**Baggage Week 2 - Micah**

**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:**

(Check Series Road Map)

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

Share a story of a time you or someone you know bullied someone or wronged someone.

**Tension (What’s the Struggle):**

God is the Judge of our wrongs.

**Text (+ Supporting Text):**

Micah 1:2

Micah 2:3

Micah 5:2

Matthew 2:5-6

Micah 6:8

**THP**:

Let go of the injustice you’re holding on to.

**Supporting Points (Not Required):**

N/A

**Application (Call to Action)**:

Prayer walk.

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

***THP/Main Points – Bold***

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

(Share a story of a time you or someone you know bullied someone or wronged someone.)

When I was in college at Purdue, I lived in a Cooperative House where 60 guys all lived together. And while I was in this house for three years, we did a lot of fun stuff together. We played video games, we watched basketball, we broke bread, and more. We even had traditions, such as volunteering at Ross-Ade stadium together, building a water volleyball court in our backyard, etc.

But there were some traditions that I honestly look back on now and think were quite stupid. For example, we had this tradition called “10 cereal.” Now to “10 cereal” someone meant getting a group of guys to surprise attack someone, pin them to the ground, and slap their stomach red until they were able to yell out 10 cereals. And so, me and my buddies would go around the house and do this over and over again throughout each school year.

Until one time when I was a senior, as I walked into my room after a long day of classes, I, myself, was attacked by 5-6 guys and 10 cereal-ed. They beat my stomach red for what felt like an eternity. Finally, I was able to blurt out 10 cereals, and they stopped. But, it was too late. The damage had been done. And as I laid there on my floor for the next 10 minutes trying to catch my breath and let the pain slowly go away, it was in that moment that I realized I never wish that upon anyone ever again.

You see, I had been bullying people. I had been wronging them over and over and over again. But what happened once it came to me? What happened once it came time to receive my judgment? Well, I recognized the injustice I was committing. I recognized my wrongs and immediately regretted them. Not only that, but I wanted to be better moving forward.

**Tension (What’s the Struggle):**

And so tonight, I want to look at a story of someone that also wanted to be better moving forward. More specifically, someone that wanted God’s people to be better moving forward. I want to look at one of the most popular minor prophetic books of the Old Testament—and that is Micah. And when people that know the book of Micah hear of it, there are two common themes that immediately come to mind…judgment and injustice.

Now to give you some context, Micah, like Hosea, lived during the time of the divided kingdom of God’s people. In fact, most scholars believe that the two prophets were alive at the same time, along with the prophet Isaiah.

And so because we can assume that they lived during the same timeframe, we know that what we discovered about God’s people at the time in last week’s message on Hosea still reigns true in this context—God’s people were very much astray. They had drifted far from God and looked to various ways of fulfilling their fleshly desires. The Israelite people had been filled with such worldliness and darkness that their lives were centered around idol sacrifices, materialism, sex, drunkenness, theft, and more.

Well, students…couldn’t we say the same thing about the people of today? I mean seriously, just think about it. In the last year or two alone, there have been several police brutality and mass shooting cases. George Floyd, the Uvalde school shooting, etc. Not only that, but cancel culture has flooded the scene. Dave Chapelle cancelled for standing up for those that believe in heterosexuality, Will Smith cancelled for standing up for his wife, and more. Not to mention the riots and acts of injustice towards our national leaders. Look at the words being said and the crimes being committed towards government officials for gas prices, the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision, and more. Our country, and honestly, our world is in such a time of turmoil.

We straight up bully each other as human beings today. And the Israelite people did the same; they wronged each other time and time again. And not only that, but they wronged God too. And so to put it bluntly, God wasn’t too happy about it.

Right off the bat in Micah 1:2, we see God say through the prophet Micah,

Hear, you peoples, all of you,

 listen, earth and all who live in it,

that the Sovereign Lord may bear witness against you,

 the Lord from his holy temple.

We then see God to be even more harsh and straightforward in Micah 2:3 where it says,

Therefore, the Lord says:

“I am planning disaster against this people,

 from which you cannot save yourselves.

You will no longer walk proudly,

 for it will be a time of calamity.”

**Text / Truth (+ Supporting Text):**

You see, the Israelite people sinned against each other, and they sinned against God. And you know what? We do the same. But God despises injustice. He looks down upon those that wrong others, and He especially looks down upon those that wrong Him. That’s exactly what we just read!

And so students…here’s what I want you to take away from tonight… you need to **let go of the injustice you’re holding on to**.

*\*\*PAUSE\*\**

**Let go of the injustice you’re holding on to**.

Are you bullying people (like I was)? It’s time to stop. Are you holding a grudge? It’s time to let go. Are you gossiping about someone you don’t like? Quit it. Are you lying to your parents about something? Give that up. Are you breaking the law? Stealing, getting drunk, smoking, etc.? It’s time to stop. Are you talking people into having sex with you? It’s time to lay that down!

Now, what I don’t want is for you to mishear me on this…what I’m NOT saying is to let go of the ways people have wronged you. It’s one thing to forgive, which was last week’s message, and it’s another thing to forget. So again, I’m NOT saying to forget the ways in which others have committed injustice towards you.

What I AM saying is to let go of the ways you wrong others; simply stop mistreating, judging, and committing injustice towards people.

This series is all about releasing the things we’re holding on to; it’s about letting go of the baggage that’s weighing us down. Well friends, we all carry and live out injustice. We all carry ways in which we judge, look down upon, and even wrong others.

But God calls us to something better. God calls us to **let go of the injustice we’re holding on to** so that we can pick of the justice He desires. Because when you let go of injustice, you become open-minded in a way that is inviting and embracing to God’s heart.

You see, although we just read about how God brought judgment on the people of Judah—and He used Micah to communicate that—God ALSO used Micah to bring hope; God used Micah to speak of coming restoration. So, you see, there’s a third theme to the book of Micah…a theme of restoration.

Micah 5:2 says,

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,

 though you are small among the clans of Judah,

out of you will come for me

 one who will be ruler over Israel,

whose origins are from of old,

 from ancient times.”

Micah’s job wasn’t to just communicate God’s judgment. Micah’s job wasn’t to just communicate God’s righteous anger towards His creation’s injustice. Micah’s job was much bigger than that; Micah was given the responsibility of prophesying God’s great plan to restore His people. Micah was given the responsibility to communicate the Good News. Because **the Good News isn’t about judgment…the Good News is about restoration**!

And you know how God planned to restore His people? Do you know what that “Good News” was? Do you know who Micah was referring to as “one who will be ruler over Israel”? The answer is Jesus.

We see that in the first Gospel of Matthew, where it says in Matthew 2:5-6,

5 “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

6 “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,

 are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

for out of you will come a ruler

 who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

Matthew is referring to the prophet, Micah! Matthew knew what Micah was getting at. Matthew knew of the significance Micah had on those around him.

Again, this series is focused on the minor prophets of the Old Testament. And their job was to not only prophesy, but to act as mouthpieces of God, street communicators of Yahweh, and messengers of the Good News!

Students—your job is to do the same! If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you are to bring Jesus to others by mouth. Not only that, but you are to bring Jesus to others through your actions! Again, **the Good News isn’t judgment…the Good News is restoration**.

Do your words communicate that? Do your actions communicate that? If the answer is no, then it’s time to **let go of the injustice you’re holding on to**. Only then will people recognize the way you choose to be set apart and live different; only then will people see the Good News of Jesus.

**Application (Call to Action)**:

Choosing to let go of injustice–to let go of your judgement and wrongdoing–means that your corner of the world sees more of Jesus.

I mean, think about it…a community that didn’t name-call, didn’t bully, didn’t judge, didn’t seek to wrong their neighbor…THAT would stand out.

As followers of Christ, it is our job to be Kingdom builders. It is our job to live out God’s will on earth as it is in heaven. To show our corner of the world a different way.

And so how do we do that? How do we practically help be part of the change? Well, this is something that Micah also spoke to, in one of the most famous Bible verses ever.

Micah 6:8 says,

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

 And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

 and to walk humbly with your God.

Three things…act justly…love mercy…and walk humbly with your God…that’s it!

Now, those three things are easier said than done. So to help be more specific and direct, let’s look at each of these.

1. Act Justly

Again, in Micah’s time, materialism was a big thing. There was a huge gap between the rich and the poor. There was socio-economic inequality. And so given this context, when God says to act justly (or act according to what is morally right), He probably means to take care of the poor and needy.

So, my question to you is, how are you treating the poor? I mean let’s be real for a second…a lot of us in this room fall into the “rich” category. And so knowing this, would you say you spend more headspace thinking about yourself and your material needs? Or are you actively taking steps to help and fight for those that are in material need? Are you thinking about those that need clothes, food, or a roof over their heads? If the answer is no, then it’s time to act!

The next time you have a free weekend, go spend some time at the homeless shelter serving food. The next time you have an outfit crisis because there’s too many clothes in the closet, go on a purge and donate some to Goodwill. The next time you drive by a homeless person, spare them some change. Or at the very least…acknowledge them! Wave. Say hello. Heck, pray for them!

Whatever you feel you need to do to act justly…do it.

1. Love Mercy

Students, if you love Jesus, you should love mercy. To love mercy is to love being compassionate and forgiving to others.

This is exactly what we talked about last week. And so if you were here last weekend, and you wrote down on a piece of paper either (1) someone you needed to forgive, or (2) an action step you needed to take towards forgiveness, can I ask…did you do it? Did you go to that person you said you needed to forgive? Did you take that action step you wrote down? If not, let this be a reminder.

And if you weren’t here last weekend, then now is your chance. Who do you need to forgive? What do you need to do in order to let go of unforgiveness? I’d encourage you to think about that, and either write it down, or tell someone. That way, you’re held accountable.

1. Walk Humbly with God

To walk humbly with God means to walk in a way that shows or suggests a modest estimate of one's importance in comparison to God; it means to carry yourself in a way that prioritizes God and not yourself. To walk humbly with God means to always have God at the forefront of your mind, because He is preeminent—He is above all things.

And so tonight, I want to lead us through something we’ve never done before. Tonight, I want us to practice walking humbly with God by going on a prayer walk.

Now some of you are probably wondering, “What’s a prayer walk?” A prayer walk is exactly what it sounds like—its praying while walking. And so here in a minute, I’m going to walk us outside, and we are simply going to walk. No talking. No cracking jokes. No bumping into your friend just to break the tension of silence. We are just going to walk. And while we walk, I want each and every one of us to be praying to God.

Not sure what to pray about? Well, here’s a start. Pray for the injustice you see in the world. Pray for the people and families involved in and affected by mass shootings, police brutality cases, and whatever else stirs your heart. Then from there, pray as you feel led. Pray in whatever way you need to to keep God at the forefront of your mind. What is God trying to say to you? What injustice is He trying to reveal in your heart? Ask, and He will listen. Listen, and He will speak.

So…are you ready? On the count of three, no speaking. Ready? 1…2…3…Let’s walk.

*\*\*Walk for 5 minutes around your campus\*\**

Alright, you can go ahead and grab a quick seat.

Friends I hope that was as pleasant, slowing, and renewing for you as it was for me. Know that you can literally do that whenever!

But again, before we close, let me remind you one last time…just like God wanted to restore the Israelites, He wants to restore you. **Let go of the injustice you’re holding on to** so that He can help store up or pack up justice in you.

Let’s pray.

*\*\*GENERAL PRAYER & CLOSING\*\**