

**God's Case against Injustice**  
**Micah 6:1-7:7**

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When I was in seminary in Ft. Worth, I stayed home from class one day because I was sick. I felt so bad, I didn't even get out of bed. About mid-morning, there was a knock at my door. Jamie had gone to work so I dragged myself out of bed and opened the door. In front of me stood a guy I did not know. He handed me a folded up document and said something along the lines of "On behalf of the Tarrant County Court, you have been served" then he left. I opened up the document to discover that Kelly Randolph was being sued by some company in Ft. Worth. It was unsettling to say the least. I had no idea what this was about. I saw the plaintiff named in the suit and made a phone call. I ended up getting in the car and driving over to the business to tell them that some mistake had been made. Turns out there was another Kelly Randolph in Ft. Worth being sued by this company. They had grabbed my address out of the phone book and served the wrong person.

I don't know if you've ever been sued. Even though I wasn't really being sued, just the idea that I was being taken to court kind of shook me. Now what if you were served notice of being sued and the plaintiff was Almighty God. What if God took you to court? Would that get your attention?

As we turn to Micah 6, this is precisely what we find. Scholars refer to the literary form of this passage as a "covenant lawsuit." God is suing the people of Judah for their failure to keep the covenant. Micah is acting as the prosecutor on God's behalf. There is an indictment. There is evidence. There is a sentence. And the final segment of this section of Micah includes a lament over the sins of Judah in 7:1-7. **In our consideration of this passage today, we will consider four elements of God's case against the injustice of his people.**

**I. The indictment: you failed to honor God's grace by neglecting the basic requirements of covenant faithfulness (6:1-8).**

- A. God serves the summons to hear his indictment (vv. 1-2).
- B. God reminds them of his gracious acts on their behalf (vv. 3-5).
  1. God redeemed them through the Exodus from Egypt.
  2. God gave them leaders to guide them.
  3. God blessed them when others wanted to curse them.
  4. God brought them across the Jordan into the land of promise.
- C. The people protest. What kinds of sacrifices will please God (vv. 6-7).
  1. Does he want more sacrifices in quantity?
  2. Does he want greater sacrifices in terms of extravagance or cost? Note the way they ramp up the description to indicate increasing quantity/extravagance.
  3. The questions reveal a total disconnect in terms of true worship.
    - a. God's favor cannot be bought with sacrifices and rituals.
    - b. Rituals disconnected from true heart of repentance and love for God are not only unacceptable to God, they are insulting (Isa. 1).

“False worshipers think God’s favor, like theirs, can be bought” or earned. They “offer the Lord everything but what he asks for: their loving and obedient hearts.” “Offerings ... are no substitute for obedience to God’s will.” (Kenneth Barker, quoting Waltke and Vorlander)

D. God pinpoints their failure to meet basic requirements of covenant faithfulness (v. 8).

1. **Do justice.** This refers to treating others with equity and fairness as God defines it. Gary Smith states,

*“Justice” describes right social relationships between people based on God’s view of what is appropriate. These behavior patterns were described in covenant documents (Ex. 20–23), covering both legal and normal social relationships in and outside the courts. Such instructions included protection for foreigners, the poor, slaves, orphans, and widows, who could easily be wronged or taken advantage of by others...*

2. **Love mercy** (chesed). This term means “loyal love” or “lovingkindness.” It is the attitude of the heart from which the doing of justice must find its source. It is to value the kind of compassion and faithful love that characterizes God in his relationships.

3. **Walk humbly with your God.** This term is used in Prov. 11:2 which says, “When pride comes there is dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom.” It refers to “a life that is not proud but is attentive, careful, and prudent to follow God’s will (Gary Smith).”

Charles Feinberg summarized these three requirements in this way: “The piety that God approves consists of three elements: a strict adherence to that which is equitable in all dealings with our fellowmen; a heart determined to do them good; and diligent care to live in close and intimate fellowship with God.”

Do you see how God’s requirements of covenant faithfulness expose the faulty thinking of the people of Judah? They are wondering what grand kind of ritual or sacrifice they must make to get God’s favor. God is telling them their focus is all wrong. What God really wants is covenant faithfulness that flows from a heart of humble obedience that produces that justice and compassion for others.

Someone might say, “well, that’s the Old Testament. We don’t really have to worry about that sort of thing under the new covenant.” Oh really? Listen to the words of Jesus found in Matt. 23:23: *Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.*

I want you to consider again the larger structure of the argument in vv. 1-8. The first thing God does is to remind his people of his acts of redemptive grace. He is not telling them that they could earn his grace by doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God. He is telling them that because they had experienced his grace, their lives should be marked by these things. It was to be their response to his grace.

We must not read Micah 6:8 in isolation from the gracious actions of God in salvation. It is only a life changed by the gospel that can actually live out the covenant faithfulness called for here. If you are not a Christian, don't think "I have to start being just and kind and walk with God." You can't. What you need is the heart-changing work of Jesus Christ in your life. That is the fountain and source of a God-pleasing life. He died on the cross for our sins and rose again from the dead so that we could be new creations living in faithfulness to God. Have you experienced that grace?

If you are a Christian, then recognize that a life of doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God is the expected and logical fruit of your experience of God's transforming grace.

Our text now moves from the indictment to the evidence.

## **II. The evidence: your lives are full of unjust practices (6:9-12).**

- A. They have amassed treasures of wickedness through unjust practices.
  - 1. Scant measure – a short measure for measuring grain, etc.
  - 2. Wicked scales
  - 3. Deceitful weights
  - 4. Violence
  - 5. Lies and deceit
- B. These practices are the outcome of a failure to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. There is no equity, no love for neighbor, and no obedience to God reflected in these unjust ways.

Consider your practices in terms of the way you relate to others. Do they suggest a life that is compatible with saving grace or incompatible?

- Do you value things over people or people over things? Does greed drive your interactions with others?
- Do you manipulate people and situations always to your favor and benefit? Or are you looking for ways to do others good?
- Do you give others their due in terms of characterizing them and their views truthfully? Or is there some deceit and falsehood in the way you represent them?

We have seen the indictment and heard the evidence. Now, our text describes the sentence.

## **III. The sentence: you will experience futility and defeat (6:13-16).**

- A. God will strike them with judgment due to their sins.
  - 1. The curse of futility.
    - a. You will eat but not be satisfied.
    - b. You will put away but not preserve.
    - c. You will sow but not reap.
  - 2. The reason? Idolatry and injustice.
    - a. Omri and his son Ahab were kings in the northern kingdom of Israel. They were wicked kings. Here is the way Scripture evaluates them.

Omri did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did more evil than all who were before him. <sup>26</sup> For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in the sins that he made Israel to sin, provoking the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols. (1 Kgs. 16:25-26)

And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. <sup>31</sup> And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him. <sup>32</sup> He erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. <sup>33</sup> And Ahab made an Asherah. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. (1 Kgs. 16:30-33)

And remember how Ahab killed Naboth to take away his land which was his family inheritance (1 Kgs. 21).

3. The curse of defeat. They will be an object of scorn for their enemies.

There is a principle at play here in these verses that holds true for all of us. When we idolize the good things that God has made for our enjoyment, we spoil those gifts. It is good to eat. It is good to preserve. It is good to plant olives and tread grapes. But when the accumulation of those things become gods in our lives, we are going to suffer the curse of futility. They will not satisfy us.

It is a judgment from God against our sin to take the joy and satisfaction out of the good gifts he provides when we put those gifts in place of him. Make that dream job your idol, and it will become a nightmare job. Make marriage your idol, and you will wreck your marriage. Make money your idol and you will be eaten up with the worry and anxiety that enough is never enough. Make your reputation your idol and you will forever be looking over your shoulder and living in damage control mode.

Worship God and enjoy his good gifts. Don't idolize his gifts and ruin them.

Having presented the indictment, the evidence, and the sentence, Micah now expresses his sorrow over the situation.

#### **IV. The lament: society declines because of depravity (7:1-7).**

A. Micah's sadness.

1. Micah has worked like a farmer but there is no fruit to show for it. He has preached and called people to repent but with little result.
2. Godliness and righteousness have all but disappeared from the land.
3. The day of judgment has come.
4. No one can be trusted, not even those closest to you because injustice has penetrated all of society.

B. Micah's strength.

I love the realism of Micah in these verses. It is right for the people of God to recognize what is happening around them and lament the collapse into sin and its collateral damage. But this

lament does not harden into despair. God's people must be realistic about what is happening around them. But they must also grasp the promises of God that guide their ultimate future. The way things are now is not the way they will always be. God will set everything right. He will subdue sin and save his people.

### **Conclusion**

What is a person to do in this situation? When things have collapsed morally and spiritually and society has spiraled into a tailspin of depravity, what can a person do?

The answer is found in v. 7.

- **Look to the Lord.** Refocus. Get your attention focused on the Lord and not just on the terrible situation around you. What voice frames your world the most? News outlets or the Word of God?
- **Wait for the God of your salvation.** Remember that God is in control has promised ultimate salvation for all who trust in him. Waiting is not passive impatience but active trust in a God who promises deliverance and has the power to keep his Word.
- **Talk to the Lord.** God will hear you. Unburden your soul to the God who sees and hears the suffering of his people. Most of us spend too much time complaining to each other when we should be talking to the Lord.

This is a season of life when it would be easy to allow lament to ferment and become cynicism or despair. People are divided about social issues and politics. The pandemic and the response to it has created pain and loss on many fronts. A long season of uncertainty has fostered confusion and uneasiness. And it isn't as if things were peachy before all this.

Can you say with Micah, "I will wait for the God of my salvation, my God will hear me?" How do you know if God is your God and he hears you? John 1:12 says, "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ and trusts in him for the forgiveness of their sins will be a child of God. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me." But if you have trusted in Jesus Christ, you are a child of God and God is your Father. You can say with confidence, "My God will hear me."

We can identify with Micah when it comes to lament. But will we also join him when it comes to faith and hope? The struggle is deep. The pain is real. Now is the time to look to the Lord, wait on the Lord, and talk to the Lord.