

TRUTH COMMUNITY

- TEACHING GOD'S PEOPLE GOD'S WORD -

When God Tarries

Micah

GraceLife: February 25, 2007

© 2007 by Don Green. All rights reserved.

I will be preaching out of the book of Micah this morning. Some of you didn't even know there was a book in the Bible called Micah although there is. So if you want to start turning to the book of Micah and get a head start that might be a good idea.

There is a good word in the English language that we don't use that often, I like this word, it's the verb called "to tarry". It means to delay or to linger, it has some other meanings as well. But it has the idea of delay, lingering before something should happen. And it is a good word to use as we think about our God because let's face it, from our perspective God seems often to tarry in His dealings with man. The Bible says that God is a holy God and the God of justice when we see sinners prosper all the time. We see people defy His name, we see silly atheists shake their fists at the sky and say, "If you are God, strike me dead" and nothing happens. We see that all the time—where is the justice? God is tarrying.

On the other side of the equation, the Bible says that God is always good to His children and He is a faithful God. But you and I know that Christians suffer, sometimes for long periods of time during their lives here on earth. And when God tarries either in His justice or seemingly tarries in His grace, everybody, Christian and non Christian alike (That's a comprehensive set, you are either a Christian or you are not, there is no in between) when God tarries, everyone is in danger of misinterpreting life and eternity. To use the precise theological term that I learn in my studies at the seminary, we all tend to be spiritual knuckle heads. We think we've got it figured out based on what we see that's going on right at the moment. But we've got it all wrong if that's all that we are using to try to figure out what is going to happen in the future, what the outcome of any event or any series of circumstances in life is going to be. I don't hesitate to say that that's absolutely true.

When God delays the execution of His justice, when sinners prosper in seeming defiance to His law, the sinner thinks that God is indifferent to his sin, maybe God doesn't see it, or even worse, he thinks that God approves of his wicked lifestyle. And so he goes on doing his sinful rebellion against God, maybe without even thinking about it. There is this presupposition in his mind that he as a sinner can continue in defiance to the character of God without consequence—what foolish mistake.

On the other side, when God allows a Christian to suffer even deeply or He allows a society to deteriorate in the face of Christian prayers to see that change, the Christian may get discouraged

or have his faith shaken, “Where is God in the midst of my trials? Where is God in the midst of my suffering? Doesn’t He hear my prayers?” And God is tarrying in the process.

So whether it is a cocky sinner or a shaken Christian, at least one of the root causes of their spiritual error is the same, it is absolutely identical. They are wrongly evaluating God’s future intentions based on present circumstances, based on what they see. The sinner is deluded by his prosperity, the Christian can be thrown off track by his present suffering, both of them totally misjudging God’s intention and what God will ultimately do.

We need to correct that situation. It is not fitting for any of you to be in that situation either as a sinner or as a saint. We need to correct that and try to address that this morning, we are going to take a look at this nearly forgotten Old Testament book of Micah. Micah’s name means who is like the Lord. Who is like the Lord and we will come back to that a little bit later.

Just a briefest of historical background because I know I would venture to say that none of you did your devotion in Micah this week. If anyone wants to raise their hand and tell me I’m wrong about it, I’ll be happy to be surprised—any takers? No, just me, that’s great.

Just a briefest of historical background because historical background is important. You remember that God called David to be the king of Israel and he reigned over Israel in glory in the midst of war and all of that, but he was the singular king of the entire nation of Israel. After his reign his son, Solomon came and reigned in even greater glory, his greatness was unsurpassed among the kings of his day. But shortly after Solomon’s death, the people went in to sin and the kingdom quickly divided. There were two kingdoms that were now in existence, the ten Northern tribes of Israel in the Northern kingdom called Israel and their capital city was Samaria. The Southern kingdom was two of the Jewish tribes called Judah and its capital city was Jerusalem.

And as we come to the book of Micah, we are going to see those capital cities called out in particular. Now the book of Micah is structured around three cycles of judgment and grace. I’m not going to spend a lot of time on this. The first two chapters is one cycle of judgment and grace, chapters 3-5 is another cycle of judgment and grace and chapter 6-7 is yet another cycle. I say that just to kind of let you know what the structure is. For our purposes today, we are going to treat this book according to its themes rather than its literary structure so we can get through the material.

As we open up the book, look at Micah 1:1 as Micah introduces his book:

The word of the Lord which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Now that little verse there tells us a lot about this book. Micah himself was a man from Moresheth, he says, and that was a little small area in the hill country about 25 miles south west of Jerusalem, it was kind of an isolated rural area. And think about that for a moment, here is Micah raised up to preach against the cities of Samaria and Jerusalem, the capital cities where all

of the power of the nations was concentrated. Here he comes as a man from the country to be the prophet of God in that situation. A country boy as it were, but God raised him up to preach to princes and to cities. Always a mistake to judge a man by his origins, it is where he is at now that matters. Micah was raised up as a prophet of God and if you look at chapter 3:8, here is what he said about himself, the power of this man's ministry:

On the other hand I am filled with power—With the Spirit of the Lord—and with justice and courage to make known to Jacob his rebellious act, even to Israel his sin.

And so God called up this man from the country to go to the capital cities, filled him with His Spirit, filled him with courage, filled him with divine understanding to declare God's judgment upon the wicked nations. And he mentions the reigns of three kings here in verse 1—Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Just to give you a little bit of understanding, those kings reigned over about a 50-year period in the southern kingdom of Judah. Micah's ministry, even though his book is relatively short and he is basically a forgotten prophet among Christian churches today, he was a man who was known among the contemporaries in the religious scene at that time—his ministry lasted over 50 years. Most scholars believe that his book is a collection of messages that he delivered during that span of time. But during most of that period, Micah was preaching in the midst of serious national corruption and spiritual decline during the reign of King Ahaz—see, Ahaz is listed there in verse 1.

I want to turn your attention to 2 Chronicles, you can turn back to 2 Chronicles, back in front of the Psalms, in front of the book of Job. Again, we are just setting the context here to be able to appreciate Micah's ministry. In 2 Chronicles 28 you see the Lord's assessment of Ahaz's reign as king and it is bleak. 2 Chronicles 28, beginning in verse 1:

Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king, and he reigned 16 years in Jerusalem; (Capital of the southern nation of Judah) and he did not do right in the sight of the Lord as David his father had done. But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; he also made molten images for the Baals. Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom and burned his sons in fire, (Did you get that? Burned his sons in fire!) according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel. He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places on the hills and under every green tree.

The Bible condemns the leadership of this man, condemns him for leading the nation in to idolatry, condemns him for leading them in to such perverse worship that they even sacrificed their children to idols. The entire national life had been corrupted in a way that goes beyond anything that we have ever known even in this country—we're probably headed there, but that's another story for another time.

The prophet Micah, this man filled with courage, filled with the Spirit of the Lord, steps in to that polluted situation and denounces sin and calls the people to repentance. Now understand that when Micah began his ministry, the people were still enjoying a measure of national and economic prosperity. Even though everything was corrupt internally, things were corrupt in their

worship, corrupt in their leadership much like what we enjoy today, there was this measure of external prosperity going on. And the people of Micah's day just like people of our day today are lulled to sleep by the fact that God tarries in His judgment.

How do you wake up in the midst of that? How do you find what God is really doing? Can you just go by external circumstances? No, obviously not. If you want to put it in theological terms, these people in Micah's day just like people in our day today are mistaking God's common grace for His redeeming grace. The fact that God sends the rain on the righteous and the unrighteous, the fact that He lets people enjoy a measure of prosperity, a measure of happiness, a measure of satisfaction in what they do is not an indication that they are rightly related to Him, that common grace is not an indication that they are not enemies of God.

If you are in the midst of that, what do you do? How does someone wake up from their slumber when God is tarrying in His judgment? First point that I would lay out for you today is:

1. Contemplate God's Awful Judgment

What we are going to see in Micah (and we are going to go through this rather quickly) is that God's judgment is pervasive, it is intensive, it is broad and it is deep, it is more than just judging an occasional act of adultery, more than just judging an occasional lie. God sees omnisciently, He sees comprehensively and the areas of His concern are broad. We see first of all that God is going to bring awful judgment on:

A. Corrupt religion

Look at chapter 1:2 with me where Micah declares:

Hear O peoples, all of you; listen O earth and all it contains, and let the Lord God be a witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple.

Micah, as it were, calls all of humanity to bear witness as God brings the case against His people. And in verse 3, he begins to declare the judgment in very vivid language. He says:

For behold, the Lord is coming forth from His place. He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth. The mountains will melt under Him and the valleys will be split like wax before the fire, like water poured down a steep place.

Why is this judgment coming Micah? Verse 5:

All this is for the rebellion of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the rebellion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? (the capital city) What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? (the capital city) For I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the open country, planting places for a vineyard. I will pour her stones down in to the valley and will lay bare her foundations. All of her idols will be smashed and all of her

earnings will be burned with fire and all of her images I will make desolate, For she collected them from a harlot's earnings, and to the earnings of a harlot they will return.

In these verses, God is calling the nations to be a witness to Him as He testifies against Israel. It has the picture of the courtroom scene, the people are the jury who are called and asked to evaluate God's case against Israel. And He opens His case by declaring judgment against their pervasive idolatry, the high places. The harlot's earnings referring to cultic prostitutes who were the engine that ran all of the false idolatry of that time. God says I'm going to pour down stones, I'm going to lay bare her foundations. What He is talking about is He is going to raise up the nation of Assyria and sweep through these people and judge them, never to return. God says in effect, I see your false worship, I see your corrupt idolatry and I will not tolerate it. They had strayed from the true God, the God who had revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, established His covenant with David and they had strayed from all of that and now they were going to pay the price.

Beloved, as false religions proliferate in our day, as the Mormons and Catholics and others gain seeming acceptance in even evangelical circles with no seeming consequence to that, self-appointed evangelicals scholars saying we embrace you, let us find our common points of agreement instead of declaring the word of God and saying, "No, you are corrupt, you are false, your worship is damnable," beloved, when you see that going around and when you see God tarrying in His judgment against that, don't be deceived. Don't think that things are spinning out of control because God will judge all corrupt religion when it is all said and done—this is terrifying to think about. But God meant what He said in John 4:24 when He said:

Those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in truth.

He meant what He said about Jesus Christ in Acts 4:12 when He said:

And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.

He meant what He said in Galatians 1:8 when the apostle Paul said:

But if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Beloved, God judges false worship. Christianity is the only true religion (for lack of better term). It is only those who have repented and put their faith in Christ along that will be saved from coming judgment. There are not multiple ways to God, there is one way and every other way leads to damnation. The idea that all religions or at least most of them somehow lead to God in the end is a demonic lie. We should grieve in our hearts and squirm in our seats when we realize that the billions, the billions of people who are enmeshed in false religion who will never repent and put their faith in Christ will be condemned to hell for ever because God judges all corrupt religion—so this is serious, this is profoundly serious. And the fact that we don't see God just exercising His judgment on a continual bases should not cause us to fall asleep. We

should take seriously what the Bible says about this and be committed all the more to the preaching of the gospel, both on a corporate level and individually.

But it is not just that God judges corrupt religion when Micah calls down His judgment upon:

B. God judges corrupt relationships

Having condemned the corrupt worship of the nations of Israel and Judah at the time, He now turns His attention to some of the outworkings of false religion. Look at Micah 2:1 where He says:

Woe to those who scheme inequity, who work out evil on their bed! When morning comes, they do it, for it is in the power of their hands. They covet fields and then seize them, and houses, and take them away. They rob a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.

He is directing these words to the powerful wealthy of the society of that time, the people who had the power to take advantage of less fortunate people, take advantage of the poor without consequence because there was no one in leadership who was holding them accountable. No one in leadership was protecting the little guy. And Micah steps in and condemns that—I love that, I absolutely love that. I love the fact that God is a Father to the fatherless and protector of the widows. I love the fact that God cares about justice, don't you? I love the fact that God's holiness is extended not only to the protection of His own name, but the protection of people who cannot protect themselves.

It is the responsibility of the leadership whether it is spiritual leadership in the church, business leadership, a man in his household, a mom with her kids or any other kind of leadership that has any kind of authority attached to it. Beloved, if you have authority, God has given it to you to exercise it for the benefit of those who are under your authority not to promote your self-interest, not to advance your own case because the people under you cannot do anything about it.

Think about this beloved, what did the Lord Jesus Christ do with all of His authority, with absolute sovereignty—what did He do? John 10:18, He came and voluntarily laid down His life. That's what you do with absolute authority, you absolutely serve. Mark 10:45:

I did not come to be served, but to serve and to give my life a ransom for many.

Absolute sovereignty, unchallenged authority and He is a servant? Boy, would I love to see that implemented in all areas of authority throughout every relationship that we know—it would turn a lot of things completely upside down. If you have authority, understand that God will hold you accountable for how you use it and if you are using it to abuse people or to simply push them around because you can, you ought to tremble in the sight of God.

Micah looked at the wealthy people of the land and called judgment upon them. Leaders were taking advantage of the weak to advance their own personal gain and Micah brings them back to

the truth that they were losing sight of in the midst of their prosperity as God tarried in His judgment. But God avenges the oppressed. People who use their clout to take advantage of others or simply to promote their own gain set themselves in opposition to a powerful God of justice—praise God for that.

And so whether it is political or financial or simply relational authority that has been abused, mark this down as a certainty, mark it down as an absolute certainty. Those abusers are living on borrowed time, God's judgment on that is certain, particularly since the coming of Christ and we have seen what a man with absolute authority does. For a Christian in the face of the example of Christ to be an abuser and to lord it over other people is an absolute abomination. God may tarry in His judgment on that, we may not see it in our life time, but understand, He will not leave it unaddressed. Look at what Micah said to the people of his day in verse 3 of chapter 2:

Therefore thus says the Lord, "Behold, I am planning against this family a calamity from which you cannot remove your necks; and you will not walk haughtily, for it will be an evil time. On that day they will take up against you a taunt and utter a bitter lamentation and say, 'We are completely destroyed! He exchanges the portion of my people; How He removes it from me! To the apostate He apports our fields.' ..."

What Micah is alluding to is that in 722 BC, just a few short years after he made this prophecy, Assyria came and conquered Samaria, conquered Israel and all of a sudden these people who were wealthy and powerful, who had been abusing those under their authority, all of a sudden everything had been taken away from them. And these apostates came and owned the land and the tables had been turned.

Beloved, mark it as an absolute certainty that God in His awful judgment will put an end to the arrogance of the proud. He will judge those who abuse their authority. Micah tells the people of his day foreign armies are going to come and carry you off in to exile and you will never come back. If they were not awake, it should have woke them up.

Beloved, what I want you to see is that is how seriously God views sin. I don't know how else to say it. We get so accustomed to sin in our own lives and in the society all around us, we are so accustomed to it in our entertainment and everything else that we just diminish it and think that God views it as lightly as we do, as lightly as you do, but don't be deceived. You want to know how seriously God views sin? Here is one way among many others. In the context of Micah, in God's surpassing holiness, His pristine purity, His absolute justice, God removes nations if that's what it takes to put an end to it.

People were corrupt in their religion, they were corrupt in their relationships, the clear testimony of the Bible at that time was that God raised up the nation of Assyria to go in and bring judgment upon them, to be His hand, His instrument of judgment—it is awful in the holy sense of that word, terrifying. The book of Hebrews says:

It is a terrifying thing to fall in to the hands of the living God.

The people of Israel were just about to experience that. But there was a little bit more that Micah condemned in his ministry. It was not just that God was bringing awful judgment on corrupt religion and upon corrupt relationships, also:

C. God brings judgment upon corrupt rulers

This is kind of an expansion of the prior point, chapter 3:9. As you here this, I want you to just picture people that are in control of the temple, people who are in control at the levels of power, people that the common guy couldn't even begin to approach. And here what this mighty prophet of God says as he addresses them in chapter 3:9:

Now here this, heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel who abhor justice and twist everything that is straight, who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with violent injustice.

There is that theme of justice go through it, leaders that should be composed or contributing to justice, motivated by justice or twisting all of that—verse 10:

Who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with violent injustice.

Verse 11:

Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, her priests instruct for a price and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord saying, "Is not the Lord in our midst?"

The national leadership abuse their positions for their self-interest and to gratify their greed. Instead of promoting justice and welfare, judges took bribes to determine their decisions—“You’ve got a dispute? Who’s got the most cash?” Priests taught for money, prophets gave favorable words for pay. Everybody just opened their wallets and that was the means by which they acted. Notice there at the end of verse 11:

Yet they lean on the Lord saying, "Is not the Lord in our midst?"

They did all of that corruption in the name of the holy God of Israel out of blasphemy, it was total blasphemy. They claimed to be in God’s favor and have His protection as they were violating every single law that He had ever given to the nation about how society was to be run. Beloved, they misjudged the situation because God was tarrying in His judgment. They were living on borrowed time and the clock was ticking.

Let me step back for just a moment to say that if you have ever been under the influence of dominating leadership, ever been under the influence of false teachers and suffered the consequences of that, understand that God was condemning that all along. Don’t impute to God the sins of your leadership. God is holy and when leaders abuse their authority like that, their time of accounting is coming.

Look at the judgment that Micah proclaimed in Israel's day, look at verse 12 of chapter 3, speaking to these leaders who were arrogant and proud and deceitful and wicked and unjust, Micah looks them straight in the eye and says:

Therefore, on account of you Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest.

God is going to plow you up like a field. This country will fall on account of you, corrupt leaders. Judgment was coming, but they didn't believe it because things seemed good at the time. It is the same mistake sinners make today that somehow God must be satisfied with them because they are enjoying a measure of peace and prosperity at the moment and they never take their lives and submit it to the judgment of God's word, but they would never make such a foolish mistake.

Do you want to know a practical way to know that's true? Do you want to know a very practical way to know that sinners are completely misapprehending their situation? Simply, they sleep at night. How could a sinner sleep at night if he really understood the situation, if he really understood the holiness of God, if he really understood that God was going to call him to account and hold him accountable and then on his current path, nothing but the bottomless pit of the fiery hell lays ahead—how could you sleep at night? How could you not just tremble in cold sweat on your bed when that's what lies ahead of you? Anyone that understands that couldn't possibly sleep at night. But they carry this false sense of security because they misjudge God simply because He tarries.

Back in 2 Peter, chapter 3, let me read this to you, this problem is identified throughout the Bible. 2 Peter 3:3, Peter says:

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lust and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

Peter says the coming judgment escapes their notice. In their mocking and arrogance, they completely miss the most salient point.

My friend, if you are not a Christian, this should rock your world, this should cause your mind to collapse under the terror of the coming judgment of God. Everything is wrong, nothing is right for you. Judgment is coming, God is just tarrying for a little while longer. Use His delay to seek His mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ while you still have time—that is the only sensible thing to do in light of God's awful judgment.

But the prophet Micah like so many of the Old Testament prophets does more than shows us God's awful judgment. He taught the Jews then, he teaches us today to look at the second point of God's character as He carries:

2. Contemplate His Amazing Grace

When Micah was declaring God's judgment with such clarity and conviction, with such certainty, a judgment that history has vindicated to the finest detail, Micah also told the faithful remnant, that small believing core that were still in the nation that God had not cast Israel away forever. Look at chapter 4:1, the contrast of this is striking. Chapter 4:1, Micah says:

And it will come about in the last days...

Notice "in the last days" looking beyond the immediacy of the judgment upon the nations, looking beyond that, Micah says:

And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords in to plowshares and their spears in to pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war.

(Verse 5) Though all the peoples walk each in the name of his god, as for us, we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever.

What is he saying here? The thrust of it is this, Micah says, here is going to be this near term judgment coming, but faithful remnant of Israel, that is not going to be the end of our nation. Looking beyond that judgment, looking toward the last days, God will not cast His people off forever. God is one day going to gather the people, the Jews back in to a position of prominence and the Messiah will reign over us in a glorious reign of peace and righteousness that all of the nations will submit themselves to. What kind of God is this that He would declare judgment, yet His judgment would not cast His people away forever?

We believe that that coming time of peace and prosperity is what the Bible describes in Revelation 20 as the millennium kingdom where Christ will reign over the earth in the time of peace, in the time of glory. Look at chapter 5:2 where God gets even more specific about the nature of that coming kingdom. In the verse that Matthew quotes that Christ fulfilled His prophecy, in verse 2 he says:

But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.

When God Carries

© 2007 by Don Green. All rights reserved.
truthcommunitychurch.org

For the sake of time, look at verse 4:

He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth.

You remnant of Israel, your ultimate ruler is going to be one who existed from the days of eternity. He could only be speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ here when he says, your ruler is one day going to reign over all of the earth in total glory, in total majesty, He will be great to the ends of the earth and He will be our peace. Verse 5 was a great message to the small remnant. God's judgment was going to be coming and from all outward appearances at that time it looked like God had abandoned His people, but He was going to tarry in His grace.

But Micah comes to those people, to those who were suffering under their leadership and were going to see their country judged, Micah comes and assures them that God was not going to lose sight of them in the process. He wouldn't cast the nation aside forever. In the more distant future, Messiah would come and reign in glory and prominence and the Jews of that time will experience the blessing of all of that—God will never forget His people.

It is that same kind of ultimate triumph of God's grace for His people beloved that you have to come back and contemplate as well. God may tarry, God may allow you to suffer, but He never abandons His people in the end, it is that great faithfulness of God. Sometimes we get a little foretastes of it, don't we, when He gives us such great faithfulness in the midst of this life. But ultimately the apostle Paul would say:

I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come; nor powers nor heights, nor death, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Beloved fellow-Christian, as you suffer now, rise above that by contemplating the amazing Grace of God. Don't get swallowed up in your circumstances. Don't sit down and just dwell in the muck of that and complain and question and wonder where is God in all the midst of it. God will prove His faithfulness to you in the end, maybe you will see it in this life, you will surely see it in heaven. So don't misjudge your circumstances because God tarries in His grace to you beloved. So when trials are upon you, come back to this grace and say, "Father, I know you are going to be faithful to me in the end." Worship Him now before you see the outcome.

What kind of God is this? Awful judgment, but amazing grace. He judges Israel and yet promises them a future. He looks on you in sin and yet forgives you in Christ. What kind of God is it where absolute holiness kisses amazing grace? That has implications in your life, Micah lays them out and I'll go through it real quickly. In light of all of this, the awful judgment of God and yet His amazing grace, Micah brings application to all of this:

3. Contemplate Your Approach to Life

Look at chapter 6:6:

With what shall I come to the Lord and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves?

(Verse 8) He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

How do you respond to a message like this? You respond with righteous behavior that springs from your heart commitment to the Lord. You deal fairly with men, you do good to them, you live in fellowship with God. Beloved, what I want you to see is this, it is not that complicated, responding to this is not that complicated. Look at chapter 7:7. In the midst of your struggles, take the tone that Micah did. When judgment was coming, he says:

But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.

You wait under the burden of trial and expect God to bless you in the midst of it.

We will close at the end of the book, chapter 7:18. Micah draws all of this together in a worshipful response that is part of your approach to life. In total wonder and amazement at the character of God, having seen such glorious visions, both of judgment and of grace, Micah says:

Who is a God like you, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession?

He is saying, God, you could judge us, but you show us grace, who is like you?

He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, He will cast all their sins in to the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob and unchanging love to Abraham, which you swore to our forefathers from the days of old.

Who is a God like this? His dealings with His people demonstrate His character. He does not tolerate sin at all, but He is a God of mercy to those who come humbly to Jesus Christ in repentant faith. Beloved, if you know Him, your sins rest in the bottom of the sea, never to be taken in to account by God in His dealings with you again. God keeps His promises, He delights in unfailing love, He delights to forgive sinners, He delights in truth. So what do you do? You worship Him and you worship Him now before you see how life comes out because this great God of judgment, this holy God of judgment (and get this) God of amazing grace is worthy of your trust and obedience.

Let's pray.

Father, we have covered such a sweep of history and a sweep of your character from justice to grace, from judgment in 700 years before the time of Christ to stretching out to that which is still future to us, our minds quiver under the magnitude of all Father. But we as your people worship you. We thank you that you are a God of justice. We thank you that your holiness will be vindicated, righteousness will prevail in the end even though in your grace and wisdom and in your time your judgment tarries. Father, while it tarries, we pray for those who don't know Christ for that window of opportunity you would use to bring them to saving faith that they might escape the horrible wrath that is to come that, that be true for everyone who hears this message. But beyond that father, as we see your intentions for future history for the return of Christ and how you are going to allow us to be a part of that O God, when we see our faith in you fully vindicated in a visible way, Lord we rejoice and thank you for that hope. I pray that as you tarry for us, that we will be found faithful to glory of forgiveness of sin, to trust you even when life seems to be totally opposed to that trust and to know that ultimately you are going to bring us in to your kingdom, bring us in to your family where we will see Christ face to face and be with Him forever. Father, it comes out good for us in the end. We believe you for that and we will wait expectantly and trustingly until that day is fully realized. Thank you for all of the drops of mercy and the showers of mercy that we see because they are tokens of a greater grace yet to come.

We thank you for that in Jesus' name. Amen.