

Bible Study Series

Topic: Hearing Gospel Texts Today with Jesus

Aim: To examine how Jesus uses the Jewish Scriptures in the Gospels and how Christians may hear those texts today as a call to faithful and holy living.

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, open our hearts, minds, and imaginations as we study your Word. Help us hear the Scriptures as Jesus heard them, receive the challenge of your truth, and respond with faithfulness, justice, mercy, and humble obedience. Guide our conversation and shape our lives by your Spirit. Amen.

Questions as Learning Tools

- What could Jewish scriptures mean in itself?
- What are to grasp in the First (OLD) Testament imagination?
- How does Jesus interpret text in relation to his mission and message?
- How can Christians hear and imagine Jesus' call to Holy living?

Lesson One: Micah 7:6 used in Matthew 10:34-36

Lesson Questions

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Hearing Micah in Its Own Setting

The book of Micah presents a prophet decrying the covenant community's unfaithfulness to God. Both Northern and Southern Israel struggled to live into their divine calling: showing God's mercy and justice among their own people and before the world. Micah identifies Israel's sins, especially idolatry, injustice, and spiritual arrogance.

Scripture Reading: Micah 1:5-7 (CEB)

All this is for the crime of Jacob and the sins of the house of Israel. Who is responsible for the crime of Jacob? Isn't it Samaria? Who is responsible for the shrines of Judah? Isn't it Jerusalem? So I will make Samaria a pile of rubble in the open field, a place for planting vineyards. I will pour her stones into the valley; her foundations I will lay bare. All her images will be beaten to pieces; all her wages will be burned; I will make all

her idols worthless. Since she gathered them from the wages of a prostitute, they will again become wages of a prostitute.

God is about to correct and purify the community. Judgment will come through the threat of Assyria against the leaders and cities of Samaria and Jerusalem. God demands social justice, yet the people live with spiritual arrogance.

- Micah 2:1-5 suggests that oppressors will themselves be ruined.
- Micah 2:6-11 describes the unwillingness of leaders to listen to God's word.
- Micah 2:12-13 notes that false prophets' message of "peace" will not save the leaders from destruction.
- Micah 6:8 declares that God requires the people "to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God."

Scripture Reading: Micah 7:1-7 (CEB)

I'm doomed! I've become like one who, even after the summer fruit has been gathered, after the ripened fruits have been collected, has no cluster of grapes to eat, no ripe fig that I might desire. Faithful ones have perished from the land; there is no righteous one among humanity. All of them lie in wait for bloodshed; they hunt each other with nets. Their hands are skilled at doing evil. Official and judge alike ask for a bribe; the powerful speak however they like; this is how they conspire. The good among them are like a briar; those who do the right thing are like a thorny thicket. A day for your lookouts! Your punishment has arrived. The confusion of the wicked is nearby. Don't rely on a friend; put no trust in a companion; guard the doors of your mouth from she who lies in your embrace. Son disrespects father; a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; the

enemies of a man are those of his own household. But me! I will keep watch for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.

By chapter 7, the corruption of Israel has moved toward self-destruction. The prophet laments the loss of faithfulness and fair relations in community. No one can be trusted. Yet Micah's lament does not end in despair: the prophet keeps watch for the Lord and waits for the God of salvation.

Micah 7:8-20 gives assurance that God's future for the people will be grounded in compassion, forgiveness, and the promises made to the ancestors.

Micah's message moves between judgment and hope. It names the community's sin honestly while still looking for a renewed and faithful people after destruction.

Hearing Micah with Jesus in Matthew

Matthew 10:34-39 is a difficult text. It follows the mission and commissioning of the twelve disciples and comes within Jesus' long evangelistic speech. Jesus names the community realities that may arise because of the gospel message. Faithfulness to Jesus may expose deep divisions, even within the family.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 10:34-39 (CEB)

"Don't think that I've come to bring peace to the earth. I haven't come to bring peace but a sword. I've come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a

daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. People's enemies are members of their own households. Those who love father or mother more than me aren't worthy of me. Those who love son or daughter more than me aren't worthy of me. Those who don't pick up their crosses and follow me aren't worthy of me. Those who find their lives will lose them, and those who lose their lives because of me will find them."

Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus mean when he says that he has not come to bring peace but a sword?
2. How is Jesus' use of Micah similar to or different from Micah's original setting in the Hebrew Scriptures?
3. How can Christians hear Jesus' call to holy living when the gospel creates tension, conflict, or costly discipleship?

Prayer:

Lord teach us how to live truthfully with you and with our neighbors in establishing your rule in our hearts.
Amen.