

# Micah: Broken People, Faithful God

## *People of Integrity*

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Micah 3

Speaker: Joel Greenwood

July 20, 2025

We're going to talk about the word integrity today. Integrity, just by definition, is the quality of being honest and adhering to strong moral and ethical principles even when faced with adversity. It implies a wholeness of your character where one's words and actions align with each other and deeply held values.

And so I begin by asking the question of everybody here and watching online and listening on the radio. Do you view yourself as a person of integrity? Are you the same person no matter who is around? Do you still make the right decisions when no one is watching? Can people trust you? And do you stick to your Word even when it hurts?

As a follower of Jesus, I personally have been called to live a life of integrity because no one will listen to what I have to say about Jesus if my personal life is a lie. In knowing this, the enemy is constantly trying to invent ways to trip me up, and I know the same is true for you as well. The enemy is constantly looking for ways to get you to make a mistake, to ruin your witness.

And so our question for all of today is this, is your integrity for sale? Yeah, that's a tough one, isn't it? What is your integrity worth to you? Could someone offer you enough money, enough fame, enough pleasure for you to abandon your integrity? And I will tell you, it is crucial that we can answer that question before the moment comes, rather than trying to make the right decision in the moment.

It's harder to answer that question when the money or the fame is sitting before you. And so beforehand, you need to decide how you are going to answer the question. Don't wait until the offer is on the table. It is much easier right now in this moment to stand on the truth and values of His Word.

Today, as we continue in our series of the Minor Prophet Micah, we are going to discover that the integrity of Israel's leaders, their religious leaders, and their prophets was, in fact, for sale. For the right price, they would do or say just about anything. They adopted the phrase might makes right. Whoever had the power made the rules.

They had no fear of God as their actions were dragging his name through the mud before the eyes of their people they were supposed to be leading as well as the nations around them. And so Micah is going to call them out for their lack of integrity and for their sinful lifestyle. This should not be taken lightly. Micah is going to remind them that this is a serious infraction against the covenant they have made with their God, Yahweh.

And in a land where the rulers, the religious leaders, and the prophets are willing to receive bribes, there will be chaos and consequence for their actions. These same men who are willing to deceive the people, who naively act as the mouthpiece of God, we will also see that they have the nerve to believe that if they cry out to their God, even after misrepresenting his name, that God will keep them safe.

We also can be deceived into believing the same is true, and we're going to read about that as we continue. So I encourage you to open your Bibles to Micah chapter 3, starting in verse 1. Micah, chapter 3, verse 1. You can use

the Bibles in the pew in front of you. You have phones or tablets. The words will also be on the screen behind me, but let's pray before we jump into God's Word. Heavenly Father, this is a heavy message.

As I said first service, I repeat, it's not a fun message to always share as we talk about integrity and the ways that the enemy will attack the integrity in our lives, the many ways that he invents to trip us up, to ruin our witness before others, and to bring guilt and shame into our lives.

And so, Father, as we read in Micah this morning, not only will we see the importance of our integrity, but we will also see hope. There's not a person in here who has done it perfect. We thank You for Your forgiveness and Your grace and Your mercy, and that You will walk with us. And so we pray You would speak Your truth to us today. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Micah chapter 3, starting in verse 1, "Then I said, 'Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel. Should you not know justice, you who hate good and love evil, who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones? You who eat my people's flesh strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces.

You who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot." Wow. Those are some pretty interesting figures of speech that Micah is using to describe what these leaders are doing to their people. Think about the image in your head that they are tearing these people up, breaking their flesh apart, and throwing them into a pot to be fried.

What could they possibly be doing to the Israelites that it would compare to chopping them up and throwing them in a frying pan? The reason that Micah is using these figures of speech will be made more clear as we continue to read. You see, the Israelite leaders are devouring the people of God. Instead of protecting their sheep, their people, like a shepherd, they, in fact, are like the ferocious wolves who are tearing them apart.

Remember that God is referred to as our loving shepherd, and the leaders of the Israelites were supposed to follow that example as they were leading God's people. And instead, they have become ferocious wolves. Let's go on to verse four. Verse 4 says, "Then they will cry out to the Lord." These are the leaders, the prophets, the false religious leaders, but God will not answer them.

At that time, he will hide his face from them because of the evil they have done. You see, in a moment of fear and terror, these leaders will cry out to the Lord, but Micah says, "The Lord will not listen to them." Micah foresees a time coming in the future when these leaders who have turned their back on God because of the terrible things they have done will cry out to Him because something bad is coming upon them.

Of course, Micah is foreseeing what is going to take place to the land of Judah, the southern kingdom in 586 BC, when God will raise up the Babylonian nation to bring judgment upon the Israelites. And Micah foresees this. And at that time, these leaders, these rulers are going to cry out to God, but it's going to be too late. You see, when bad things happen in our life and our life begins to spin out of control, most people turn to God in that moment.

But it often is too late. I think about our nation's history, and I think about how we do turn to God when bad things happen. I remember back in 2001, September 11th, and you know we finally discovered we were vulnerable and we were attacked. And what did our nation do after that? We cried out to God. But then things begin to get normal again. And we begin to do our own things. And so we fall into this pattern of only wanting God to be around when we need Him.

And that's exactly what the Israelite people were doing. It's exactly what the leaders were doing. And we do the same things. And so Micah is encouraging them. He's encouraging us. Don't wait to turn to God. Turn to God now. He goes on in verse 5. This is what the Lord says, "As for the prophets who lead my people astray, if one feeds them, then they will proclaim peace. They will prophesy peace.

But if one does not feed them, then they prepare to wage war against Him. Therefore, night will come over you without visions and darkness without divination. The sun will set for the prophets, and the day will go dark for

them. The seers will be ashamed and the diviners disgraced. They will all cover their faces because there is no answer from God.

Micah informs us that the deceit in Israel went well beyond just the corrupt leaders and kings. The prophets were also in on the lies. The prophets were being bribed. Literally, if someone would bring them food, bring them gifts, then they would prophesy peace, and they would say, "Everything is going to be great." But if you didn't bring them anything, if you didn't bribe them, then they would talk about wars that were becoming upon you. Their integrity was for sale.

Now you can see why Micah used the language he did. Literally, the people would bring them food so they could eat special meals. And he says, "You're devouring them these people." The prophet's actions were unthinkable. And God says, "I will not speak to them any longer. They will not have dreams. They will not have visions." And God is speaking this truth to us as well that if you use your gifts for evil, if you use them for selfish reasons, for your own gain, it will eventually be taken away or be unproductive at the very least.

Our gifts are given to us for others' sake. Let's go on in verse 8. "But as for me," Micah says, "I am filled with power and with the Spirit of the Lord and with justice and might to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel, his sin. Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right, who build Zion with bloodshed in Jerusalem with wickedness.

Her leaders judge for a bribe. Her priests teach for a price. And her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they lean upon the Lord and they say, "Is not the Lord among us, for no disaster will come upon us." Micah goes before the leaders, goes before the people, and says, "Listen, I know that right now I am being filled with the power of the Spirit and His words are upon me.

These words that I am speaking to you, I am boldly calling you out for your sin." And this seems to be the main job of the prophets in the Old Testament. God uses them to point out sin and to call people to repentance. How many would want to be a prophet in the Old Testament? Your whole job is to point out people's sin, to show them where they are ignoring God and where they need to turn back to Him.

And these same prophets that were misrepresenting the name of God, that were lying and deceiving everybody else, had the nerve to still believe that God would protect them because they were God's chosen people. How dare they think they can misrepresent His name, that they can lie about what God is saying and then believe, "Oh, but we're still God's chosen people. He still is going to love us." Let me just tell you something that is not fun to hear.

We are guilty of the same foolishness. Every single one of us, we live our lives how we want, totally ignoring God, going about our daily business, even having struggles and temptations and sins that we fall into, sometimes even openly jump into.

And then when something bad happens, you and I have the nerve to cry out to God when we need Him, to which I can only say, "God, forgive us." Because every single one of us in here is guilty. We go on in verse 12.

"Therefore, because of you, because of your actions, Zion will be plowed like a field. Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble.

The temple hill, a mound that is overgrown with thickets. Micah is telling them, and he's telling us today, that there are consequences for our actions. Even when God forgives us of our sin, even when He offers that hope and He makes us clean before Himself, there are still consequences that you and I must deal with while we are still here on earth.

I don't think there is a person in here right now or watching online or listening on the radio that is not dealing with some consequences from their decisions. We might have gone before God and we have repented and asked for forgiveness and God has healed us and made us clean before Him, but those consequences still exist. And I

love the fact that we don't serve a God that in the midst of us dealing with our consequences stands back and laughs at us.

Instead, Scripture says He cries with us. He carries that burden with us. That as we walk through those consequences that we deserve because of our actions, He actually cries with us while at the same time remains just and fair. The consequences must be paid, but He walks with us in the midst.

And the amazing story of Scripture is that even though we have these consequences here and now, though we are forgiven for our sin, God has a plan in the future for entire restoration when even our consequences here will disappear. And we get to go and be with Him, and He makes everything new as it was supposed to be before sin entered creation.

Micah is going to go on in chapter 4:1 to offer us hope because this is hard to hear. It's not a fun message. And that's why we're not ending on Micah chapter 3. We're going to go on to chapter 4. Verse 1, "In the last days," Micah says, "The mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains.

It will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it." Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways so that we may walk in His paths. The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." And so Micah gives us another section of hope. Micah sees a vision in the future when the mountain of the Lord will be raised up again.

God will call all the nations to Himself in the last days. He does not abandon us or the world in our sin. His plan involves a great healing and restoration. There is hope that even in the midst of us falling to temptations, even in the midst of us falling to sins and dealing with the consequences, there is hope that God will come and restore everything.

He goes on in verse 3, "He will judge between many peoples, and he will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Every man will sit under his own vine, under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord almighty has spoken.

All of the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. Micah foresees a future, a time when God will no longer use other nations to bring judgment on His people. You see, He had brought the Assyrians. He had brought the Babylonians. He had used these wicked nations to bring judgment.

But Micah says, "There will be a day when those nations will also be judged and they will be judged by God." He says, "The idea of wars and disputes will cease because God will reign supreme." No longer will there be a world power, but God will be in power. He goes on to verses 6 and 7. "In that day," declares the Lord. "I will gather the lame.

I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief. I will make the lame a remnant, those driven away a strong nation. For the Lord will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever." This, of course, would be fulfilled as well when God would bring the Israelite people back from exile as He would save a remnant that would remain faithful to Him.

But this prophecy goes beyond just the Israelites to us as well, that God will continue to have a people who will remain faithful to Him, and the Lord will rule over them instead of unjust rulers or prophets or kings or presidents or monarchies. The Lord is our ruler, and He can be trusted above all.

And so we come back to the question that we started with, "Is your integrity for sale? Have you established the appropriate boundaries in your life that protect you from the temptations that exist to lose your integrity?" I have found in my own life that the enemy is constantly looking for ways to destroy my witness and therefore steal glory from God.

He is constantly looking for new ways to trip us up, to make mistakes, to lose our integrity so that then God would not receive glory from our lives. Now, the same sins have always existed. There's always been struggles. There's always been the same traps that we fall into, but I feel like the enemy creates new ways for us to fall into old traps.

I question whether I want to bring up any sin in particular and kind of flesh that out a little bit for you because I don't want anybody to feel like I'm pointing them out. We all have our own struggles. We all have our own issues that we deal with. But a big one that is in our world today that I do want to flesh out a little bit, this idea that the enemy has created new traps to fall into old sins, is this idea of lust and physical pleasure.

We live in a world today where I have my cell phone in my pocket, and at any given moment, I can receive a text from somebody that I have no idea who they are, and they claim they know me, and they want to begin a conversation. I'm not the only one that gets these, right? You guys get these too? They'll randomly say, "Oh, I think I have your number in my phone, and I don't know who you are. Can you tell me who you are?" And it's like, "No, you don't know me." It's a trap. The whole intention of that very first text is to get me to try to meet up with some other woman that's not my wife.

I didn't have to go looking for that. It rang on my phone, and I don't care how much I've tried. I blocked the number. They use a new number. There's a million ways around it. The enemy is creating traps for us. I don't even have to go look for it. What about social media? I get on Facebook so that I can keep up with you guys as you post things and I know what's going on. I try to keep up with birthdays and anniversaries and just try to be there to encourage you and know what's going on in your life.

And I begin scrolling through Facebook. And I guess because I'm a 40-something-year-old guy, they think I want pictures of young ladies. I don't have to go looking for them. They just put them there. And I'll ask my wife, "Do these pictures come up on your feet?" No, they don't. Well, because she's a woman. And so then they show up on your feet. You don't have to go look for it. They just put them there and you're like, "What is this?"

I could be watching a TV show, family-friendly programming with my family at night, and I'm watching the show, and the commercials come on, and there's a commercial that will come on at night that would have been a raider's movie 20 years ago." I don't have to look for it. The enemy is creating new traps to get us to fall into the same old sin. And I could do the same with other sins. So if lust is your sin, if that's your problem, maybe God is calling you out.

But there are all the other sins as well that the enemy is just creating new traps, wondering, is your integrity for sale? Can I get you to trip up? Because if I get you to trip up, then I can steal glory from God. Because how many times do we hear stories of people that have made a mistake and they're in public ministry, or they say they love Jesus, but yet they went and did this, and who gets a bad name? God gets the bad name. That's the whole point of the enemy. He doesn't care about you at all.

He wants to steal glory from God. Is your integrity for sale? I encourage you to fight against it. Set up appropriate boundaries in your life where necessary to protect you from that temptation to lose your integrity. Fight against it. I don't believe defense is enough anymore. We need to go on the offensive against it. Make plans now.

Heed the words of Micah this morning, the warnings from the wicked rulers and the prophets of his time. Learn from their mistakes. Don't follow their examples. Micah is calling them out and he's calling us out today to always speak the truth. The truth is found in His Word, and there is hope in the Lord. There is hope in His Word. I don't end this message on calling out people for their sin.

I want to end this message on the fact that we serve a God that forgives and loves. We serve a God that offers us mercy and offers us grace. That we can come before Him and say, "Father, I'm struggling with this, whatever this is, and I don't want this to ruin my life. My integrity is not for sale. I will establish boundaries. I will do what is necessary to protect that, not for my own sake, but for your sake.

Because if I mess up, I may get a bad name for a little bit, but you get a bad name from a lot of it." What boundaries do you need to put into place? Can I encourage you to put your hope and trust in God? For there will come a day, Micah says, that everyone will see Him for who He really is. The King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is where we place our hope and our confidence.

He is our true king and leader. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, you know that there's not a single perfect person in here. We have all made mistakes. We have all fallen for some of the traps of the enemy. And so we come before You with repentant hearts asking for forgiveness.

Lord, it is our desire to represent you well to the world You have placed us in so that as we point people to You, we could live lives of integrity and You would receive the praise. Father, for those that are struggling, I pray that You would give them the wisdom of Your Spirit to know where to set up those boundaries, where to get help, how to avoid those things so that they can remain true to you.

May we learn the lesson of those who have gone before us and not fall for the same traps. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.