

Lifegroup notes from Sunday 23 October 2022

Reading: Micah chapter 6

Part 6 of Twelve Ripples brings us to Micah



Micah helpfully lists the three Judean kings that ruled Judea during the time of his prophetic ministry: Jotham (750–735 B.C.), Ahaz (735–715), and Hezekiah (715–687). Once again, this is the time that the Northern Kingdom has been seeking to strengthen itself by making political allegiances with neighbouring countries, and has found itself in the midst of battles between the rapidly changing regional powers.

Micah is a kind of legal drama, indeed the very first chapter reveals God bringing a charge against Judea and Samaria (the Northern Kingdom), and the following chapters detail the way that the people of God have broken His laws.

It's a long list, and includes, idolatry (1:7; 5:12–14); unlawfully taking the property of (often weaker) people (2:2, 9); King failing to give Godly leadership (3:1–3, 9–10; 7:3), religious leadership failing (3:11), the corruption of the prophetic ministry (3:5–7, 11); seeking to offer sacrifices without truly repenting (6:6–7); cheating in business practices and being violent (6:10–12).

As in other writings by the minor prophets, there is judgement coming, however Micah introduces a new perspective, that judgement is to lead to restoration, that God's discipline is meant to bring us to the place of fully participating in the works of the kingdom. Micah 7:8-end reveals a picture of restoration and hope.

Finally, Micah reveals that God has a requirement. Not just that sacrifices will be made, but that His people would live lives in the light of who is and what He has revealed in the law and prophets. It is summed up in three positive statements; Act Justly, Love Mercy, Walk Humbly.

Just in case we fall into the error of thinking this is just an Old Testament idea, superseded by Jesus (I really have heard teaching that suggests God doesn't need us to do anything), we read Jesus description of the life that attracts the approval of heaven in Matt 5:1-11.

As Christians, sometimes we need to hear that challenge to press on towards maturity. Part of this growth is to realise that we were saved with a purpose, not just to come to faith and be thankful for our salvation, but rather to dedicate the remainder of our lives to living for God, and living God's way; to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly. The work of the Spirit is to produce the kind of lasting change that reveals this new way of life.

Some questions

- What encouraged or challenged you in this message?
- Taking a look at the list of things that went wrong for Israel, are any of these more important than the others? Why?
- If we were writing a similar list today, what else could we include?
- Have you experienced the discipline of God in your life? If so, would you share something of that story?
- Micah sums up what's needed from us as; Act Justly Love Mercy and Walk Humbly. What do each of those things look like for us in the 21st century?
- I made the link with Jesus' teaching of the Beatitudes in Matthew. Although we can add nothing to the work of Salvation God has done in Jesus – what is it He now requires of us?