WALK WITH THE GOD OF HOPE

Passage: Micah 6:8, 7:18-20

INTRO (MICAH 7 — THE BROKEN PERSON)

In Micah 7 we arrive at the end of a story and meet a person who is in misery.

They say:

> "What misery is mine! I am like one who gathers summer fruit at the gleaning of the vineyard; there is no cluster of grapes to eat, none of the early figs that I crave."

There's nothing left. No fruit. No nourishment. No satisfaction.

Then they look outward:

> "The faithful have been swept from the land; not one upright person remains. Everyone lies in wait to shed blood; they hunt each other with nets."

Everywhere they turn—corruption.

Leaders are corrupt. Justice is for sale. Power is used to crush people.

And it gets closer.

You can't trust your neighbour. You can't trust your friend. You can't trust your own family.

> "A man's enemies are the members of his own household."

Everything that should be safe… isn't.

Trust has collapsed. Relationships are fractured. Even love has turned suspicious.

This is a broken person living inside a broken nation. This is the prophet's image of Israel when it it finds itself, away from God.

And as they look at this devastation and viciousness Israel will finally admit:

> "I will bear the Lord's wrath, because I have sinned against him."

They are not blaming others. They are not excusing themselves.

They see clearly now: "I am part of this. My sin has contributed to this."

This is what it looks like when the illusions shatter and the excuses run out.

And you are left with what is real:

Emptiness. Regret. Isolation. Misery

How did they get here?

PROBLEM — A NATION THAT LOOKS FINE (MICAH 1–4)

Micah lived in a time of serious upheaval. In 722BC the Northern tribes of Israel had been destroyed by Assyria. Around 701BC Jerusalem only just escaped a similar fate. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea. While Isaiah focused largely on the royal court in Jerusalem, Micah was a rural prophet from the small town of Moresheth, and he had deep empathy for the rural poor who were being exploited. Micah prophesied during the reigns of

- Jotham (earlier king)
- Ahaz (very ungodly king)
- Hezekiah (reforming king

Micah speaks into a time that *looked stable*.

On the surface, in Israel everything looked fine. Or that at least is what they told themselves. There was prosperity. Religious life was active. People were confident.

But underneath:

• The wealthy were taking land from the poor
• Families were being pushed off their inheritance
• Leaders were abusing power
• Justice had disappeared

And the strangest part? They couldn't see it. Chapter 3 says it best

> 3:11 Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they look for the Lord's support and say, "Is not the Lord among us? No disaster will come upon us."

Yet they say, 'Is not the Lord among us? No disaster will come upon us.'"

They were confident.

Spiritually confident. Morally confident.

But completely blind.

Why?

- Maybe because life still worked for them.
- Maybe because they kept up religious habits.
- Maybe because they compared themselves: "The north has fallen… but we are still standing." "We must be fine."

Comparison, and normalcy, and prosperity gave them confidence. But it deepened their blindness.

And the tragedy was the very people meant to lead others to God— rulers, priests, prophets— were shaping a society that pulled people away from Him.

GOD'S CONFRONTATION (MICAH 6)

In Micah 6, God challenges his people:

"My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you?"

He invites them to answer. And their response is revealing.

They imagine extreme religion:

> "Should we bring thousands of rams?" "Ten thousand rivers of oil?" "Even our firstborn child?" (as the wicked King Ahaz had done)

They assume God must want more.

More sacrifice. More effort. More performance.

God rejects that he asks too much of them and says this is all he requires

> He has shown you, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly[a] with your God.

Do justice, Love mercy. Walk humbly with your God

The issue is not: "You haven't done enough.", The issue is: "You are not walking with Me."

And it starts with humility. Because pride says: "I'm fine."

But humility says: "I might be blind." "I might be missing justice." "I might be resisting mercy." "I need God to show me."

That is where change begins.

THE HOPE OF MICAH 7

Now we return to Micah 7.

The people in chapter 7 are broken. They admit their sin has brought them to this miserable place.

And then in 7:verse 7 we hear this:

> But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.

Their final word is not: misery and despair, it is hope in God.

HOW CAN THEY HOPE?

There is no hope in themselves. Or their nation. Or their leaders.

<u>They hope in who God is. (7:18-20)</u>

> "Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance?"
>
> "You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy."
>
> "You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea."

They are not minimizing sin. They feel its weight.

But they also see something greater: God delights in mercy. He does not cling to anger. God removes sin completely.

<u>And they hope in God's promises:</u>

> "You will be faithful to Jacob, and show love to Abraham, as you pledged long ago."

God lives out what He asks of His people.

- He is just. He is merciful. He is faithful.

After every terrible turn God gives hope

WE SEE THIS HOPE MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

In Hezekiah's time, the Assyrian army surrounded Jerusalem.

Every other city had fallen. Defeat was certain.

There was no human solution left. Hezekiah goes to God.

Not with confidence in himself— but asking for mercy.

And in Jeremiah, we are told why: Because he had heard Micah.

Jeremiah 26:18 – 19

> "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. He told all the people of Judah, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says:
>
> "'Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.' (Micah 3)
>
> "Did Hezekiah king of Judah or anyone else in Judah put him to death? Did not Hezekiah fear the Lord and seek his favor? And did not the Lord relent, so that he did not bring the disaster he pronounced against them? We are about to bring a terrible disaster on ourselves!"

Hezekiah took God's warning seriously. He was like that person we read about in chapter 7. Desperately seeking God. He feared the Lord and sought His favour.

And God relented.

God spares Jerusalem, and Hezekiah leads the people in returning to God.

2 Kings 18 summarises his reign

> 5 Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the
> kings of Judah, either before him or after him. 6 He held fast to the Lord and did not stop
> following him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. 7 And the Lord was with
> him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria
> and did not serve him. 8 From watchtower to fortified city, he defeated the Philistines, as far
> as Gaza and its territory.

With God there is always hope.

This is what hope looks like in real life.

Not denial. Not self-confidence.

But turning to God in the moment when everything is lost— and finding that He is still merciful.

WITH GOD, THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE

Even here.

Even now.

Even if your life feels like Micah 7— Empty. Regret-filled. Fractured.

Even if your own choices brought you here.

Failure is not final. Sin is not the last word.

Because our hope is not in ourselves— It is in God.

Who He is.

What He promises.

APPLICATION — WALKING THIS WEEK

The message of Micah is not a to do more. It is a call to walk humbly with the God of hope.

Reflection

- Where do I need God's hope right now?
- Who near me needs God's hope now?
- How is God inviting me to walk humbly with Him?

PRACTICE

We are the people of hope

1. Start each day with hope

Read Micah 7:18–20
"God, help me hope in You—
in who You are and what You promise."

2. Notice where hope is needed

Pay attention to a person, a moment, a struggle.
Do not rush past it.

Ask: "Where is God inviting me to bring hope?"

3. Offer hope

• Speak encouragement
• Give practical help
• Pray with someone

Small acts carry God's hope.

CONCLUSION

Micah is not calling us to try harder.

He is calling us to come back.

To walk humbly with God. To trust His mercy. To live in His hope.

And to bring that hope to others.

Doing justice. Loving mercy. Walking with God.

BENEDICTION

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

MICAH

GROUP AIM

Help the group see that Micah confronts corruption, abuse of power, hollow religion, and false security, while also revealing God's justice, mercy, and promise to restore.

The aim is not just to understand Micah, but to recognise what God is doing in the book and respond with honesty, humility, and obedience.

BOOK BACKGROUND

Micah was an 8th century BCE prophet from the rural town of Moresheth, and he speaks with deep concern for ordinary people being exploited by powerful leaders.

The book moves between warning and hope, judgement and mercy, and exposes what happens when people use power for themselves while still acting religious.

BOOK STRUCTURE

- Chapters 1–2 expose injustice, land theft, and the crushing of vulnerable people.
- Chapters 3–5 confront corrupt rulers, priests, and prophets, and point to a future shepherd-king from Bethlehem.
- Chapters 6–7 present God's case against His people, reject empty ritual, and call for justice, mercy, and humility.
- The book ends with hope: God forgives, restores, and remains faithful to His covenant promises.

1. OPENING — NOTICING GOD

- Prompt: "Where did you see God at work this week?"
- Opening question: "Have you ever had a moment where you thought, 'That's not right,' even though everyone else seemed fine with it? What helped you notice?"

2. UNDERSTANDING THE PASSAGE

- As you look across Micah, what kinds of wrongdoing keep showing up again and again?
  Leader prompt: Notice the patterns — land grabbing, misuse of power, corrupt leadership, religious performance, and people being harmed while leaders feel secure.
- Why do you think the leaders in Micah seem so confident that God is with them, even while they are exploiting people?
  Leader prompt: Think about comfort, power, success, group thinking, and how easy it is to assume God backs what benefits us.
- Micah uses intense images — mountains melting, cities collapsing, leaders tearing people apart, swords becoming ploughshares. What do those images help us feel or understand that plain words might not?
- What kind of future is Micah pointing to in the vision of nations learning God's ways and living in peace? How does that future challenge the world Micah is condemning?
- Micah promises a ruler from Bethlehem who will shepherd God's people in peace. How is that ruler different from the leaders Micah exposes, and what does that show us about the kind of leadership God wants?

3. DISCERNMENT — WHAT IS GOD DOING?

Discernment is seeing what God is doing so we can align with it.

- Main question: Where is God at work in this passage?
- Alt question: What is God doing—and how might He be inviting us to respond?

You could prompt the group to consider in the book where God is exposing corruption, defending the vulnerable, warning the comfortable, calling people back to true worship, promising a faithful shepherd-king, or revealing mercy that people do not deserve.

4. CONNECTION TO DAILY LIFE

- Where do we see the same split today between outward religiosity and authentic faithfulness — where people look morally or religiously credible but ignore injustice, pride, or harm?
- How are power, money, influence, or systems used selfishly in our world, our workplaces, our churches, or our relationships? Where do people get squeezed while others stay comfortable?
- What tends to blind us to our sin? Reputation, busyness, group approval, political loyalty, comfort, fear, or success? How might God be trying to wake us up?

5. ENCOUNTER MOMENT

- Take a few minutes of silence.
- Ask God: 'Where are you speaking to me right now?'

6. PERSONAL CHALLENGE & REFLECTION

- Micah 6:8 says God is ask us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Which of those feels most challenging for you right now, and why?
- Where do you need God to confront you, correct you, or show you mercy, at the moment? How would you know?

<u>Reflection</u>

- Where do I need God's hope right now?
- Who near me needs God's hope now?
- How is God inviting me to walk humbly with Him?

7. RESPONSE — ACTION STEP

The message of Micah is not a to do more. It is a call to walk humbly with the God of hope.

Review together these practices. How might these suggestions work for you?

<u>1. Start each day with hope</u>

- Read Micah 7:18–20
- "God, help me hope in You— in who You are and what You promise."

<u>2. Notice where hope is needed</u>

Pay attention to a person, a moment, a struggle.

Do not rush past it. Ask: "How is God inviting me to bring hope?"

<u>3. Offer hope</u>

- Speak encouragement
- Give practical help
- Pray with someone

8. CLOSE

- Personal: "How do you sense God is inviting you to respond?"
- Communal: "What is one concrete step we sense God inviting us to take this week