**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes 6-11-2023
Majoring in the Minors – Micah**

How many of you remember Nintendo? Well back when I was growing up, Nintendo and Super Nintendo – they were the thing. I know that there are all different gaming systems today that are popular. But I remember spending many hours playing Nintendo with my brother David. Good memories indeed.

In fact, after he passed his chicken pox along to me when I was in 3rd grade, I remember saying at the time that that was the best thing that he ever gave me. And there was some truth in that. I got to spend a whole week home from school and much of that time in honing my Nintendo skills. Those were the days.

Seriously though, despite my fond memories with my mild case of chicken pox and the extra play time that it gave me, there is the reality in there that certain things can spread from person to person.

And unless someone’s been living in a cave since March of 2020, they’ve probably heard and experienced some fears related to sickness, especially fears related to covid. It was such a strange time that we lived through.

But there has been a disease that is far more dangerous and far more contagious than covid or anything else. Does anyone want to guess what that might be? It is the disease called sin.

In fact, it is so contagious and so deadly that everyone has caught it. Everyone but God Himself. And it was God Himself that had to intervene to bring the cure. And He did by becoming one of us as Jesus Christ. Those that put their trust in Him are cured, in who He is and in what He has done for them, they are cured.

But before God sent Jesus to us, God raised up other doctors to help humanity find healing. The Bible calls them prophets. As we continue our journey through these minor prophets found in our Old Testament. Each of these books are important in helping God’s people find healing from this terrible sin-disease.

Today we turn to the prophet Micah. Now Micah lived about 50 years after Hosea and Amos. He was from the town of Moresheth, in the southern kingdom of Judah. And Micah was sent to minister particularly to the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

Now before we take a look at our highlighted passage from Micah, I would like to also note a couple of other places from this sacred book the Lord has given us. The first passage is Micah 1:9. And this is what the prophet writes, **“For Samaria’s plague is incurable; it has spread to Judah.”**

This verse struck me. We think about again spreading of sickness and disease. This was what was spiritually taking place. By the time of Micah’s ministry, the northern Kingdom of Israel, with Samaria as its capital, was soon to be destroyed. Samaria’s plague of sin was incurable. God had given Israel many years and several generations to repent and to turn to Him for life, but things kept going further and further off the rails. And the hour of judgment was about to strike.

But here is the thing. Samaria’s plague had spread to Judea. By the time of Micah’s writing, the southern Kingdom of Judea was turning further and further away from God.

***Judah* *had not practiced safe spiritual distancing from Israel and they had become spiritually sick as well.***

One major problem with this contagion was the failure in leadership. One of the big themes from the Book of Micah is that the spiritual leaders had utterly failed. The prophets and the spiritual leaders were not seeking God, but instead they were seeking to teach and proclaim whatever they thought their audience wanted to hear.

In Micah 3:11-12, Micah writes about this.

**Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they look for the LORDs support and say, “Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us.” Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.**

While the people of Judea and Samaria are also called out for their many sins, the greatest sins would be on the religious rulers and leaders. Instead of pointing people to the way of the LORD, they were superspreaders of sin among the people. The greater amount of blame would land on them.

But this would not always be the case. Micah makes it very clear that there was a promised ruler that would be coming. And this ruler would be great. And the greatness of this ruler would reach to the ends of the earth.

You probably have a good guess who this great future leader would be.

Let us hear this prophecy together from Micah 5:2-5a

**“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah+5%3A2-5a&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22636a)**] of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” 3Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. 4He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.**

**5And he will be our peace.**

We often hear this verse read during the season of Advent, in the weeks leading up to Christmas. Clearly, this refers to Jesus Christ. It was He that was born in Bethlehem. It is He that is the Ruler over all. It is He that gives true peace to those that follow Him as their King.

Even though Micah is clear that both Samaria and Judah were on a path to destruction, that would not be the end. This future King was yet to arrive, but the people of Israel and Judah were to look ahead to Him and trust that this good and loving and just King and Leader would come. They were to put their hope in Him as their Savior.

Jesus did indeed eventually come. And He would be the hope of Jew and Gentile alike. He would be the One and Only Savior of the world.

So friends, what is the main takeaway from this Book of Micah for us today? And I believe that it is this. **We are to put our hope in Jesus Christ and live for Him every day.**

Jesus is Lord. Jesus is King. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Jesus came to shepherd Israel and to shepherd everyone who puts their trust in Him. And Jesus alone is to be our peace.

**As Christians, we are to look to Him as our Shepherd**. I am blessed to be called as one of His under-shepherds. But Jesus is the Head of the Church and Jesus is the One we are to look to more than any other leader. He wants us to speak with Him each and every day. His voice is life-giving.

**And King Jesus gives us His Word – the Bible – as His Book**. The Bible is trustworthy and reliable. The accounts in it are true. One big way that we can submit to Jesus is by seeking to know Him through His Word. Every day is another opportunity.

**Micah’s prophecy also tells us of the importance of having godly spiritual leaders in our lives**. Again, sin is very contagious. Spiritual leaders are called to be the real deal. Spiritual leaders are called to speak truth in love.

As Christians, one big way that we grow is by finding godly leaders that teach and preach the Word of God faithfully, rather than just say whatever they think people want to hear.

This was a big problem in Samaria and Judah. The leaders were people-pleasers and the people only wanted to hear about how godly they were living.

As Christians today, we should seek out people in our lives that will gracefully and lovingly speak truth to us. I seek to be one of those people for you.

But I know that I’m not perfect. Just as Kara. Please test what I teach and preach. Be in the Word yourself. Spend time in prayer with the Lord. He is your Chief Shepherd and He wants to lead you every day, every moment.

That same Jesus who was born in Bethlehem continues to live today. We have a risen Savior. Jesus continues to build His Church today. He is at work through the Holy Spirit and through women and men and children that are following Him today.

Finally, although we live many years after Micah, in some ways I think there are many similarities today. Our nation in many ways has caught the plague of Samaria. There is much godlessness in our land.

But Jesus told us to not let our hearts be troubled. Let us continue to believe in Him and to put our hope and trust in Him. And as we live for Jesus, we will shine for Jesus in this world.

The One who is our peace desires to give His peace to everyone. And friends, we are His vessels. Every one of us has a significant role to play in God’s Kingdom. While we are to look to have godly leaders over us, we must also remember that every one of us is a leader in some way in God’s Kingdom. All of us are called to make a difference for Jesus in this world. Every one of us influence others more than we realize.

This morning we have been speaking quite a bit about spreading negative things – whether it is covid-19 or sinful behaviors.

But as Christians, God desires each of us to be super-spreaders of the good news of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the cure. Jesus is the answer. But we are His vessel. We are His salt and light in this world. We point people to Him.

May our words and may our actions help to spread Jesus everywhere that we go and through everything that we do. And may the One who is our peace, give you perfect peace --- His shalom, shalom – every day. Amen.

Resources:

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

Class notes from Prophets course Evangelical Seminary

The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament by Euguene H. Merrill, Mark F. Rooker, and Michael A. Grisanti