age is upon us, the time of Grace, and we are waiting for the *Harpazo*! That is the Greek word meaning to seize, snatch, catch up, to take by force, or to carry off suddenly.

We hear the argument sometimes, "The Rapture is not in the Church."

Well, *Harpazo* is, and Rapture comes from the Latin *rapio* (to seize or carry away), which was used in the Latin Vulgate to translate *harpazo* in:

1 Thess. 4:17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Caught up... we will be caught up Church... this is the next prophetic event in history... and the Church is to be busy about our Master's business until He comes...

After the Rapture... we can picture worldwide chaos... many around the world will be gone...

It is interesting that the United States, the world's biggest superpower, is nowhere in the picture for end-times prophecy.

This has led some to suggest that either the events of the Rapture cripple this nation, being incredibly Christian-influenced and populated.

Or something like a natural disaster or even one of our enemies finds a chink in our armor and

neutralizes the greatest superpower that has ever existed.

If God judged the nations in the Bible for their sins against Him, surely our country is not above this.

I hope for this... One last revival... a Great Awakening, and then the Rapture taking most of our nation...

But, I am not the one who controls world events...

We know, sometime after the Rapture, some think it might be before. Still, the Bible is not really clear; we know it is a time when Israel has no allies, no America standing with it, that a coalition of Arab nations will attack at once, and God will intervene supernaturally.

After the Rapture and the events of this Gog and Magog war, a world leader will come on the scene, charismatic and seemingly a man of peace; he will bring the whole world under the sway of his deception.

And then God will turn His attention back to the Jews, with the Bride, the Church gone, and the Last Week of Daniel's prophetic timeline will be played out.

The world will go through a time of tribulation like never before.

Halfway through this week, or seven years, the Man of Sin will enter into the newly built Temple, which some of you saw with me in January, the Jews are planning to build right now.

He will go in and declare himself to be god... the Jews' eyes will be open to Jesus as being their Messiah... and they will flee to God's protection. Many believe the Rock City of Petra will provide this safety.

This second half of the tribulation is called the Great Tribulation.

At the end of which Jesus Himself will ride, with an army of white, believed to be the redeemed, you and I, and He will come and establish His rule and reign here on earth, destroying His enemies with the Sword that comes from His mouth... the Word of God.

This will then usher in the judgments of the nations, mentioned in Matthew 25, and the world will be judged on how they treated the Jews (The Least of these). Jesus described the Judgment as the sheep being separated from the goats.

Then the Millennial reign of Christ will be ushered in... a Thousand Years, where Christ will rule this world from Zion, Jerusalem.

This is the time Micah sees here.

The people of the world will flow into a restored and redeemed Jerusalem, the world's capital.

Isaiah saw the same thing in Chapter 2 of his writings, and remember they were contemporaries.

Micah sees the world streaming into the streets of Jerusalem to meet with God and to learn His ways.

There will be no more war; the Messiah will justly resolve everything, as He can rebuke strong nations.

This will be a period of enforced righteousness.

We see no further need for weapons so that they will be converted into farming equipment.

The Psalmist tells us that righteousness will be enforced...

**Ps 2:9 You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'"**

Maybe you think, 'well, that won't be fun, I will have to be good, or I will be broken...'

Well, if you don't like walking with God in this life, you definitely won't enjoy eternity with Him.

If you are constantly fighting Him now, why would you want to spend an eternity in holiness and righteousness?

Well, that isn't fair. I don't want to go to hell.

Listen, He is not forcing you to do anything..., but there is a cost to the decisions we make in this life.

When you ultimately submit to God's Ways... you actually find that His ways are not burdensome... but a blessing... freeing, even... life-changing...

But when you are always fighting... trying to do it your way... looking for loopholes... trying to find a better way than what is laid out in His Word...

You will hit roadblocks every time...

But in the future... Righteousness will be demanded...

Look at verse 4 now...

4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree,

And no one shall make *them* afraid;

For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

5 For all people walk each in the name of his god,
But we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
Forever and ever.

Notice that the provisions for each person will be provided.

Everyone will sit under their own vine... and the state won't come and say one for you, eight for them, and me...

We will get to share willingly, out of a heart of gratitude, instead of being stolen from each week.

In Micah's day, like our time, everyone is walking in the name of whatever god they want.

But in that Thousand Year Reign of Christ, there will only be One Lord and One God, and all will walk in His Name.

In His Name, all will be blessed and enjoy peace.

Verse 6 now...

Zion's Future Triumph

6 "In that day," says the LORD,
"I will assemble the lame,
I will gather the outcast
And those whom I have afflicted;
7 I will make the lame a remnant,
And the outcast a strong nation;
So the LORD WILL reign over them in Mount Zion
From now on, even forever.
8 And you, O tower of the flock,
The stronghold of the daughter of Zion,
To you shall it come,
Even the former dominion shall come,
The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."

I like this reality about what is to come in Jesus's future Kingdom.

God's restoration will not just be for the strong, but for the weak and outcast, those who were disadvantaged.

It is those whom God typically takes from the low places who carry the greatest hearts of gratitude.

They especially know the blessing of His restoration.

In the tribulation, especially, the Jews will be persecuted intensely, more so than they have been in their entire history.

The devil and the antichrist will turn their full rage upon them when their eyes and hearts are open to Christ.

The affliction will be so intense... and the promises here seem to be so glorious, almost too good to be true...

So, in verse 8, God assures them with this special promise, "To you it shall come to pass."

And maybe tonight your life is in turmoil, more so than it ever has been in times past... You thought turning your life over to Jesus meant things might get easier for you.

Committing to a life of serving Him, coming to Church, getting your family involved in the Good things of this world, surely this would have made things better for you...

But your life has become harder, maybe you are in a living hell tonight...

The Bible tells us...

Gal 6:9 ...let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

God has a plan for your life... He is not done yet... this season is not the end of His story for you...

If you could only see what is ahead... You wouldn't believe it...

"To you shall it come..."

Look now at verse 9...

9 Now why do you cry aloud?

Is there no king in your midst?

Has your counselor perished?

For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor.

10 Be in pain, and labor to bring forth,

O daughter of Zion,

Like a woman in birth pangs.

For now you shall go forth from the city,

You shall dwell in the field,

And to Babylon you shall go.

There you shall be delivered;

There the LORD will redeem you

From the hand of your enemies.

Part of the birth pangs of their labor, during their time of judgment, came to them in the form of a lack of leadership.

Understand something: sometimes, the worst kind of judgment God can give a people is poor leaders... or no leaders...

Micah, as all the prophets have done, is speaking in dual promises, to the immediate issues of their day, and to the future end times...

Having spoken to the millennial earth, he speaks now to Israel's deliverance from Babylonian captivity.

The Lord would chasten them, but here the prophet gives them the seed of hope to carry with them through their captivity.

God would ultimately restore them.

Verse 11 now...

11 Now also many nations have gathered against you,

Who say, "Let her be defiled,
And let our eye look upon Zion."

12 But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD,

Nor do they understand His counsel;
For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

13 "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion;
For I will make your horn iron,
And I will make your hooves bronze;
You shall beat in pieces many peoples;
I will consecrate their gain to the LORD,
And their substance to the Lord of the whole earth."

Though the nations were set to come against Israel, God is for them; they do not know the thoughts of the Lord.

This is a fascinating verse.

The Lord deals with Israel's enemies as easily as the farmer deals with sheaves of grain on the threshing floor.

Today, many of the Jews in the land don't have faith; they don't even know the thoughts of God... They have a veil over their eyes and hearts.

Paul says in Romans 11 that he was sent to the Gentiles to provoke the Jews, his brethren, to jealousy.

That is interesting... when we go to Israel, I think about that...

I am there to make the Jews jealous of this relationship, hoping they will come to God as well, through Jesus...

Our guide is a wonderful man, I think he is getting closer and closer to coming to the Lord...

But he can get so close to the truth... and then he stops...

We were at one of the battlefields from the Yom Kippur War in 1973, in a place that is called the Valley of Tears...

The Battle was intense, Israeli forces were greatly outnumbered, and on the fourth day of the battle, the Syrian tanks broke through the lines; the Israeli defenses were almost on the point of collapse.

The Syrian tanks had a straight shot to Jerusalem, and Tal, our guide, gets a little emotional, and he says, they stopped, the Syrian tanks, for no explanation at all, they just stopped for the night, maybe thinking reinforcements were there, but they were not...

It allowed the ragtag Israeli tanks that were left to regroup, reposition, and start picking off Syrian tanks, and for some reason, they retreated...

He says, "No explanation, call it...." And I shouted, "It was God Tal." He said, "Okay, providence."

But God has this history of dealing with their enemies...

He will continue to do so until Christ comes...

Verse 1 of Chapter 5 now...

5:1 Now gather yourself in troops,
O daughter of troops;
He has laid siege against us;
They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the
cheek.

The Coming Messiah

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."

Micah announces here that foreign powers will humble Israel, and even the rulers will be insulted.

But coming out of that humiliation, under those foreign powers, God is promising here a Great Ruler from a very humble and obscure place, Bethlehem.

This was the hometown of David, Israel's most famous king.

But it was never a great city in and of itself.

It was little among the thousands... yet this little place was chosen as the Savior's birthplace, the Ruler of Israel.

Remember when Herod was paranoid as the Magi came looking for the Promised One, the chief priests quoted Micah 5...

Matt 2:5-6 "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

6 *'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;
For out of you shall come a Ruler
Who will shepherd My people Israel.'*"

Bethlehem, as we just learned while walking its streets in January, means “House of Bread.”

Which is pretty remarkable, as Jesus said

John 6:35 “I am the bread of life.”

But notice Micah declares that His goings forth are from old, from everlasting, meaning they came well before Bethlehem.

We learned on Sunday morning that Jesus is eternal...

Col 1:15-17 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Jesus is no mere mortal... His goings forth are from everlasting... and He is fully Man and fully God.

Look at verse 3 now...

**3 Therefore He shall give them up,
Until the time *that* she who is in labor has given
birth;**

Then the remnant of His brethren
Shall return to the children of Israel.

4 And He shall stand and feed *His flock*

In the strength of the LORD,
In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God;
And they shall abide,
For now He shall be great
To the ends of the earth;

5 And this *One* shall be peace.

This “One” is that “One,” the Baby that would be
Born in Bethlehem... the Ruler to come...

Jesus will stand and feed His people.

He will be Great in all the Earth, and bring peace,
true and lasting peace...

Oh, how this world needs peace...

Look at the rest of verse 5...

Judgment on Israel's Enemies

When the Assyrian comes into our land,
And when he treads in our palaces,
Then we will raise against him
Seven shepherds and eight princely men.

Here, Micah, once again, as he blends near and distant prophecies, sees the looming and coming threat of Assyria.

That mighty Empire would be used to judge both Israel and Judah...

And though the enemies of God would come against them, God would raise against them mighty men, whom He calls “Seven Shepherds and eight princes” here, to ultimately deliver His people.

Many scholars see this as a reference to the future, when the Antichrist will attack, and Jesus will come to defend His flock with seven shepherds and eight princely men.

The challenge in unraveling the Old Testament prophets is that they often speak of events that occurred thousands of years apart, in verses right next to each other.

Verse 6 now...

6 They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria,
And the land of Nimrod at its entrances;

Thus He shall deliver *us* from the Assyrian,
When he comes into our land
And when he treads within our borders.

7 Then the remnant of Jacob

Shall be in the midst of many peoples,
Like dew from the LORD,
Like showers on the grass,
That tarry for no man
Nor wait for the sons of men.

8 And the remnant of Jacob

Shall be among the Gentiles,
In the midst of many people,
Like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
Like a young lion among flocks of sheep,
Who, if he passes through,
Both treads down and tears in pieces,
And none can deliver.

9 Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries,
And all your enemies shall be cut off.

10 "And it shall be in that day," says the LORD,
"That I will cut off your horses from your midst
And destroy your chariots.

11 I will cut off the cities of your land

And throw down all your strongholds.

12 I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
And you shall have no soothsayers.

13 Your carved images I will also cut off,
And your sacred pillars from your midst;
You shall no more worship the work of your hands;

14 I will pluck your wooden images from your midst;
Thus I will destroy your cities.

15 And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury
On the nations that have not heard."

When Jesus returns, His people, Israel, will be among the nations, like a lion among the sheep.

They will be made strong.

Those who opposed Israel will be cut off...

Now, I take the Bible literally... and there is no mistaking God's love for the Jewish people.

There is more happening with Israel today than we can understand... We know that they are the key to the prophetic timeline...

As we watch world events unfold centered on that tiny little country, we have to ask, “Why is it so important?”

I was picking up Sofia from Volleyball practice on Monday night, and she was seeing Israel in the News. She has been to Israel, growing up in the Church, and she knows that our faith was born out of that place.

And it is fun sometimes to just let our kids talk and reason.

She was telling me that the world being so focused on the Jews and Israel, and the hatred for them, is for affirming that what we believe is true... and with a little coaching from me... I helped her understand the spiritual battle at work... the deception at play... and how Satan has always hated the Jews and the promises surrounding them...

Our Savior was Jewish... and she will read the Diary of Ann Frank, so we were talking about the Holocaust, and how Satan can deceive people so much into hating a certain people group, that they blame them for everything, that they would treat them worse than animals...

And we see this deception at play in our society right now, with prominent voices at work, trying even to use Christianity to deceive, if possible, the elect... to turn our hearts from the truth...

God has a plan for the Jews... is it because they are deserving? The Bible never says that... But He is God... This is what He says He will do... He can do as He pleases... He will protect them... and when you have seen multiple battlefields with your own eyes, where supernatural events have taken place... in modern warfare... It becomes obvious, God will be true to His Word...

Don't worry, there are plenty of promises for you too...

Jesus came to die for every man and woman... There is a special place for the Church in God's plan, too...

When we get into Revelation, we will see this so much more clearly.

Let's look at Micah's final sermon... Verse 1 of Chapter 6...

God Pleads with Israel

6:1 Hear now what the LORD says:

"Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
And let the hills hear your voice.

2 Hear, O you mountains, the LORD's complaint,
And you strong foundations of the earth;
For the LORD HAS a complaint against His people,
And He will contend with Israel.

Now, God turns the world into a courtroom here.
It seems as though God is the Prosecuting Lawyer.
The topography is the jury.

God calls the mountains and hills to render His
verdict.

They were the only ones who had stood throughout
the centuries to testify to God's mercy and
faithfulness to God's people.

3 "O My people, what have I done to you?
And how have I wearied you?
Testify against Me.

4 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.

5 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."

God opens up the door for communication here.

He asks... "How have I let you down? Where has my love failed you? Tell me your complaint."

Then God recounts their history of His faithfulness, from leaving Egypt, their journey through the wilderness, and even the incident with Balaam...

Everywhere you look in their history, God has been faithful.

He even turned Balaam's curses into blessings...

Think back on your own life with the Lord tonight...
He has always come through... even at the most desperate times...

And He will continue to do so...

Look now at verse 6...

6 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?

7 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?

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?

Throughout their history, the Jews looked to their good religion and many sacrifices as their way of responding to God's mercy.

But they didn't understand it at all.

Sacrifice is important, but it was only a sign of something far greater: obedience.

We are told in...

1 Sam 15:22 Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.

So often, it is easier to give to God what we want to give to Him.

This is how many people give to God...

God's word gives us principles of giving in our worship, giving of our time, tithe, and service...

But we want to tell God where we will give to Him... We don't want to give freely, obediently... we want to do it on our own terms... That is not worship...

To obey is better than sacrifice...

Sacrifice for sacrifice's sake is of little value... God needs simple obedience... He doesn't need our creativity and workarounds.

Now, if you are wondering how you can please God tonight...

Verse 8 is a wonderful start... "He has shown you... do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."

Listen, He is not hard to please.

Do justly, live rightly, treat people fairly.

Love mercy... don't wait for people to deserve love...
be gracious and spread love even when the person is
unloving.

And walk humbly... don't make it about you...

That is how you please God... do the right thing, love
others, and don't just think about yourself.

Look at verse 9...

Punishment of Israel's Injustice

9 The LORD's voice cries to the city —

Wisdom shall see Your name:

"Hear the rod!

Who has appointed it?

10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness

In the house of the wicked,

And the short measure *that is* an abomination?

11 Shall I count pure *those* with the wicked scales,

And with the bag of deceitful weights?

12 For her rich men are full of violence,

Her inhabitants have spoken lies,

And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

13 "Therefore I will also make *you* sick by striking you,

By making *you* desolate because of your sins.

14 You shall eat, but not be satisfied;

Hunger *shall be* in your midst.

You may carry *some* away, but shall not save *them*;

And what you do rescue I will give over to the sword.

15 "You shall sow, but not reap;

You shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil;

And *make* sweet wine, but not drink wine.

16 For the statutes of Omri are kept;

All the works of Ahab's house *are done*;

And you walk in their counsels,

That I may make you a desolation,

And your inhabitants a hissing.

Therefore you shall bear the reproach of My people."

The Lord sends this country boy prophet to cry out in the city.

God calls for wisdom there.

Their scales were dishonest, and God was displeased.

God desired honesty in their business dealings.

Micah here is telling the crooked businessman that they will never truly enjoy the spoils of their deception.

They will be sick from the food they buy with their filthy money.

The man who sows with the money that he stole from others will never reap a harvest.

He points to the evil kings of Omri and Ahab as examples...

Yet the people followed their wicked ways, and they will reap the same reward...

Now, here in Chapter 7, Micah is grieved as he looks around; he is alone, concerned about righteousness throughout Israel.

Verse 1...

Sorrow for Israel's Sins

7:1 Woe is me!

For I am like those who gather summer fruits,
Like those who glean vintage grapes;
There is no cluster to eat
Of the first-ripe fruit *which* my soul desires.

2 The faithful *man* has perished from the earth,
And *there is* no one upright among men.
They all lie in wait for blood;
Every man hunts his brother with a net.

Micah feels like you might feel tonight...

Maybe you are the only Christian in your workplace,
and it is getting tough for you.

You signed up to do a ministry, and no one came to
help.

Or you are the only person saved in your family, and
it just feels like Christians are in short supply.

It seems like good people are nowhere to be found at
times...

But if the Bible testifies to one thing, it is that God can
do big things with few people.

God used Gideon to wipe out the Midianites with
only a handful of men and no weapons.

He used a boy with a sling and a stone to fell a giant.
Jesus turned the world upside down with twelve men.
Listen, you plus God equals the majority. Stay faithful,
and God will do great things.

Look at verse 3...

3 That they may successfully do evil with both hands

—

The prince asks *for gifts*,
The judge *seeks* a bribe,
And the great *man* utters his evil desire;
So they scheme together.

4 The best of them *is* like a brier;
The most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge;
The day of your watchman and your punishment
comes;

Now shall be their perplexity.

5 Do not trust in a friend;
Do not put your confidence in a companion;
Guard the doors of your mouth
From her who lies in your bosom.

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.
7 Therefore I will look to the LORD ;
I will wait for the God of my salvation;
My God will hear me.

It is not hard to sin with one hand, and here they are sinning with both.

Micah is saying, “You cannot even trust your friend or your spouse;” the moral climate of that day was so bad that everyone was betraying each other.

Perhaps Micah’s own family turned on him.

And sometimes this will happen when you commit your life to serving the Lord... your world will become a lonely place.

But it is in that loneliness you find out what Micah finds out here...

“I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will hear me.”

In those seasons of loneliness, you find that there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother, and His name is Jesus.

There have been painful seasons in this walk with the Lord, where I have told Jess, I wanted to call someone today and talk, but I can't trust anyone enough anymore, I have no friends...

But it is in those times when friends are in short supply, I find Jesus closer than ever before...

I love Him... He is always there...

Verse 8...

Israel's Confession and Comfort

8 Do not rejoice over me, my enemy;
When I fall, I will arise;
When I sit in darkness,
The LORD WILL *be* a light to me.

He knows the Lord has not forsaken Him... Even when the prophet has sins to deal with, he will not allow himself to be run over by condemnation, and he will look to the God of second chances.

Verse 9...

9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD,
Because I have sinned against Him,
Until He pleads my case

And executes justice for me.
He will bring me forth to the light;
I will see His righteousness.

Micah looks to his Mediator....

We all have a Mediator between us and God and its Jesus...

He will plead your case if you put your trust in Him.

He alone can negotiate your eternal pardon.

Look now at verse 10, those who doubted his God...

10 Then *she who is* my enemy will see,
And shame will cover her who said to me,
"Where is the LORD your God?"
My eyes will see her;
Now she will be trampled down
Like mud in the streets.

But, as in all of Micah's sermons, God will now begin His message of restoration and comfort... He doesn't leave it in judgment.

Verse 11...

11 *In* the day when your walls are to be built,
In that day the decree shall go far and wide.

12 *In* that day they shall come to you
From Assyria and the fortified cities,
From the fortress to the River,
From sea to sea,
And mountain *to* mountain.

13 Yet the land shall be desolate
Because of those who dwell in it,
And for the fruit of their deeds.

The prophet sees the desolate land, because of their wicked deeds, being repopulated with Jews coming from all over the world.

We are literally seeing this today...

Verse 14...

God Will Forgive Israel

14 Shepherd Your people with Your staff,
The flock of Your heritage,
Who dwell solitarily *in* a woodland,
In the midst of Carmel;
Let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead,
As in days of old.

15 "As in the days when you came out of the land of
Egypt,

I will show them wonders."

Micah is seeing once again the final glorious picture: when the Messiah will reign in Israel and Shepherd them again.

In the last days, they will see the same sort of wonders they saw when God intervened during their exodus from Israel.

Verse 16...

16 The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might;

They shall put *their* hand over *their* mouth;
Their ears shall be deaf.

17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent;
They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth.

They shall be afraid of the LORD OUR God,
And shall fear because of You.

18 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.

19 He will again have compassion on us,
And will subdue our iniquities.
You will cast all our sins
Into the depths of the sea.

20 You will give truth to Jacob
And mercy to Abraham,
Which You have sworn to our fathers
From days of old.

Who is like our God?

People give all kinds of definitions...

Let's end the night with a Biblical identification...

He passes over the transgressions...

Does not retain His anger forever....

He delights in mercy... He does not enjoy judgment...

He is rich in mercy.

Look at verse 19, He casts our sins into the bottom of the sea...

Who is like Him, pardoning iniquity?

Listen... maybe tonight... You have lugged around the burden of sin and guilt for a long time, hiding it, stowing it away, hoping it will go away...

The only cleansing offered is to confess it to a God who will then forgive and cleanse you.

He will forget about it, never bring it up again...

It will be at the bottom of the sea... Leave it there tonight. Rev 21:1 – No Sea – Sin Gone

Let's pray...