

A Thrill Of Hope Part 1

A Weary World Rejoices

Micah 5:1-5a

Memory Verses: Micah 5:4-5a

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

The famous song's lyrics exclaim, "long lay the world in sin and error pining, Til He appears and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices!" Over the next two weeks we want to rejoice at the hope we have in Christ through his birth. Our world is in sin and error. Our world is longing for something to bring it hope. Those in the world are longing to feel worth in their souls. Unfortunately they don't know where to find it. But we do. We find it in Jesus Christ and we celebrate the hope we find in Christ at Christmas. A time when we gather together to set our eyes upon the incarnate God who came to earth to save us from our sins.

The song continues; a thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices. Are you weary? Are you weary from the weight of this world? The pressures of life? The evils of this culture? Do you feel overwhelmed and burnt out? There is hope. The only way a weary world can rejoice is in Jesus Christ. This morning I want us to see how those before Christ were weary too, but they had hope in the messiah. Let's begin by looking at our main passage this morning **Micah 5:1-5a**.

Micah was a minor prophet who prophesied to the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel before they were taken into captivity. He knew the evil of his nation and he saw the wrath of God coming for them. He saw how the faithful were weary. How the sinful were weary. How even himself had grown weary. But in the middle of all of that chaos and defeat he saw hope. He saw a savior from Bethlehem in Judah who was coming to bring them peace. The main point this morning is simple; **The Hope of Christ Is the Strength of the Weary!**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **The Weary Rejoice At Israel's Restoration**. The birth of Christ was for the restoration of Israel. They had strayed so far and the only way for them to come back to the God of their fathers was for God to come to them.

Let's start back at **vs.3**. Therefore he shall give them up... Way back in the Old Testament Israel was divided. The twelve tribes were divided and soon a great diaspora would take place that would last thousands of years. Israel had gone after false idols, and their kings had abandoned the one true God even though Prophets like Micah had told

them time and time again that if they did this they would be sent into exile. But they didn't care. They feared neither the prophets nor God. They lived in excess, adultery, idolatry, selfishness, and a never ending state of war. They had become their own gods. So God made good on the promises he made to Moses in **Deuteronomy 28**. Lets look at a summary of this chapter in a couple of verses. Look with me at **Deut. 28:1, 8-9**. Clearly God's plan was to bless Israel and the Jewish people as long as they stayed true to their God. But the Mosaic covenant was conditional. Continue in **Deut. 28:15, 25, 48, 63-64**. Because of their apostasy God made true on his promise and the kingdom was divided, exiled, and oppressed for thousands of years. God had given them up.

Now look back at **vs.3**. He gave them up but not forever. He gave them up until the time of Christ. Jesus was born to restore Israel. He truly was the hope of a weary Israel. Under the rule of Rome Israel was wearied by the yoke of their religion, Israel was wearied by the yoke of Roman occupation, and Israel was wearied by centuries of defeat and oppression. So when Christ came in **vs.3** his plan was to bring Israel back together. "Then the rest shall return."

How did this occur? Two ways. In a small way, Christ came to bring Israel a minor reformation. Over the next 30-50 years Christ and Christianity garnered a large following, most of which were Jews. In a way, Israel was kind of coming back to God. Unfortunately this was not to last. 300 years after Christ's death there were over 350 million Christians world wide. Christianity had grown exponentially. However, it grew without the Jewish people who had almost wholesale rejected Christ as the messiah. Still we know one day Jesus will fully accomplish his mission by drawing Israel back to Christ.

The greatest way Christ has restored Israel up to this point was as a nation. Over the next two thousand years Israel would face oppression but eventually they would be given back the land of Israel and would be made a country in 1948. Jews from every country in the world would return to Israel for the first time in 2 to 4 thousand years. When Israel became a nation, many Jewish people thought that the prophecy of Israel's return was fulfilled, and it was, partially. But, until the Jewish people accept Jesus as the Christ and come to worship him as their savior, this prophecy remains unfinished. **Zechariah 12:10** says that in the end, when Christ returns again, Israel will turn their hearts back to God in salvation through Christ.

So, though this prophecy is incomplete as of now, this is good news. First, if God can do some of it, God can do all of it. God will do it! **The restoration of Israel is not complete, but through Christ it's as good as done!** God has been faithful, he has sent his son for Israel, he allowed the death and sacrifice of his son for Israel. One day Israel will be restored completely. And that's worth rejoicing over. If God can do it for Israel... God can and will do it for all of us. **The Hope of Christ Is the Strength of the**

Weary.

The second thing we need to see here is that... **The Weary Rejoice In The Church's Rock**. Jesus was born to be the Rock of the church! Look again at **vs.4**. He shall stand and shepherd his flock. When Christ came he began a movement we call the Church. After his death and since, he has stood as the primary shepherd of the church. We are his flock and he is our leader. We stand on His firm foundation. We stand on his Word. We follow him through his Spirit. We follow him as his body. Look at **Colossians 1:18-22**. He has taken the weary sinners of the world who had no hope, and given them something amazing. We've escaped the weariness of the slavery to sin and hell.

But even if we've escaped the weariness of sin, we can still experience weariness in the mission of the church. Ministry is hard. The Christian walk can get heavy. So, how do those of us within the church, find hope in the midst of everyday weariness? Simple. Look at **vs.4**. We overcome our weariness in the strength of the Lord. We let him take on our burdens. We cast all our cares on him for he cares for us. We depend on him and not on our own strength. Look at **Hebrews 12:1**.

We also overcome our weariness through the majesty of the name of the Lord. Look at **John 14:13-14** and **Philippians 2:10-11**. The name of Jesus has power. It had power at his birth, it had power during his life and ministry, and it still has power today after his resurrection. Because Jesus is the rock of the church and his name is our name. We are Christians. He is the cornerstone and the rock on which the christian church is built. He is the rock which the weary run into and are safe. **The Hope of Christ Is the Strength of the Weary**.

Lastly we need to see that... **The Weary Rejoice For An Eternal Reward**. Look at **vs.4-5a**. To the ends of the earth and for all of eternity those who are in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, will dwell secure in his greatness. Israel and the Church will one day be the same thing... born again in Christ. One day Israel and the Church will find peace. One day there will be Shalom in the holy land and in the hearts of every believer. It's the perfect storybook ending – and they all lived happily every after. This is why Jesus was born. Look at **Revelation 21:1-4**. **The Hope of Christ Is the Strength of the Weary**.

Application

This is what Christmas is all about! Jesus is our hope. If he had not come we would have no hope at all. But because he came as child, lived a perfect life, died for our sins, and rose again... there is no longer any reason to live in weariness. Put your trust in Christ today, depend on him and trade your weariness for his strength and majesty. He is the hope of Israel, the hope of the Church, and the hope of all for all of

eternity!

Conclusion

A couple years ago at Christmas a single mother named Connie was really struggling. She had two teenage boys but could hardly feed or clothe them. There was no way she would be able to give them the Christmas dinner or presents they deserved. There was very little hope for her family to have a merry Christmas.

A couple of nights before Christmas she was coming home from her second job and noticed a giant Christmas basket on her front porch with everything she would need for Christmas dinner. It also had gift cards for gifts. It was a Christmas miracle to be sure. There was no note so there was no way to know where it came from. She couldn't believe it. Her prayers had been answered.

But just as she was bringing the basket into the house her mind turned to her grandmother and her aunt who both were struggling much worse than she was. How could she have a merry Christmas when her grandmother and aunt would have nothing. So she picked up the basket, got in the car, drove to her Grandmother's house which was right across the street from her aunt and brought the basket to her grandmother.

Grandma was thrilled, but she was very concerned for Connie. She said, what about you? Connie replied, "we'll be fine," hugged everyone, and went back home. But as she approached the house for the second time that evening she saw something that blew her mind. On the porch sat another giant Christmas basket, even bigger than the last one, filled with even more stuff.

Why do I tell you this story? Listen, you have been called to be hope to a weary world this Christmas. Just as Jesus was the hope of Israel and the Church. Just as Jesus is the hope of the world. You are an extension of that. Take the hope you've been given by Christ and give it to others! Then sit back and let Jesus do his thing! A Thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices! **The Hope of Christ Is the Strength of the Weary**