

Micah 7
I Can't Out Sin the Grace and Mercy of God
Pastor JD Farag

KAPONO: Praise the Lord. Would you join me as we pray? Heavenly Father, Well, one thing we know, one fact, Lord, that we do know is others can't see Jesus in us if we don't have Your living word living, breathing in us, Lord. So how important it is that we can gather together on a Thursday night and be filled with Your living word.

So would You teach us this evening, Lord? Holy Spirit, lead us, guide us, and give us understanding. And be with Pastor JD. Give him the strength and the courage, as You always do, to deliver Your word. In Jesus' name we pray name. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and Amen. Good evening to you all and welcome. You can be seated. So glad you came tonight. Those of you online, we're glad that you're joining us tonight as well. Before we jump in, though, to our study, I want to mention that this upcoming Tuesday, which is the 4th at 7:00 p.m., we're going to have our prayer meeting. So I really encourage you to come and join with us if you're able. I know you'll be blessed if you do. It's always a blessing as a church coming together and praying together.

And I have a smudge on my glasses, so excuse me for a moment here. You could pray for the smudge on my glasses is what we need to do. All right. Guess what? We are — oh, you're trying to guess. (Chuckling) We're going to finish Micah tonight, *Chapter 7*. And Lord willing, next week, we're going to begin our study in the *Book of Nahum*, a short, three-chapter book, but boy, is it packed. That's next week. It's still this week, so Micah, *Chapter 7*.

I have to preface this last chapter here in Micah by letting you know that it's going to start off rough and tough, but you guys can handle it. But it will end off wondrously and gloriously. Why? Because of God's grace and God's mercy. So I hope you know by now that whenever I put a title on a verse-by-verse teaching expositionally of God's word, it's synonymous with the takeaway, the theme.

Now there's so much here in this chapter. But the main takeaway, if I can say it that way, is the reason I chose this title of 'I Can't Out Sin the Grace and Mercy of God.' I love what the Apostle Paul, by the Spirit, says. **“Where did sin abound there did grace much more abound.”**

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As we're about to see, this is what God, through the prophet Micah will bring about in the end with His forgiveness and His compassion and His longsuffering and His patience, and the list goes on and on and on. But again, it's going to start off — let me just say it like this — it's going to get ugly. But God.

I hope that when it's all said and done and we go our separate ways, we take away this one simple and potentially life-changing truth. God forgives all my sin, and I can't out sin His grace and His mercy. I can try.

The Israelites did a pretty good job, Southern Judah, especially the Northern Tribes, which had pretty much at this point already sealed their fate because Micah's prophesying to both, but principally to Southern Judah, using the Northern Tribes, the Northern Kingdom, as an example to learn from what fate would befall them. What fate would befall them? They would be taken captive by the Assyrian Empire and the Northern Kingdom of Israel would never again return. That was the last of the Northern Tribes of Israel. It would, as we're going to see, become one nation again, not split in two.

So I think we need to pray first because especially to get through this first part, which I'll do my best to get through and gut through to get to the good part. And isn't that how it is in our lives, by the way? Sometimes you just gotta go through the bad stuff to get to the good. The bad precedes the good. Let's pray.

Father, I — there's so much here, and this chapter is just wondrous and glorious. But it doesn't start that way. And we readily admit that we need for your Holy Spirit to, as Kapono just prayed, be our guide as we navigate our way through this last chapter here in Micah.

There's so much here, and unless the Holy Spirit just quickens our heart so that our hearts are supple to receive what it is that You have for us, unless our ears are open to hear and not just hear, but take heed, and unless our eyes are open to see, then our time together tonight in Your word is going to be a waste of time. And I don't think there's a one of us here or online that wants that. That's why we're here. We're here to hear You speak. So Lord, will You speak? Your servants are listening. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right. You ready? *Verse 1.* Told you. **“Woe is me!...”**

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Didn't they write a song? Isn't that a song? Woe is me; Micah says This is a lamentation like that of Jeremiah. In fact, that the similarities are striking, the parallels between the Lamentations written by Jeremiah, by the Spirit, and this lamentation. He is mourning, he is lamenting.

“Woe is me! [And he says] For I am like those who gather summer fruits, like those who glean vintage grapes; [But]there is no cluster to eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires.”

What he's saying here, of course, metaphorically, figuratively, symbolically represents the barrenness, the fruitlessness of God's people. There's no fruit. And is it not true? And this is what's going to come, I think, leaping off the pages of our Bibles and this chapter is what sin does, what sin brings. Fruitlessness. Barrenness.

And he goes from fruitlessness and barrenness to faithlessness in *verse 2*. Listen to this.

“The faithful man has perished from the earth. And there is no one upright among men. [It was so bad, Micah says, that] They all lie in wait for blood; [They had a blood lust] [And] every man hunts his brother with the net.”

These are God's people killing their own brethren. And try to find a faithful man. He's gone. Try to find an upright man among them. There are none. You'll find none. But here's what you will find. You'll find bloodthirsty men that are hunting and killing and shedding the blood of their own brothers. And it gets worse.

Verse 3. This is quite picturesque. **“That they may successfully [They were succeeding at] doing evil with both hands—”**

You know, sometimes you can, you know, remember when you learned to ride a bike, and you could ride the bike with one hand? (Chuckling) No, they need two hands; they had — it's like Micah is saying they had both hands in doing this evil. And not only were they using both hands, implying effort and work, they were succeeding at it. What were they succeeding at in doing this evil with both hands?

[Well] **“...the prince [The ruler] asks for gifts. [How much you going to pay me?] The judge seeks a bribe. [You want justice?] [I can be bought, you know] And the great man utters his**

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evil desire, [And if that were bad enough, the end of verse 3 says] so they schemed together."

Oh, my goodness! They're all in on this together. What did they do, have a meeting where they all had a — they sat around the boardroom table, and "Hey, how much you getting now for bribes? How much you getting paid off to do what people are asking you to do? And by the way, what kind of stuff are you doing? Because, you know, I'm open to some new ideas and suggestions."

They were conspiring together. They were in on it together. Boy, some of this — and I'm sorry to say this and I hate to say this, but I have to say this. This *Chapter 7* in the *Book of Micah* could be written for us today. And you know what I'm talking about, right? The corruption was so bad.

And *verse 4*, "**The best of them [This is the cream of the crop] The best of them is like a brier.**" You know what a brier is, right? I mean, it's a leafless, fruitless, you know, thorny. And then even worse, "**...the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge...**" on your wife's bougainvilleas that you have to trim.

No, for real. I had to have a talk with my wife. I'm all scarred from — this one up here, you know, the mark on my forehead. I didn't get an implant. But it's starting to heal. Thank you, God! But I got, you know, I still got scars from those thorns.

You know bougainvillea? They are beautiful flowers, but they have ugly thorns. And those things, man, once they get into you, I mean, they just lacerate you. Anyway, enough of my problems. Back to Micah and his, again, picturesque description of the corruption that was rampant throughout Judah.

Think about this. Just think this through. Let this sink in, *verse 4*, the best of them was like the brier. And you found someone that you deem to be the most upright among all of them, and even they were sharper than a bougainvillea. I'm sorry; just — I just — I love the flowers. I hate the thorns, the same thing with roses, too, by the way. "**The day of your watchman and your punishment comes; now shall be their perplexity.**"

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In other words, all that Micah is prophesying and saying in all of his lamenting is going to completely catch them by surprise. They're going to be perplexed, puzzled. What? Why are we being judged? Why is God going to judge us? What did we do? This is what sin does.

You got a sermon in a can with the account of Samson. You remember Samson, who you know, had supernatural strength? By the way, it wasn't — so guys, don't grow your hair long thinking you're going to have — it wasn't that. It was a symbolic idiom, if you will, for lack of a better word, of the blessing of God and the strength of God supernaturally on Samson's life. So he's never to cut his hair.

So when Delilah finally got it out of him, that that was the secret, they cut his hair, and his strength was gone. And he was completely — when he woke up, completely surprised, completely caught off guard. Why? Three-point sermon for anyone that wants a sermon in a can, ready-made. Stick it in the microwave. Two minutes. Sin blinds. Sin binds. Sin grinds. That's the story of Samson.

I mean, they ended well in the end when his strength came back and there was a coming back to the Lord. But it was — he was playing games. And he started getting a little bit full of himself too. And he was completely perplexed. But that's what sin does. It blinds you. That's the first thing it does, actually.

You know what they did with Samson, right? I don't want to be graphic, but they — they poked out his eyes and blinded him. He was blind for the rest of his life. And sin does that. It doesn't just make us fruitless and faithless. It also blinds and binds us and then grinds us. One last time. It also hurts really bad. It cuts us like a thorn on a bougainvillea.

Anyway, *verse 5*. This gets even worse. We'll get through this. How are you doing so far? Okay? All right. I mean, the sins of the people were, I mean, unthinkable, unspeakable. It was so bad that Micah, *verse 5*, would say, **“Do not trust in a friend; [You can't trust anybody] do not put your confidence in a companion...”**

Better understood as a guide or a leader, even a pastor/ You can't you can't put your confidence in man. You can't trust them. They're all corrupt. They're going to lead you astray. That friends going to turn on you and turn you in when he turns on you.

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“Guard the doors of your mouth. [Watch this one] [This one's... ouch] from her who lies in your bosom.”

That's the wife, man. In other words, be careful what you say to your wife because you can't even trust her. That's what sin does. It destroys trust. It destroys relationships. It destroys marriages. Can you imagine? You can't speak any truth or righteousness. Guard the doors of your mouth. Do not allow yourself, as hard as it may be, to speak truth to your wife because you can't trust her.

Jesus quotes, by the way, *verse 6*. I think it's in *Matthew's gospel, Chapter 10*. I'm probably wrong. I usually am. **“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.”**

Wait a minute. This is family we're talking about. You mean to tell me that the sin was so bad against God that nobody trusted anybody, not even people in your own family? Yeah. That's bad. How's this one? Sin destroys families, children, parent-child relationship, father-son, father-daughter, mother-son, mother-daughter, even the in-laws. They become outlaws.

And I almost don't want it to sink in, but it needs to sink in, this last part of *verse 6*. It's worthy of repeating because this is pretty strong. Don't miss the strength with which Micah, inspired by the Spirit, writes this. **“A man's enemies are the men of his own household.”** You're sleeping with the enemy! You're having dinner with the enemy. When you go home, in your house, they're your enemies. It was that bad.

Never, ever, ever underestimate the consequences of sin. The pleasure of sin lasts only for a season, but it ends in bitterness. The pleasure of sin lingers on, the consequences of sin lingers on longer than the pleasure of sin ever will.

Verse 7. Now Micah turns a corner here. Thank you. And he says this is so messed up, man. That's a loose paraphrase. There's no way to fix this. There's no way to repair this. The damage is irreparable. This family has been torn to shreds. Forget the government, the leaders, the priests, the pastors, the judges. They're all corrupt, and they're all in on it together.

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So what are you going to do? You can't look to them to fix this. No man can fix that. Now, don't miss this. Because this is what God will often do in our lives. He'll — I think it's the Proverbs; could be the Psalms. **“Some trust in horses, some trust in chariots. But I will trust in the Lord my God.”** I will put my trust in no man. He who puts — David would pen it in the Psalms — his trust in the Lord will never be disappointed. You can't trust anyone. So what are you going to do?

Sometimes in that state of affairs, when things are so corrupt and the sin is so deep, it's almost the catalyst. You know what I mean by catalyst? It's that which is needed to get us to get our eyes off man, Putting our trust in man, looking to man, and instead look to the Lord because He's the only one that can fix this.

I think about our country. I want to be careful. (Chuckling) Why start now? I want to be, I actually prayed about this prior, but I think you know judgment begins in the house of God, the church of Christ first, the leaders, the ones that are held to a higher account. And I oftentimes wonder to myself and ponder and muse and inquire of the Lord concerning this matter of putting one's trust in man to fix that which only God can.

Listen to what Micah says in *verse 7*. **“Therefore I will look to the Lord.”**

I can't look anywhere else. I look over here, and I got a — okay, last time — I got a bougainvillea bush with thorns just waiting to cut me and make me bleed. And that's the best, the most upright ones. The best of them are like the briars. When I go to shake the tree, the figs, you know, just to get the first ripe fruits, you know, you shake them three times, and the ones, they fall, and you eat them, and you're nourished. And I've done that, and there's nothing.

So I can't look to that. I can't look to them. I can't look to this. I can't look to that. So what am I going to look to? The Lord. I think that sometimes God will bring us to that place where we reach the end of ourselves, and that's a good thing.

Because see, sometimes we put our trust in our own selves, in our own strength, our own savvy. And then he says this. And I want to, if you'll indulge me, I want to kind of explain and expound what he says next. He says, I will — he says, **“Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; My God will hear me.”**

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Indulge me. It's like Micah is saying I can't wait to see what God's good to. Because you guys, this is this is messed up. You guys messed this up so bad. I can't wait to see what God's going to do. I'm looking to Him. I'm waiting on Him. I'm trusting in Him. I'm praying to Him. And He'll hear me.

I wish — you know how you can — you can't get the tone, you know, when you're reading something. Because it's not what you say. It's how you say what you say. And that could change the whole complexion of what you're saying. That's why emails sometimes can get messy and misunderstood. And then you gotta make, you know, compose another email to clarify. And then they have to clarify that clarification that you have to clarify that they clarified. And then you try to call them.

Well, now that's a little better because at least you got some voice inflection and tone. You know, you can tell by the tone. And they've done research on this. But there's nothing like being there eyeball to eyeball, belly to belly. For me, it's belly to belly.

And I would have just loved to have been a fly on a camel nearby because it was almost like just wait. My God is going to have the final word because I'm going to Him with this. I'm looking to Him for this. I'm waiting on Him for my salvation because you guys aren't gonna save this. This is beyond that point. It's past the point of no return.

Now it's interesting because he says, **“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.”**

Now this is speaking really of the enemies of Israel who were gloating at the fall of Southern Judah and certainly the coming fall of the Northern Tribes, the Northern Kingdom. And then he says, *verse 9*; now this is what I believe was different about Micah when compared to the other prophets. I'm not saying better than or none of that. I'm just saying that he was personal. He was real. And he was honest.

And, you know, by the way, they hearkened unto the prophet Micah, not Isaiah, which some have referred to the *Book of Micah* as a miniature Book of Isaiah. And there's a lot of quotes in Micah from Isaiah and quotes from Isaiah in Micah. So the question is, who's plagiarizing who? They were contemporaries.

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But I mean Isaiah, major prophet, not because he's better and minor prophet — don't think of it like that — minor in terms of smaller in their writings, in their prophecies. Major because of the volume of their prophecies. So don't think minor is synonymous with inferior. It's not. In fact, he's kind of an unsung hero because he actually succeeded.

And I think the — if you'll forgive me borrowing back a phrase the world stole from us, of which there are many, the secret to his success was he was very real, very honest, very personal. And I picture him as having a very tender heart.

He says, *verse 9*, **“I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against Him.”**

Now that is a prophet of God. That is a true pastor and shepherd of God's flock. I'm a sinner. We've all sinned. I hope I never, and if I ever do, I hope you love me enough to call me out on it. I hope I never stand behind this pulpit and speak in a condescending way, like I have arrived. You..... You're looking at me, like, wow, man. He's almost reached a state of sinlessness and perfection. Are you kidding me?

How about the Apostle Paul? This is a study. I would really encourage you if you're interested. You'll be so immensely blessed if you do. You start off with Paul's earlier epistles, Paul the Apostle because that was brought into question “called by Christ.” That's who deputized and authorized me to be an apostle, called out one, the Apostle Paul. And God chooses the foolish things to confound the wise, as he would write to the Christians.

But he starts off, “the apostle of Christ.” You get to the end of his life, “chief of sinners.” Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. This is the same guy we're talking about? Yeah. See, this is what happens as you grow in grace, you mature in Christ. What should be the fruit of that is meekness and humility and honesty and transparency. I'm the chief of sinners. No, you're the Apostle Paul! It also makes you want to go back to those first epistles because this is the Apostle Paul! And now: chief of sinners. No, no.

What happened to Apostle Paul? Did you take that off your business card? You know what pastor, shepherd, bondservant, bondservant, doulas in the Greek? Under-shepherd. You know, the corporate world it's backwards. It's upside down. The corporate structure: You're the CEO at the top. And then you got the, you know, people under him.

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No, that's an organization. The church is an organism. It is a living body of believers. We're all different parts of the same body. And the pastor isn't at the top looking down on you talking death — do I do that? I just did, but that was for illustration purposes. You know, looking down on you because after all, I'm the pastor. I'm not worthy. I'm not worthy.

That's actually one of the reasons why I'm uncomfortable and still to this day, after all these years in ministry with the title “pastor” because of the stigma of it. It's like you, you create this chasm between the clergy and the laity. Oh, you're the pastor. Yeah, you know what that means? You take that corporate structure. I'm gonna get in trouble for this. This is not a masonic symbol. In fact, I'm not even going to do it now. I'm just gonna let you use your imagination.

I'm under at the bottom, under-rower under-shepherd. I'm not at the top. I'm at the bottom. Chief of sinners. I'm the under-shepherd, the under-rower, the doulos, the bondservant who of his own volition, who loved his master as a slave, would bound themselves to the master, and they would be marked with an ear piercing so that you knew, hey, that slave serves a loving master. He's a doulos in the Greek, a bondservant. He was free. His debt was paid. He could have gone, but he wanted to stay. He chose to stay. Why?

Because my master is a good master. And He loves me. And I love Him. I don't want to go anywhere. So they would become a bondservant. And Paul even uses that wording, a bondservant of Christ. I was going to go somewhere with this, but... You know, my staff will tell you that when it comes to titles, we don't even have job descriptions. I hope that you don't think differently of me and us and the leadership and the staff, but we just we don't. You know, it's not, you know, there's not — it's not a pecking order or hierarchy. It's just we're a family. We're a team. We're co-laborers in Christ.

And so I jokingly, tongue in cheek, of course, you know, when it comes to cards, which are obsolete now, aren't they? Aren't they not cards, but codes now you scan? I don't know. Forehead or something, or forehead? I don't know. Those — everything is a scan now. And so you give someone a card, they go, what's that? Oh, it's a business card. No, just, you scan it on your phone, and I'll get all your information. So, but you have the title.

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I was thinking about it. It just says "Pastor." But it doesn't say "Senior Pastor." In fact, I think I might have — and I have asked for God to forgive me. "Founding pastor." Oh, ho, ho, ho. Founding pastor? Wow! No. I think you know what? On my card or code — whatever you want — it should say, "Bondslave." That's my title. Under-shepherd. Servant of the Most High God. Bondslave to my master, Jesus Christ. How's that for a title? Well, that — it won't fit on a card. It will fit in a code, I think. I think you can put a lot of stuff in there. Let's move on. Some of you are saying please.

He's confessing his own sin. That takes humility. The lost art in the last days church today: Humility. The Proverbs say humility is the beginning of wisdom. I know I said we're going to move on, but we will. This is a — I feel like the Holy Spirit's prompting me. This is for somebody maybe here or online or both.

Let me put it in this context. Have you ever had an argument with somebody that was humbling themselves and saying they were sorry? I think about marriage conflict, marital conflict. And of course, you know, the pastor and wife have a perfect marriage. So I'm speaking in the theoretical realm. We don't call them arguments as a pastor and wife. We call them, as one said, intense fellowship.

So I just wonder how long would those silent treatments go, or how long or how bad would those arguments be if one would just humble themselves and say, you know what, I was wrong. I am sorry. Three hard words. I am sor... (Struggling to say "Sorry") I was wro... (Struggling to say "Wrong")

And how are you going to — how's the argument going to keep going? I mean, you just put water on that fire. It's going out.

Now, there are two words that I used to say to couples, whether pre-marriage or post-marriage, that they needed to remove from their vocabulary. You want to know what those two words are? "Never" and "always." You never... Fill in the blank. You always... Fill in the blank. I tell you what. You get rid of those two words because they are fighting words, and you can't continue arguing or fighting with somebody that has humbled themselves and admitted they were wrong.

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“I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. [He's talking about Himself, and in a sense, he's talking about his people] He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness. [Now, verse 10, he continues] [He says] Then she who is my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, ‘Where is the Lord your God [Now]?’”

I added the “now,” again because you miss the flavor of it, the intensity, the emotion in it. How, how snarky and snotty — there's other words; I won't use them — is this? Where's the — where's your God now? He goes on.

He says, **“My eyes will see her; now she will be trampled down like mud in the streets. [Verse 11] In the day when your walls are to be built, in that day the decree shall go far and wide. In that day [Verse 12] 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.”**

Wait, what? This is another dual prophecy; had a near fulfillment and it spoke of a yet future fulfillment in the Kingdom Age. The decree to rebuild the walls — not the temple — was with Nehemiah and Ezra.

But then *verse 12* is a dual prophecy, a restoring of, a rebuilding of, but it also so fast forwards to the Millennium, the Kingdom Age in that day. **“Yet [When they return] [The near-fulfillment prophecy] the land shall be desolate [Why?] because of those who dwell in it, and for the fruit of their deeds.”**

Stop right there because we're about, in *verse 14*, to enter into the most eloquent and magnificent prayer of Micah to his God, to whom he looks and trusts. Sin brings desolation. Sin brings destruction. The fruit of their deeds, their sinful deeds, that's the reason for the desolation? Yeah. I often wonder if we really thought through past the temptation of sin's temporal pleasure to the long-lasting consequences of sin's destruction. It could really change how we behave, what we do, what we say Listen to this beautiful prayer.

Oh, .I mean, it's just marvelous. He's praying now to the Lord. **“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. “As in the days [Verse 15]**

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when you came out of the land of Egypt, [And then the response from the Lord] I will show them wonders."

Wait, so he prays in *verse 14*, and God answers in *verse 15*? Yeah. I love it when God does that. I love it when God answers my *verse 14* prayer with *verse 15* in my life What's this? What's up with Bashan and Gilead? Oh, the most fertile land in Israel.

Well, what's in the midst of Carmel? The most fertile land. Right now they're dwelling in solitary confinement, barren, fruitless, faithless, desolate. O Lord, shepherd Your people again. They're Your people. They're not mine.

Remember the argument? Well, not really argument, but the discussion, the dialog, better said, between Moses and God when, you know, the Israelites were always complaining and Moses was like — you know, it's like a parent — you know, "here you need to take care of your son." "Oh, he's my son now. Oh, I thought he was ours."

Here's Moses and God going back and forth and going, you know, Moses says, they're Your people. And God says, No, they're not. They're your people. They're not My people. They're yours. (Arguing sounds) They're not my people!

And they go back and forth like a mother and a father with their kids. Every time our kids do something good, it comes from my wife's side of the family, so I'm told. These are Your people. These are flock of Your heritage. And they're dwelling in solitary confinement. Be their shepherd again. Feed them again. Do for them again what You did for them in the past. You're the same God yesterday, today, and forever.

And isn't it interesting that God's response is almost like a default. We saw it before. Remember the short history lesson that God gave them in the previous chapter? He always goes to the Exodus and the deliverance out of slavery in Egypt, which was an absolute miracle. The crossing of the Red sea on dry ground. And what God is saying in response to Micah's magnificent prayer is **"I will."** I will.

Did you catch those first two words towards the end of *verse 15*? I will. **"I will show them wonders. [Verse 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. [I like this part] [This is pretty intense] They shall lick the dust like a serpent; [You got to say that with a growl] they shall crawl**

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from their holes like snakes of the earth. They shall be afraid of the Lord our God and shall fear because of You."

Okay. Did you catch that? Okay, so they're going to mock you and rejoice when they see you taken captive by the Babylonians. 70 years are going to go by, and I'm going to restore you, bring you back into the land. You're going to rebuild the walls, rebuild the city, and I'll be your shepherd, and the land will be fertile. And that's going to happen again in 1948. And it's going to happen again at the Second Coming and in the Millennium.

And all those people that were rejoicing over your fall, I'm going to make them so ashamed. They're going to become like slithering serpents licking the dust. That's pretty low. **"They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth."** I'm pretty sure this is nobody's life verse. Anybody? This is one of those memorization verses, you know, but it should be. But why? The why question is answered. The why is because they're going to see what You, Lord God did, and they are going to tremble in fear because of You.

Verse 18. Now here it comes. Oh man! The best for last. The best is yet to come. I know there's more sayings, but I won't torment you with them. *Verse 18*, and this is the — this is replete throughout Micah. **"Who is a God like You..."** Who is Your equal? Who is like unto You O Lord? There is none like You. **"...pardoning iniquity..."** What God does that? Who does that? And pay careful attention to this wording here. **"...and passing over [Pass over] the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?"** Question mark.

Who is a God like you that does that? There are no gods that do that. Pardon iniquity. By the way, transgression, iniquity, there's a delineation. I don't want to get too technical here, but this is deliberate disobedience, willful disobedience. This isn't just, Hey, man, I'm trying. I'm a sinner. That's why I sin. I'm always going to sin this side of glory until I get my new body, which I can't wait. It better be soon. No, we sin because we're sinners. And we are always going to sin.

And God's not surprised by that sin. We all stumble and fall. Paul was the chief of sinners, remember? But when you start talking about iniquity and transgression, this is deliberate. That's what makes Micah ask. It's rhetorical in the sense that it's, there's no God like You that pardons iniquity and passes over as the Passover prophecy, the Passover, which we're

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going to celebrate next Thursday, Lord willing, with the communion table at the end of the Bible study. In other words, He's pardoned iniquity. He's passed over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage.

And **“He does not retain His anger forever, [Do you all know why?] because He delights in mercy.”**

He takes great delight in mercy. He takes no delight in the punishment of the wicked, the unrighteous. What does He take delight in? Mercy. This — He does not retain His anger forever. He took all of His anger, all of His wrath, and He put it on His only begotten Son. Which is why Jesus on the cross would say, **“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?”**

Because sin separates us from God and it brings the judgment of God, the anger of God. God is angry with sin. God hates sin. But He loves us. And He delights — check it out. It's almost like He's coming up with creative ways. You know how it is, parents, when you want to surprise your kids and you know, maybe it's a birthday party or, you know, just something you want to do.

“I have a surprise for you.” Of course, the kid's like, “What is it?” “I can't tell you because it's a surprise. If I tell you, it won't be a surprise anymore.” I think it's like God just is looking for a way, takes great delight to show us His mercy. And it even gets better.

Verse 19. “He will again [Key word] have compassion on us.”

You know, in Exodus we have God basically describing who He is and how He is. He's slo-o-o-w to anger, as Gail Erwin would always say. He doesn't have a short fuse. He doesn't blow His top like me. No, He's long suffering.

You know what long suffering means? I know this is profound. It means you suffer long, long suffering. He's compassionate. There's another one. The lost art in the last days church: Compassion. It's every man for himself. What's in it for me? What can I get out of this? How much can I get for this?

I'm talking about the church. These are God's people, by the way. This isn't the world. We don't expect the world to behave in ways as if they're regenerated by the Holy Spirit. No.

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These are God's people, His heritage. We're God's people. That's His church. And the church now is, what can I get out of this? What's in it for me? Just let me. — let me have this one. You'll notice, I'm not going to look anybody. You guys don't do this. I'm talking about other churches. You know that, right?

You know those other churches, right? You can tell by the body language. They come in; they sit down. Is that the worship leader? Right? Kapono knows what I'm talking about. You know, I really didn't, I really didn't get much out of the worship today. You know, the song selection, I just, I wasn't feeling the Spirit, man. To which — back in my younger days, when I had more energy — I'd like to think it's spiritual maturity. It's not. I'm just tired. I just, now I pause, and I think, nah, it's not worth it. But in my younger days, when I had the energy, I would usually respond with something like, you know what? I got some really good news for you. The worship isn't for you. Ha! It's for Him. So there's no problem here.

And oh, by the way, I have even better news. I'm sure you can find there is no shortage of churches that perform, I'm sure, to your liking. See, you're a consumer, not a communer. And then I haven't even gotten — you're a good sport, Kapono. I'll come to me now.

So then this actually happened. True story. Then I come up and they — now the hands are like — they're cutting their circulation off; they're folded so tight. And their eyes are like deer. Oh, this is on the mainland. I could use "Deer the headlights."

You know what that means, right? I mean, just (Shocked look) is that the pastor? I thought he was just doing the announcements. He's the pastor? And then it's like this. It's like, okay, bless me. Really? Okay, I'm catering to you? I dance to the beat of your drum?

Oh. I'm sorry. You must think I'm a man pleaser. I'm a God pleaser. And if you're displeased and God is pleased — yeah, I — no. No. It's there, though. Like Paul says, I know what dwells within me. There is — that is in my flesh, there is no good thing. It almost sounds noble until you read it in some other translations or paraphrases. Basically, what he's saying is I know that in my flesh I am rotten to the core. And sometimes it's dormant, and all it takes is just something to just make it rear its ugly head. But I'm not going to let that happen.

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So where were we? Last verse. Oh no. We got to finish the rest of *verse 19*. This is so cool. Check this out. Not only will He have compassion on us, He will also **“subdue our iniquities. You will cast all [Not most, not some] all our sins into the depths of the sea.”**

And then You're going to post a sign out front that says, “no fishing.” Pastor Mac and I were just talking about this, being in a submarine for how many decades. Sorry to give you a flashback. There is a certain depth in the sea that it is pitch black. You see nothing. In other words, I'm going to take your sins, all of them, and I'm going to cast them into the depths of the sea, never to be seen again.

This is covering them, burying them, kofar in the Hebrew. This is the Old Covenant promise. We have the New Covenant, the cup of the New Covenant in His blood that cleanses us of all of our sins.

1 John 1:19 has been affectionately referred to as the Christian bar of soap. If we confess our sins, and that's not, you know, just grocery listing, “I confess, I confess, I confess...” No. You're confessing that that was sin. You call sin sin. You're confessing it as sin. **“And if we will confess our sins, [Just one thing, He'll do two things] He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us of all [There's that all word again] unrighteousness.”**

Verse 20, last verse. You know when something is so good you don't want it to end? I know you want me to end. I don't want this to end, but here's the end. *Verse 20*, **“You will give truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.” N**

ow we're talking covenant. That's covenant language. You have the four covenants: The Abrahamic Covenant, the Noahic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the everlasting covenant, the New Covenant. So he's going back to the covenant with Abraham, the first covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant. He made a covenant with Abraham.

Abraham did not make a covenant with God. In fact, God put him in a deep sleep because you can't break a deal you don't sign. You can't break a covenant you've not agreed to. No, God is the one who keeps His covenant. I have a covenant, and it's an everlasting covenant. You know what an everlasting covenant, how long it's for?

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Can I just have this last one? It lasts forever. I have an everlasting covenant. So I'm going to restore you. I'm going to forgive you. I know your sin is unspeakable. You've sinned against Me. Your sin has been an affront to Me. Your sin has cost you. But it's separated you from Me. And now I want to restore you back to Me because I'm a merciful God.

Listen, I'm going to close, but not without just reiterating and ending how we began. We cannot out sin God's grace and mercy. There's no sin that God can't forgive except one, which, ironically enough, is the rejecting of the mercy of God by rejecting the person of Jesus Christ. It's the unforgivable sin, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, rejecting Jesus Christ. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit, not accepting the mercy of God offered freely to you. He paid for it. The only sin God cannot forgive is the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. There's no sin that you can sin that God's grace is not sufficient for.

And don't leave here tonight with the enemy still crushing you under the weight of guilt and condemnation because God already forgot about. God already cleansed it. He remembers our sins no more. He removes them as far as the east is from the west. I think one of Satan's most successful tools is condemnation. He keeps us crushed under guilt and condemnation. We need to be under that conviction, not condemnation, no longer than it takes for us to get to the cross where that sin was paid for. Okay. I'm done. Kaponu, come on up. Stand up. Man, I cannot just end on time, can I, ever.

Father, thank You. Oh, Lord, who is like unto You, O God? There is none like You. You are so merciful and compassionate and forgiving, longsuffering and patient and gentle. You're gentle. Lord, thank You that You forgive all of our sins and cleanse us of all our unrighteousness when we confess, just come to You. Lord, I pray for anybody tonight that has been under condemnation or guilt, and the enemy's just had a heyday with them. Would You, as only You can, make that stop right here and right now. Please don't let anybody end the video or leave this church without the fully grasping of Your forgiveness because of Your grace and Your mercy. It's as if I'd never sinned, just if I'd never sinned. You don't see our sin. You see Your only begotten Son who paid for our sin.

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Please, Lord, and thank You, Lord. You're a restoring God, and You're a forgiving God, and You're a gracious God, and You're a merciful God. On this side of glory, we'll never be able to thank You enough. In Jesus' name, Amen.