

Faithfulness in a Broken World Micah 6:1-8

- Columbia vs Colombia.** So that's where you want me to go! A failure to communicate.
- Have you ever had a relational struggle because of poor communication?
 - Because you didn't know what someone wanted from you – your boss, your coach, your teacher, your parents?

Micah 6:8 tells us in just a few words what the Lord desires from us.

- It's not unclear. It is very clear. **[Read]**
- I have a few boys who often ask, "What's our plan today?" When asked first thing in the morning, I need to about an hour to respond ... my plan is coffee and clothes. If I can get my clothes on and get to the coffee, and then to my Bible, I might then be able to give you a coherent answer.
- How many of you know what I mean?
- I think I will just respond from now on with this: **the plan today is Micah 6:8.** Got it?
- **There's not a day in which we don't need to live out this verse.**

Scholars say:

- "[This verse] is the finest summary of the content of practical religion to be found in the OT." ... "The rabbis who commented on this verse in the early centuries of the Christian era called it a one line summary of the whole Law." [NAC]
- "One of the most timeless expressions of OT ethics" (EBC)
- "The finest summary." "A one line summary." "A timeless expression of ethics."
- In light of the all the complexity of the Minor Prophets, as well as the back and forth style of Micah, it **is refreshing to come to a one-line summary!**

Of course, despite our desire for clear communication in relationships, the popular spirituality in this postmodern culture is different.

What is in style is **the sovereign self** and **"your truth."**

- Perhaps you've heard of people talking today about "your truth" instead of "the truth." "Your truth" may not be "my truth" but that's okay. It's "your truth."
- What does the Lord desire from you? Today's person would say, "Whatever you think." "You decide." "It's your truth." "Choose your own adventure." "Live your life the way you feel – the way you want to.."
- Wrong. The Bible gives us God's truth; Micah tells us plainly what the Lord wants.

Let's **see it in light of Micah's world**, and then talk about **how to apply it in our world.**

- Micah 6:8 was one of those verses that just landed on my heart with force about ten years ago. (It ended up tattooed on Kimberly's foot, and hangs in our living room!).
- About 10 years ago, the Lord convicted me of my lack of involvement for the poor, the oppressed, the orphan, the widow, and those in need.
- Out of that season of reflection, repentance, and the reorienting of our lives came a lot of things – a book, five kids!, various ministries, and the PEACE Plan.

- P – Plant Churches**
- E – Evangelize the World**
- A – Aid the Poor and the Sick**
- C – Care for the Orphan and the Oppressed**
- E – Equip Leaders**

It was my way of nailing down how to impact this broken world.

P.E.A.C.E. Is also appropriate because it reminds us of total shalom that is coming in Christ Jesus.

Brokenness now, Peace is coming,
 “He shall be their peace” (5:5).

It is what I call an **“integrative model of mission.”**

- It includes the **Great Commandment and the Great Commission.**
- We are seeking to fulfill the **Great Commission with a Great Commandment heart.**
- There are some Christians and churches that **are all about evangelism, but have never lifted a finger for the poor and the oppressed.**
- There are others who are all about **social action, but have abandoned the gospel!**

We can do both! It is possible!

We want to alleviate both **temporal suffering and eternal suffering.**

We must care about **urgent physical and spiritual needs**, as God’s people.

- We aren’t **Gnostics**, just caring about spiritual truths, neglecting physical needs.
- We aren’t **secular humanists**, neglecting divine truth.
- We are Christians, “little Christs,” who showed us **what it looked like to love those with real needs, and what it looked like to preach the truth boldly.**

The main point of verses 6-8 is that covenant faithfulness consists not in empty ritual, but in three proper expressions of love: justice, mercy, and humility.

- Underneath this is **God’s** faithfulness, justice, and mercy (1:2; 7:18).
- Illustrating faithfulness is **Micah**. (a long ministry)
- Further illustrating faithfulness is the **remnant** Micah speaks about.
- Like Micah and this remnant, we are called to be faithful as we reflect the character of our God in this broken world.

- (1) Micah’s Context**
- (2) Micah’s Example**
- (3) Micah’s Summary**

#1: Micah’s Context

Micah gives this word in a time of societal/spiritual brokenness.

- No one goes unaddressed – from **the whole earth** (1:2); to **leaders** (3:1-3); to the **prophets** (3:11), to the **businessmen** (6:10-11), and even to himself (7:1-10).
- **One of Micah’s many titles is “The People’s Prophet.”**
- He takes up for the weak and powerless and calls everyone to account.

His Background (1:1)

A. Micah's **name** means 'Who is like Yah[weh]'?

- Likely his parents reflected on the **incomparability of their God** with this name.
- **Micah wrote his own name into his book** at the conclusion (Read **7:18–20**), **like Van Gogh**, as he reflected on the **incomparability of God's kindness and forgiveness**.
- He is unlike everyone else – we like to make comparisons. (**teams, food, music, etc**), but there is no comparison to our God.

B. He was from the town of **Moresbeth**

- This **rural town was almost 25 southwest** of Jerusalem, between the city and the sea.
- He **empathized with farmers, shepherds and small landholders**.
- Micah has also been called "**Little Isaiah**" because he shares a similar message to Isaiah and they prophesied during a similar time period.
- **His story reminds us that just because you are from one particular area, that doesn't mean the Lord can't use you somewhere else (rural/urban). "I could never reach them."**

His Time Period (1:1)

At the end of the 8th century B.C.

- **During the reigns of Jotham and Uzziah (along with Jereboam II in the North) there was an emergence of the upper class, which led to a corruption.**
- **A nation can be wealthy and godless.**
- About **740BC-687 BC – 53 years total!**
- His ministry was alongside of **Hosea and Isaiah**
- **He did more than write obviously!**
- **"Man, he's a patient writer! It takes some of you a long time to write a paper, but 53 years!"** These prophets were mainly preachers, with exception of Nahum who wrote a book.

Jotham – 2 Kings 15:32-38. He improves the defenses in Israel. "He did right" but didn't destroy high places. It is during his reign that the prophet Micah begins his prophetic ministry.

Ahaz (2 Kings 16:1-4; Micah 6:16): He burned his own son (an offering to Molech).

- When threatened by Syria and Ephraim, he looked to Assyria instead of trusting Yahweh for help.
- He paid the Assyrians with treasures from the Temple.
- He then corrupted worship by replacing the bronze altar with an altar like that in Damascus, and also rearranges some of the temple furnishings.
- So, **he looked to Assyria for salvation and to Damascus for his liturgy**" (Davis)

Hezekiah, Sennacherib was ruthless but unable to capture Judah during Hezekiah's reign because of Hezekiah's trust in the Lord; and Lord's miraculous intervention (2 Kings 18-19; **Mic 1:10-16**).

- All of those places mentioned in 10-16 were places Senn. invaded in Judah.
- They are "puns." "**Dunn is done;**" **Motown is no town.**

Samaria" (v. 1) fell because of idolatry (2 Kings 17, "Hoshea"; **Micah 1:6-7**)

MICAH 1:2-End

From the book of Micah, here are a some **examples of the corruption**:

See if this doesn't sound like today:

- 1. Idolatry (1:7)**
- 2. Seizing land from the weak (2:1-2) – major problem worldwide**
- 3. Refusal to listen to faithful preaching (2:6, 11)**
- 4. Robbing poor refugees (2:8)**
- 5. Taking advantage of widows (2:9; Mk 12:40)**
- 6. Taking away the inheritance of children (2:9b)**
- 7. Politicians failing to stand up for justice (3:1-2, 9)**
- 8. Leaders taking people's lives in order to complete building projects (3:9-10)**
- 9. Judges taking bribes; religious leaders serving greedily (3:11)**
- 10. Business men cheating, lying, and doing violence (6:10-12)**
- 11. People shedding innocent blood (7:2-4)**
- 12. People distrusting everyone in society (7:5)**
- 13. People fighting within the family (7:6)**

Micah despised these practices and thundered away at the corruption.

- Keep this in mind when we get back to Micah 6:8.
- Notice how comprehensive “doing justice” was and how counter-cultural.

What's striking to me about Micah's denouncements is **his incredible RANGE!!!**

- **Micah is the Stephen Curry of the Prophets!**

If he were alive today, he would bring a word about everything from

- **Large scale headlines**
- **To the divorced husband who isn't paying his child support,**
- **To domestic violence;**
- **To employers who are harsh and unfair or employees who lie and cheat;**
- **To people who make false accusations about others;**
- **To families not caring for the elderly in their family;**
- **To politicians who make racial slurs and fail to care for the needy;**
- **To preachers who don't preach the whole council of God;**
- **To pastors who are abusive, immoral and hypocritical;**
- **And to churches for not speaking against immorality, taking care of the poor, or the fatherless.**
- **And more sins that do not reflect the character of God and do not express love for neighbor.**

His Book (1:2-7:20)

Some find the prophets hard to read.

Luther said, “They have a strange way of talking, like people who, instead of proceeding in an orderly manner, ramble off from one thing to the next, so that you cannot make head or tail of them or see what they're getting at.”

He's partially right. They can be difficult, especially **Micah**.

1. The book flows in and out of good news and bad news
2. It covers different time periods
3. It doesn't progress in chronological order

If you read chapter 1 through 7 it is hard to follow along.

- That's because the book of **Micah wasn't given in one setting, like Obadiah or Nahum.**
- This is a compilation of sermons – **Micah's Greatest Hits!**

With that said, there **is a loose structure of judgment and salvation:**

Three Cycles of Judgment and Salvation

“Hear” [1:2; 3:1; 6:1]

1. Cycle 1 (1:2-2:11 // 2:12-13)

1:2-2:11, Judgment against Israel

- The Lord is the judge of the earth and is coming to judge his people (Read 1-7)
- 1:15 Assyria is mentioned – they would take Israel into captivity

2:12-13, Salvation for Israel [Read]

- The return of exile is mentioned

2. Cycle 2 (3:1-12 // 4:1-5:15)

3:1-12, Judgment Against Israel

- Punishment will be exile

4:1-5:15, Salvation for Israel

- Salvation for Zion (4:1-5)
- Salvation for the remnant (4:6-13) (v 10)
- Salvation by the ruler of the remnant (5:1-5)
- Salvation for the nations (5:5-9)

Two Applications:

#1: Avoid “over-realized eschatology” (4:3-4)

- No war/ or believing we should have nothing but prosperity now
- Instead, we have War time simplicity now

#2: Avoid “under realized eschatology” (5:5)

- “We have no hope!” **Wrong**

3. Cycle 3 (6:1-7:6 // 7:7-20)

6:1-7:6, Judgment Against Israel

- Several short sayings contrasting sin with the simplicity of pleasing God through covenant faithfulness (**6:8**)

7:7-20, Salvation for Israel (Read)

- One must wait for salvation (v. 7)
- Judgment had to proceed salvation (v. 9)

- The enemy would ultimately be destroyed (v. 10)
- All nations would enjoy God's salvation (v. 12)
- Future salvation was as sure as past salvation because God is faithful to his promises and because he is gracious (v. 14-20)

Micah's message is similar to all other prophets: judgment and mercy.

- **God deals with everyone with either deserved judgment or undeserved grace.**
- **Sometimes its long doom, and short word of hope; other times it's a long word of hope and short word of doom.** God will judge, but God will save.

#2: Micah's Example

A. Micah's Power (3:8)

- Filled with the **Spirit** (NT references)
- With **Justice** (**He tells it straight**, like the others)
 - The test of a preacher's faithfulness is the willingness to speak truth when people don't want to hear it.
- With **Might** (**Courage**)
- These are the ingredients for faithfulness in a broken world: **Spirit's power; be a person of justice; and be courageous.**

B. Micah's Passion (1:8)

Micah, like Jesus, and the OT prophets, he expressed great **emotion**...

- **1:8; - Stripped naked, howling like a jackel! Church growth idea!**
- **He wasn't British!**
- **You gotta love the prophets! They were all different.**
- It was his way of expressing deep emotion and mourning...

C. Micah's Perseverance

- **Jer 26:16-19** records the effect of Micah's preaching during the days of Hezekiah.
- **Jeremiah was about to be killed, about a hundred years after Micah prophesied, and someone remembers the remarkable impact of Micah's preaching.**

¹⁶ Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man does not deserve the sentence of death, for he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God." ¹⁷ And certain of the elders of the land arose and spoke to all the assembled people, saying, ¹⁸ "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: 'Thus says the LORD of hosts,

" 'Zion shall be plowed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.' [Micah 3:12]

¹⁹ Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and entreat the favor of the LORD, and did not the LORD relent of the disaster that he had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great disaster upon ourselves."

- **Someone says, Hey don't kill Jeremiah! Remember Micah!**
- **What they were referring to was how the preaching of Micah about the impending judgment of God bore fruit during the days of Hezekiah** (2 Kings 18-20).
- The Sennacherib crisis was avoided as Hezekiah turned to the Lord for help.
- God slew 185,000 soldiers to save the Hezekiah's city.
- The elders were counseling that people should listen to Jeremiah, like the people had listened to Micah.

Micah preached for at least 16 years in Ahaz's reign without seeing any real fruit, but his preaching did bear fruit during Hezekiah's day!

- **Let that encourage you!**
- **"Hezekiah's reformation was due to the preaching of Micah"** (A.F. Kirkpatrick).
- **His ministry reminds us of the need for Christian perseverance.**
- **One person really can make a difference.**
- Your roots are irrelevant: Micah; Amos; John the Baptist; Elijah
 - **Can anything good come from Nazareth?**
 - **Are these not all Galileans?**
- What matters is faithfulness to God.
- What matters is **your view of God.**
- What matters is the power of God and the truth of God.
- Micah – the country prophet, his preaching changed history.
- **We must not grow weary in well doing.**
- **Keep preaching! Keep being faithful!**

#3: Micah's Exhortation (6:1-8)

Covenant faithfulness consists not in empty ritual, but in three proper expressions of love: justice, mercy, and humility.

We often point to three motivations for doing justice: creation, redemption [his grace and mercy], and new creation.

Creation

- People are created in God's image, therefore worthy of dignity and love.
- To dishonor a human being is to dishonor his or her Maker.
- This is implied throughout Micah: "Yahweh" and with the rebuke for treating people inhumanly. (see 3:1-3)

God's Redeeming Grace and the New Creation (6:1-5)

Micah 6:3 – two questions followed by three examples of God's redeeming grace...

Example 1: Micah 6:4

- **Remember the Exodus:** “I brought you up out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery... you may know the saving acts of God.”
- **Not only did God redeem, but he also gave them leaders.**

Examples 2: Micah 6:5a

- **Remember Balak and Balaam** (Num 22–24), a story which reminds the Israelites that the Lord longs to bless rather than curse them.
 - Balaak the king of Moab felt threatened by Israel so he tried to get the prophet Balaam to curse Israel, but the Lord would only give Balaam words of blessing, and prophecies about eschatological and Messianic salvation.

Example 3: Micah 6:5b

- **Remember the crossing the Jordan**
- Shittim was the last place Israel camped before crossing the Jordan; Gilgal the first place they camped after crossing.
- The point: God was faithful then; God was gracious
- God was giving a new land.

Now we say, **“Remember the gospel!”**

- You have been delivered from worse bondage than to that of Pharaoh!
- You have a God who longs to bless you, greater than the days in Balaam.
- The Promise Land was a type, a foreshadowing, of the new creation to come, which God will give you!

What will motivate a life of justice and mercy?

- **Grace.**
- **Redemption.**
- **Vision of New creation.**
- **Guilt won't motivate – it's not a big enough engine to fuel a life of sustained faithfulness.**
- **Grace will.**
- Those who have been freed from **slavery**, through Jesus Christ, are to be about freeing people from slavery!
- Those that know they were **orphans** before God adopted them, will care for the orphan;
- Those that marvel at God's grace in taking them from **sojourners** to kingdom citizens, will care about the sojourner
- The person that knows they were the **widow**, when Jesus Christ became their all sufficient groom, will seek to bring joy to the widow's heart.

What motivates obedience; faithfulness; justice is the gospel.

- This is how the **10 Commandments begin (Ex 20) – redemption, then obey.**

- A failure to care for the least, the last, and the lost, reveals that a person hasn't begun to have the gospel worked down into their hearts.
- People who stand in awe of the mercy of God, show mercy to others.
- **“Be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful.”**
- **The more I understand the grace of God, the more generous I become, the more hospitable I become, the more merciful I become, selfless I become.**

Micah helps us to dwell on the gospel as the power for faithfulness

In the **background** of verses 3-5, is a glorious vision of the New Creation (5:2-5)

- He **“will be our peace.”**
- Isaiah tells us that He will bring justice to the nations. (Isa 42)

In the **Foreground** of verses 3-5 is a glorious vision of God's grace, forgiveness, compassion, the crushing of our sin into the dirt, casting our sins into the depth of the sea (7:18-20)

Apply this good news to your heart and it will radically shape how you see the world.

Justice, Mercy, & Humility (6:6-8)

Read 6-7 – What does the Lord desire from us?

- These sacrifices? No. **Remember Amos 5:21-24.**
- Empty Ritual? No.
- What is the appropriate response to God's grace to us? **Faithfulness.**
 - God wants us – our lives (**Rom 12:1-2**)

Jesus was likely alluding to this verse in Matthew 23

²³ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have **neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness.** These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. ²⁴ You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! (**Matt 23:23-24**)
(Luke 11:42, “You neglected 'justice and the love of God'")

Micah's text was clearly rooted in Deuteronomy 10:12ff.

- You can see the intertextual link between these two passages based on the wording; and by looking at Deut 10 we can see a bit of what Micah had in mind when he spoke of doing justice.

Deuteronomy 10

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am

commanding you today for your good? ¹⁴ Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. ¹⁵ Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. ¹⁶ Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. ¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. ¹⁸ He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. ¹⁹ Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. ²⁰ You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. ²¹ He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen. ²² Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.

A. Justice

Misphat – used some 200 times in the OT

In Deuteronomy, Justice involves not showing favoritism, not taking bribes, giving justice to orphans, widows, strangers.

It is a broad term that elsewhere involves...

- Having personal integrity.
- Treating people fairly.
- Using your influence for those who have no influence
- Giving People their rights
- Having right relationships.

B. Mercy/Kindness

Kindness/mercy/faithfulness, **Chesed**.

To freely and willingly show kindness and goodness to others.

- Notice that we are **“love it”** (Micah 7:18)
- **It really speaks to the attitude of works of justice.** These are not two separate things.
- **Exodus 34:6** – As a description of the Character of God
- **Prov 3:3** shows us how to do it... Let it become part of your nature (3b). "Put it around your neck." In other words, don't forget it. Put it in your heart.
- **“Wearing Justice” Job 29:14**
- **Boaz.** God showed his mercy *through Boaz to Ruth* (2:20), just as he desires to show it through us.
- Live with a sensitivity to the needs around you:
 - Supporting the single mother
 - Bringing joy to the widow's heart.
 - Caring for orphans
 - Feeding the hungry
 - Praying with the dying
 - Freeing the enslaved
 - Giving medical care to the diseased

- Helping the unemployed
- Visiting prisoners
- Welcoming sojourners
- Counseling the abused
- Comforting the grieving
- Serving the elderly
- Caring for the mentally ill
- Tutoring the underprivileged
- Ministering to juvenile delinquents
- Caring for the disabled
- Welcoming internationals
- Ministering to the addicted
- Aiding victims of disaster
- Reforming broken social structures
- Doing after care for rescued victims of trafficking
- Fighting child labor, child pornography, and child prostitution
- Seeking racial reconciliation
- Planting Churches! (A work of justice)
- Equipping Leaders to continue the work!
- Creating ministries to do this work
 - **Acts 6:4 – they didn't neglect the problems!**
- Praying

C. Humility

This is not the usual word for “humility” but seems to carry the idea of being humble in the sense of being attentive, careful and wise.

- **Walk under the Lord's will.**
- **Micah is warning against doing things your own way!**
- **He is warning against living carelessly.**
- **We pursue holiness by gazing on the glory of our God.**

Humility is epiphenomenal, a secondary phenomenon that arises out of a primary phenomenon.

- **We walk humbly, wisely, attentively, as we gaze on the beauty of Jesus Christ, our Messiah.**
- **The one who was humble.**
- **The one who was mindful of the least of these.**
- **The one who was mindful of us.**
- **The one who had all glory, not some bootleg glory, yet humbled himself for the good of those who could not save themselves.**

Jesus Christ did Micah 6:8 perfectly.

- **He died for those who have not.**

- **He forgives us from all our injustice.**
- **He makes us new, and empowers us to do justice and mercy.**
- **He promises to come and make all things new, as he rules forever.**

Who is like our God? Micah asks. Answer? No one.

Lest we ever wonder, we merely look to the cross and see how God has God has

- **Pardoned our iniquity**
- **Passed over our transgression**
- **Had compassion on us**
- **Stomped our iniquities in the ground**
- **Cast our sins into the depth of the sea**

May this good news motivate us to be a people who are known for doing good deeds of justice and mercy, and who proclaim the good news of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The One who is himself, our peace.