

### **Micah 3:5-12**

Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets

who lead my people astray,

who cry 'Peace'

when they have something to eat,

but declare war against those

who put nothing into their mouths.

Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision,

and darkness to you, without revelation.

The sun shall go down upon the prophets,

and the day shall be black over them;

the seers shall be disgraced,

and the diviners put to shame;

they shall all cover their lips,

for there is no answer from God.

But as for me, I am filled with power,

with the spirit of the Lord,

and with justice and might,

to declare to Jacob his transgression

and to Israel his sin.

Hear this, you rulers of the house of Jacob

and chiefs of the house of Israel,

who abhor justice

and pervert all equity,  
who build Zion with blood  
and Jerusalem with wrong!  
Its rulers give judgement for a bribe,  
its priests teach for a price,  
its prophets give oracles for money;  
yet they lean upon the Lord and say,  
'Surely the Lord is with us!  
No harm shall come upon us.'  
Therefore because of you  
Zion shall be ploughed as a field;  
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,  
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.

### **Sermon**

Micah is a prophet himself. One who was called to proclaim God's truth to the people of God, the people who walked beside him along the way of faith.

Yet, he writes these words to other prophets of his day who call for "Peace." And his words are hard words, but they still ring true.

- Because he knows that the Peace that they call for is no Peace at all.
- The Peace that Micah condemns is the peace of a satisfied few.
  - It is the peace of those who have something to eat, while other stomachs rumble. It is the peace of those with a warm place to sleep and a source of income that doesn't put them in the path of danger. It is the peace of those whose lives won't really be affected by who is elected. It is a static kind of peace. A cease-fire and a stalling that doesn't really solve the problems that we face. It is the peace of those who don't need the world to change.
  - But this peace they proclaim is not the peace of God.
- When God speaks of Peace, in the Bible, God refers to a very different idea of what peace is. God uses the Hebrew word, "Shalom" and that is the word that Micah uses here. And it is something much bigger than a pause in the argument, or stopping where we are and deciding we've gone far enough.
  - Shalom is a whole other world. One where all living things will flourish together.

- Theologian Cornelius Plantinga said that “It is the webbing together of God, humans, and creation - with justice, fulfillment, and delight.”
  - Shalom is the way things ought to be.
- And Micah proclaims that any good prophet must know that this is not the way things are today. Not in his time, nor in ours.

Still we live in a way that leaves God’s good creation less hospitable than when we found it. Still, we choose the ways that seem best in our own eyes, rather than the ways of God. Still we exclude our neighbors from our prosperity and our communion - because of the way that they look, or the language they speak, or the family they happen to have been born in to. All this while we know, that God’s Shalom would require that all would thrive together, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

- And even though we know we haven’t yet arrived at the fullness of God’s peace, there will be times when we are tempted, to give up somewhere along the way. Because the journey toward God’s Shalom requires humility and sacrifice. The way is not easy. And it requires faith, and hope, and the hard work of love.
  - There will be times when we will long to settle down. To get comfortable here in the world we are in. We might become like those prophets of Micah’s day, who find a way to take advantage of the injustices and inequalities of this world.
  - We might want to build homes and barns and places to store up all this world’s bread for ourselves, even though we know it will not satisfy us in the end.
  - We will be tempted to decide that we’ve gone far enough on God’s journey, and to declare that God too will be content, with the way things are.
- But Micah’s warning comes
  - to remind us that we have no right to press pause on the work that God is doing or slam the brakes on God’s journey toward wholeness for all.
  - And that if we choose to stop here, only part-way through the journey, then we will lose our guide and we will lose our way.
    - For the darkness will settle in around us
    - And our dreams will disappear
    - And we will cease to hear the the words of our Lord
      - Not because God has ceased to call, but because God has kept on moving and we have chosen to stay behind. For God will never give up on his good dreams. God will not forsake His promises. And God will continue to lead all those who strive for true peace and justice, toward the good Shalom that awaits us all.
  - Every time we try to settle for less than God’s kind of peace, when we build up our houses and barns, before we’ve reached the end, God will tear them down and plow them under, until we deny the things of this world, put on our walking shoes, and take up God’s good journey once again.

So don't settle for what you have here, but keep up the Good Struggle. Keep fighting for God's Justice & Peace. Keep journeying on, toward true Shalom. Not in this world, but the next. The one that God is building now.

- You will know it when you get there:
  - For bread will be broken and shared
  - The lion will lie down with the lamb
  - The foolish will be wise and the first will be last
  - No one will stand on the outside looking in, but all will walk beside the Lord who loves them as God's people, forgiven and made whole.
  
- All will be just as it ought to be
- And all will delight, for we will be right at home. Amen.

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