

Title:     **“WHEN I FALL...”**

Text:       Micah 7:8

Subject:    *The Falls of God’s Saints*

Date:       Tuesday Evening — May 1, 2012

Tape:       *Micah #27*

Readings:  *Larry Brown and Bob Duff*

Introduction:

It is a great mercy of our God that we commonly fail to appreciate, a mercy for which none of us are sufficiently thankful that the Lord God graciously hedges us about with strong restraints of providence and omnipotent grace, keeping his people from those grave, outward sins that give Zion’s enemies occasion to blaspheme the name our God and mock his gospel. He plants his fear deep in the heart and causes a well of living water to flow through the soul, and keeps us (for the most part) from great acts of iniquity in our outward lives. How we ought to thank him for this great mercy every day, every hour, every moment! Yes, it is true...

- Sometimes **that man who has found grace in the eyes of the Lord** will be found in a drunken stupor, with his shame uncovered, in naked sin before the reprobate; and the reprobate will have

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

a hey-day exposing the shame. — (Noah and Ham)

- Sometimes **a man of great faith will choose to pitch his tent toward Sodom** and choose to stay in the chosen place of wickedness! — (Lot)
- Sometimes the mighty **Samson** will lay his head in Delilah’s lap!
- It has happened that **a man after God’s own heart** has committed adultery and even murder! — (David and Uriah)
- Sometimes even **the wisest man upon the earth** will bow to the will of a wicked wife and worship at the altar of an idol. — (Solomon)
- Once in a while **a great preacher** will deny the Lord Jesus. — (Peter)
- Sometimes to **most soundly orthodox and most useful and used preacher** will shave his head and take a Jewish vow! — (Paul)

Such sad falls do occur. They are plainly recorded in Holy Scripture for our learning and admonition; but they are not common occurrences. For the most part God’s saints in this world are graciously kept from such outward displays of iniquity and sin.

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

- By the Restraints His Grace!
- By the Restraints His Providence!

Having said that, I must hasten to declare that though we are usually kept from grave and gross outward wickedness, the righteous do fall and all who are righteous know that they fall seven times in a day. — “*A just man falleth seven times*” (Proverbs 24:16). — “**Seven times!**” That is to say, — “In the totality of his being, in all that he is and does, the righteous man, the just continually falls!”

With that said, I want you to open your Bibles to the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Micah. My text will be Micah 7:8.

“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD [shall be] a light unto me.” (Micah 7:8)

The title of my message is **“WHEN I FALL...”**

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD [shall be] a light unto me.” (Micah 7:8)

When Micah says, “*When I fall,*” he is not saying “I might possibly fall.” He was in the midst of describing his present fallen condition and asserting the certainty that he would fall again. Micah does not say, “If I fall.” The faithful prophet says, “*When I fall!*”

**“WOE IS ME!”**

This chapter begins with a sorrowful note of lamentation. —“*Woe is me!*” This mournful cry we often hear falling from the lips of truly faithful men in the Book of God. Unlike the “happy clappy” religious hypocrites of our day who pretend that salvation is all sugar and smiles, faithful men are honest men.

**Illustration:** “*I don’t have a sinful heart.*”

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

When **Isaiah** saw “*the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple,*” cried out, as if pierced to the heart by a view of Christ’s glory (John 12:41), “*Woe is me! for I am undone — because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips — for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts*” (Isaiah 6:5). **Jeremiah** expressed the same thing, when he cried, “*What sadness is mine, my mother. Oh, that I had died at birth!*” (Jeremiah 15:10). When Ezekiel’s roll was written within and without, there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe (Ezekiel 1:10).

But **what was the cause of Micah’s lamentation?** Why was he so mournful? There were many things that greatly disturbed him. Micah knew that **the professed church of God was in a terribly low condition.** Babylon was about to swallow up Zion! This faithful man greatly lamented the **moral corruption and debauchery** of the world in which he lived. That is clearly written in verse 2-6. But the thing that crushed him, the thing that broke his heart, the thing that brought him to his knees in humble,

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

brokenness and contrition before God was his own deeply felt sense of the fact that **his own soul was barren, unfruitful, and empty** (v. 1).

“Woe is me! for **I am** as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: [there is] no cluster to eat: **my soul** desired the firstripe fruit.”

**There is no greater source of continual sorrow for God’s saints than the sense of our own barrenness.**

We would be fruitful in every good word and work. We would be “*filled with those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God*” (Philippians 1:11). **But when I contrast my own miserable unprofitable condition,** my coldness and deadness of heart, my proneness and propensity to every evil, my backwardness and disinclination to that which is good, my daily wanderings and departings from the living God, my depraved affections, sensual desires, carnal lusts, and over much love of this world, — When I contrast those glaring realities of life, which I cannot deny, with what I see and know should be the fruit grace

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

growing in me as a fruitful branch in Christ the only true Vine, I am compelled to cry with Micah, “*Woe is me!*” So it often is with God’s saints.

**Isaiah** — “From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, [even] glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.” (Isaiah 24:16)

**Job** — “Thou hast filled me with wrinkles, [which] is a witness [against me]: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.” (Job 16:8)

**Paul** — “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24)

**LAMENTATIONS 3**

Read the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Lamentations and hear the cries of God’s weeping prophet, the cries of a

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

broken-hearted sinner saved by God’s pure, free grace in Christ.

“1 ¶ I [am] the man [that] hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. 2 He hath led me, and brought [me into] darkness, but not [into] light. 3 Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand [against me] all the day. 4 My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. 5 He hath builded against me, and compassed [me] with gall and travail. 6 He hath set me in dark places, as [they that be] dead of old. 7 He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out: he hath made my chain heavy. 8 Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer. 9 He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone, he hath made my paths crooked. 10 He [was] unto me [as] a bear lying in wait, [and as] a lion in secret places. 11 He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate. 12 He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. 13 He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins. 14 I was a derision to all my people; [and] their song all the



**“WHEN I FALL...”**

day. 15 He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood. 16 He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes. 17 And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity. 18 And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD: 19 Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. 20 My soul hath [them] still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.”  
(Lamentations 3:1-20)

**When Rebekah** found two nations struggling in her womb, she asked (Genesis 25:22) the Lord a question every believer often asks — “**Why am I thus?** *And she went to enquire of the LORD*” This is exactly what Paul experienced (Romans 7:18-21).

*“I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing...The evil which I would not, that I do...When I would do good, evil is present with me.”*  
— Why? Why am I in this condition? Why is sin so prominent in my nature? Why is evil always present with me? Why is there a constant warfare in my soul?

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

**These are questions** that I am frequently asked by concerned souls who honestly acknowledge their sin. And these are questions I frequently ask myself.

**The Word of God alone supplies us with the answer to them.** — *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:6). It is as simple and as profound as that. **All true believers are people with two natures** — *“Flesh”* and *“Spirit.”* Those two natures are constantly at war with one another. The spirit will never surrender to the flesh and the flesh will never bow to the spirit. **We do not live after the flesh or walk in the flesh. We live after the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. And those who walk in the Spirit do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Yet, while we live in this world, we never escape those lusts.** We will never be free from *“the body of this death”* until we have dropped this body in death.

**Painful as this condition is, it is best for us, while we live in this world, that we live in this condition for three reasons.**

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

1. We must never forget that the only thing that distinguishes us from other people is the distinguishing grace of God (1 Corinthians 4:7).
2. We must never forget that our only ground of acceptance with God is the blood and righteousness of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30).
3. We must never become content with our existence in this world (2 Corinthians 5:1-9).

**TWO ARMIES**

Turn to the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Solomon’s Song, and hear how God’s Church describes herself. — **Song of Solomon 6:13.**

“Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.” (Song of Solomon 6:13)

**Four times the Lord Jesus says**, “Return, return, O Solyma, return, return.” How willing Christ is to have us in his fellowship and communion!

- Return to me.

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

- Return to your first simple faith.
- Return to your first tender love.
- Return to the place where we first met. — The Cross.

**Now catch these next loving words.** Our Lord says to his beloved, he says to you and me — *“Return, return, that we may look upon thee.”* Our dear Savior seems to say, “You have not been with me much lately. You have neglected my Word. I have seldom heard your voice, or seen your face. Return, return unto me, that I may look upon you. If you return, I will look upon you again. I will show you my face again.”

- I will look upon you in love.
- I will look upon you in forgiveness.
- I will look upon you in kindness.
- I will look upon you in pleasantness and satisfaction.

**But then, in the second part of verse 13,** we hear the bride, the church, the people of God speaking. Being convinced of her own sin, being full of shame,

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

she confesses her frustration with herself. She thinks that there is no beauty in her, nothing in her that he could want to see. — *“What will ye see in Solyma? As it were the company of two armies.”*

**She is saying,** “There is nothing in me but conflict and confusion. In my heart two armies are at war. If you look upon me, you will see a raging battle, good fighting evil, light contending with darkness. I am not worth looking upon. I am a house divided against itself.” Is there something in that language that you can relate to, something that is true to your experience? I know this...

**Proposition:** This is a true and accurate description of God’s people. All God’s elect experience inward conflicts between the flesh and the Spirit continually.\*

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\* A man that is regenerate and born of God consisteth of two men, namely the “*old man,*” and the “*new man.*” So that one man, inasmuch as he is corrupt with the seed of the serpent, is an “*old man;*” and inasmuch as he is blessed with the seed of God from above, he is a “*new man.*” Inasmuch as he is an “*old man,*” he is a sinner and an enemy to God. So, inasmuch as he is regenerate, he is righteous and holy and a friend to God, so that he cannot sin. One man therefore which is regenerate well may be called always just,

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

**Divisions:** ——— **“WHEN I FALL...”** That’s my subject. — **“WHEN I FALL...”** — I want to talk to you very plainly and honestly about the falls of God’s saints, these inward conflicts which cause us so much pain and trouble.

1. These inward conflicts are facts in every believer’s life.
2. This conflict is caused by and begins with regeneration.
3. These inward conflicts do have some good effects.
4. These inward conflicts are have their comforts, because *“when I fall I shall arise”* and *“when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a Light unto me.”*
5. These inward conflicts will soon be over.

**A FACT OF LIFE**

**These inward conflicts are facts in every believer’s life.** The believer’s life is not all sweets. It is not all joy and peace. Faith in Christ will bring some bitter

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and always sinful: just in respect of God’s seed and his regeneration; sinful in respect of Satan’s seed and his first birth. — *John Bradford*

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

conflicts, which will cause God’s child much pain, much toil, and many tears. All of you who are God’s children know what I am talking about. The struggles between the flesh and the Spirit are evident enough to you. To the unbelieving, unregenerate religionists, true Christians are confusing paradoxes.

- We are the happiest and the most mournful people in the world.
- We are the holiest and the most sinful.
- We are the richest and the poorest.
- We are men and women who possess perfect peace, yet we are always at war.

**We see traces of this conflict throughout the Song of Solomon** (1:5; 3:1; 5:2).

**Song of Songs 1:5** “*I am* black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.”

**Song of Songs 3:1** “By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.”

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

**Song of Songs 5:2** “I sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is* the voice of my beloved that knocketh, *saying*, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, *and* my locks with the drops of the night.”

**We see these inward conflicts throughout the Psalms of David** (Psalms 42; 43; 73).

**We see this inward warfare in Paul’s description of his own daily experience of grace** (Romans 7:14-25; Galatians 5:16-18).

(Romans 7:14-25) “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (15) For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (16) If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. (17) Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I



**“WHEN I FALL...”**

find not. (19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (20) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. (22) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: (23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24) O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

(Galatians 5:16-18) “*This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (18) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

**And we see these terrible inward conflicts in the many, relentless, unending inward falls of our own souls in our daily experience of God’s great grace super-abounding over our relentlessly abounding sin.** God’s saints have had the same struggles that you and I now have throughout the centuries.

- **John Bunyan** wrote a book about his conflicts of heart and soul — **The Holy War**.
- **Richard Sibbes** wrote another book entitled — **The Soul’s Conflict**.

1. We all have a corrupt nature within us, a nature that can do nothing but sin.
2. We also have within us a righteous nature, which would draw us into perfect conformity and union with Christ.
3. Between these two forces of good and evil there is no peace (1 John 3:7-9).

**1 John 3:7-9** “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

**TWO NATURES**

This conflict is caused by and begins in regeneration. **Spurgeon said**, “The reigning power of sin falls dead the moment a man is converted, but the struggling power of sin does not die until the man dies.” **A new nature has been planted within us; but the old nature is not eradicated.** Do not think for a moment that the old nature dies in regeneration, or even that it gets better. “*Flesh is flesh.*” (Noah, Lot, David, Peter.)

**We need no proof of what I am saying beyond an honest examination of our own hearts and lives.**

- Our Thoughts
- Our Prayers
- Our Bible Reading
- Our Worship
- Our Love Of Self

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

- Our Love Of The World

From time to time we have all found by bitter experience the truthfulness of the hymn —

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it!  
Prone to leave the God I love:  
Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.

**GOOD FOR US**

God could remove all this evil from us; but he chooses not to do so! These inward conflicts do have some good effect. Without question, we will look back upon these days of great evil with gratitude, and see the wisdom and goodness of God in all of our struggles with sin.

- Our struggles with sin humble us and curb our pride.
- Our struggles with sin make us lean upon Christ alone — *“Salvation is of the Lord!”* — *“Christ is all!”*

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

- Our struggles with sin cause us to prize the faithfulness of our God (Lamentations 3).
- Our struggles with sin upon this earth will make the glorious victory of heaven sweeter.
- Our struggles with sin make us rejoice to know that “*salvation is of the LORD.*”

It may be that we will one day see that God allowed us to fall into one evil to keep us from a greater evil; or to make us more useful in his hands.

**ASSURED GRACE**

These inward conflicts have their comforts, because “*when I fall I shall arise*” and “*when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a Light unto me.*” Go back to Micah 7:8. Read the prophet’s words again and rejoice and give thanks, if you can enter into them.

“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD [shall be] a light unto me.”

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

- We have a great enemy (Satan, the Devil, Apollyon) who rejoices and taunts us when we fall (Revelation 12; Zechariah 3)
- “*When I fall*” I cannot fall from grace! I cannot fall from my Savior’s arms! I cannot fall into hell!
- “*When I fall I shall arise!*”
- “*When I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a Light unto me!*”

**BLESSED END**

These inward conflicts will soon be over (Philippians 1:6; Jude 24-25).

- We shall be free from sin.
- We shall be perfect.
- We shall be triumphant.

**Jude 1:24-25** “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both

**“WHEN I FALL...”**

now and forever. Amen.”

**APPLICATION**

Children of God, so long as we live in this world we will be “*as the company of two armies.*” So I give you this one word of admonition — “*Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*” (Jude 1:21). Rest your soul upon Christ. He is your Sabbath!

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it].” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Amen.