Micah 6:1-8

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Thank you for joining us.

I have a great appreciation for these minor prophets. You know, the minor prophets are often overlooked, but I want to remind you that they are not minor in quality.
They're simply minor in quality, in quantity. It's just the length of their books that are small. The major prophets get a lot of attention because they're longer. They have more to say. These guys had very little to say in comparison, or at least little was recorded.
This morning we're going to be in Micah, and I find Micah so interesting because he's not only overshadowed as a minor prophet, but he's also overshadowed in the fact that he served at the same time as Isaiah.
In fact, there are portions of Isaiah and Micah that are almost word for word identical. Isaiah 2, 2 and 4. Micah 4, 1 and 3. Almost identical. And Micah's ministry lasted for over 20 years during the reigns of many of Judah's kings.
[1:42] Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Micah is placed around 740 to 710 B.C. And we're going to see all that right there in Micah 1.1.

This verse also tells us that Micah is from the town of Morsheth. And similar to Amos, he's actually from a rural area of Judah. And it's just another reminder that God uses ordinary people to do great things.
I think that Micah is very applicable to us today because he's living in a culture that's very similar to ours. There's a desire for people to worship, but there's not really evidence of it in their outward life and the way that they're living.
He's living in a pagan culture. And he's living in amongst people that are very self-centered and focused on themselves. And you may be thinking, I'm not sure that that is similar to Mustang, Oklahoma.
But I see a lot of people in our culture who are caught up in cultural Christianity that say they have a desire to worship or say they want to have something to do with the church or say they are a Christian, but their outward life does not reflect that.
[2:47] I think we live in a very self-centered society, much like the Israelites, ancient Israel of this time. And you may be thinking, hey, I don't know that we're living in a pagan time.

But I would absolutely push back and say we are absolutely living in a pagan time. Last week I mentioned I was in L.A. and I was there for the Puritan Conference. John MacArthur preached. And he says we are paganism 2.0. That we're killing babies in the womb. That we're mutilating our children. And we aren't just doing these things, but we're celebrating them.
We're absolutely in a pagan culture today. So I think we have a lot to glean from Micah and what he has to say to ancient Israel. And I think we need to heed what he says.
And we need to learn from Israel. And it's just like what we sang. We're singing of the things that God has done for us. He's redeemed us. He's saved us. He sent his son to die for us.
[3:45] But Israel, they didn't heed the advice of their prophets and their leaders. They didn't listen to what they had to say. Listen to what our leaders have to say.

Listen to what God's word has to say. Because we have a great redeemer in Christ Jesus. God has done an incredible work among his people. Micah is going to announce destruction and judgment on Israel and Judah.
because of the corrupt lifestyles that they're living, the broken justice system that is in place. Let me give you a quick highlights, a few highlights of some of the high points of this book.

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In Micah 1 through 2, the prophet announces judgment on the people in the cities of Israel. Micah says in 2, 12 through 13, he says, I will surely assemble you, all of you, O Jacob, and I will gather a remnant of Israel, and I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men who open the breach and goes up before them.
They break through and pass the gate going out by it. Their king passes on before them, the Lord at their head. So the prophet is going to go back and forth between announcing judgment and condemnation, and then he'll come up for air time to time to remind us that we have a great hope that's coming.
[5:08] To remind the Israelites, hey, it's okay. It's going to be okay. Yes, you're a sinful people. Yes, you need to repent. Yes, you need to get right with the Lord. But God still loves you.

He still cares about his people. Then in chapter 3 through the first part of 4, Micah calls out the political leaders and the prophets in Israel for the injustices that they have committed, for the bribes that they have accepted.
Verse 3, chapter 11, sums this up well. It says, Its heads give judgment for a bribe. Its priests teach for a price. Its prophets practice divination for money.
Yet they lean on the Lord and say, Is not the Lord in the midst of us? No disaster shall come upon us. They're using God like a lucky charm. They're saying, hey, we're God's chosen people.
So whatever we do, that's okay. Nothing's going to happen. They think that they are going to go without consequence just because they're God's chosen people. And church, I'm here to tell you that we do the same thing.
[6:07] We knowingly step into sinfulness each and every day. Thinking, hey, on the back end, God will forgive me. It's all right. God, I was saved, so it's all good. Forgiveness and grace and all those good things.

It'll be all right. Instead of pushing back and staying away from evil, we get as close to evil as we possibly can. And often we cross the line into evil.
Just treating God like a lucky charm. The English Standard Version gives us two headings in this passage in chapter 6, verses 1 through 8.
The indictment of the Lord and what does the Lord require. However, I'd like to offer these three headings to you this morning. First, we're going to consider God's people in the courtroom.
God's people in the courtroom. Next, number two will be what the Lord has done for his people.
What the Lord has done for his people.
[7:09] And third, we'll consider God's expectations or his requirements for his people. His expectations or his requirements for his people. If you're looking for a title, you could simply call it Micah 6, 1 through 8.

I don't have a title. So let's read this together. Chapter 6, verse 1, the prophet Micah says, Hear what the Lord says.
Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth. For the Lord has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel.
O my people, what have I done for you? How have I wearied you? Answer me. For I brought you up out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and sent you before Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
O my people, remember what Balak, king of Moab, devised, and what Balaam, the son of Beor, answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal? Now you may know the righteous acts of the Lord.
[8:14] With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves, a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with a thousand rams and ten thousand rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for the transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Has he 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?
So let's start in Micah 6, verse 1. Number one, God's people in the courtroom. God's people in the courtroom.
Verse 1, it says, Hear what the Lord says. So first of all, we are called to attention. The people of God are called to attention. This is not just a prophet speaking. This is not just a man speaking.

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But this is God speaking through the prophet. He is a spokesman for God. Now we should stop and listen to what he has to say. Then he says, arise, plead your case.
[9:20] So Micah presents a statement. He sets it up like we're in a courtroom. And the Israelites are being accused of doing something wrong. They're the defendants. They are on trial.

Then he says, before the mountains, let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth. This is odd language. We don't talk like this.
Never has my son come home from school. And I said, Maverick, tell me what thy have done today at school. Listen, grasp to what he has to say.
I've never done that. Because that's weird. But Micah is trying to make a point. He's trying to point out something that is very important for us to understand. And that is that even creation itself bears witness to who God is.
Look at Romans 1, verse 18 for a moment. It says, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
[10:24] For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world, and the things that have been made.

So they are without excuse. God doesn't need our help to prove who he is. He has put himself and his glory and his power and his creation on display.
Creation bears witness to who God is. Imagine for a moment that the mountains could tell us about creation. And that the mountains could talk about God's hand crafting them and building them up. And imagine for a moment if the oceans could cry out and tell us about how God separated them from the land. They would bear witness to who God is and how powerful and how great he is.
Creation tells us who God is. Just by being creation, just by being there, the world points to their being a God. So creation was there as God created.
[11:32] And creation was there as God delivered Noah from the floodwaters. And he was there as he led his people through the Red Sea. Creation was there and present. And if creation could speak, creation would tell us how great and how incredible our God is.

Look for a moment at the Gospel of John, verse 1. Chapter 1, verse 1. It says, In the beginning was the Word, with a capital W, and the Word, capital W, was with God.
And the Word, capital W, was God. He was in the beginning with God, and all things were made through him. And without him, not anything was made that was made.
So obviously we know that this Word, with a capital W, is Jesus Christ, the second member of the Trinity. And it says that everything was made through him.
And I believe that if creation was able to speak, if the mountain really had a mouth to speak and a mind to understand and eyes to see, that the mountain would tell us, God created everything. He is powerful and supreme.
[12:39] And his son, Jesus, was there. Mankind, hold fast. Because a Savior is coming. And Micah's bringing attention to that. Even creation knows how great God is.

But we miss it. The hills and the oceans that don't have a mind to think, they get it. But we can't understand. We have totally missed it.
Messianic King has been promised. And Micah declares this throughout his book, that Jesus is coming.
And even creation has seen him. It says, For the Lord has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel. So we've set the stage.
Like a prosecutor, Micah instructs the Israelites to plead their case. Not to Micah, but instead to the judge himself, to God on high. Micah has called creation to the witness stand.
[13:38] They proclaim God's awesome power and his tender goodness. And the Lord speaks to his people. And Micah quotes him directly. So God is beginning to speak here. Verse 3 says, Oh my people, what have I done for you?

How have I wearied you? Answer me. Number 2, what the Lord has done for his people. This is not an expression of anger as much as it is an expression of confusion.
God is saying, hold on, wait a minute. What have I done? How have I wearied you? Think about what God has done for his people.

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And he says, oh my people, to open up. This is a phrase of love and care. He's a good father that cares for his own.
He's provided for them. But the people are not living in a way that reflect his goodness. And that is a standard that God has, that we would live in a way that reflects his goodness. Creation doesn't become a child of God.
[14:48] Creation is not bought with the blood of Christ. Creation is never indwelt the Holy Spirit. But we are. We are saved and we become children of God.

So all the more we should be bearing witness to who God is. All the more we should be a reflection of how great and how glorious God is. And just like the Israelites, we fail at this regularly.
God has set humanity higher than creation. Genesis 1.28 says, God tells Adam and Eve to fill the earth and subdue it.
Have dominion over it. So our voice should be much louder than that of the mountains or the oceans or the seas. And God expects us to be a witness both in speech and in action.
Consider for a moment Matthew 22. The Pharisees go to Jesus. They ask him, teacher, what is the great commandment in the law? And he says, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
[15:50] This is the great and first commandment. The second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. It's Matthew 22, 36 to 39. These two commands go hand in hand.

They support one. You don't have one without the other. You can only have evidence of the first in your life that you love God if you have the second that you love your neighbor as yourself.
Think about the Ten Commandments. You have the first four that are all directed towards God. The last six that are all directed towards other people. The way we treat people around us, the way we love and care for people around us is the reflection of who God is in our life.
So if we aren't loving people around us, we clearly don't have a relationship with God. That's not what saves us, but is the marker of our salvation.
If you have more questions about that, feel free to corner one of my Crossroads students. We've talked extensively about brotherly affection in Sunday school out of 1 John.
[16:51] So I'm sure any of them can give you a full synopsis of the book and what we've been talking about. Right? So I hope. So again, he says, Oh, my people, what have I done for you?

How have I wearied you? Answer me. And this is really a fascinating statement from the Lord because it doesn't focus on a list of misdemeanors. Micah has announced multiple times what the people have done wrong.
But here, when he calls them to the courtroom and he puts them on trial, in this situation, there's no list of misdemeanors. There's nothing. He doesn't list a bunch of things that they've done wrong. Instead, God turns and he focuses on himself and what he has done.
And in very simple terms, what's going on here is that people don't understand or appreciate what God has done for them. And they are now living in an unrighteous manner that is essentially a rejection of who God is.
God asks, how have I wearied you? God wants to know how he has made it so bad for his children. What he's done.
[18:01] And I know there's a lot of parents in this room now who have asked that same question of their children. How have I wearied you? What have I done as your child has walked away from the Lord or walked away from your family or taken up in a lifestyle that doesn't honor God?

You've looked at them and you said, what have I done? And it's heartbreaking, right? So for a moment, consider the sin of your own life and think about God as a parent looking at you saying, what have I done to weary you?
This should break our heart. This is a glimpse into the love that God has for his people. He cares for us. And he wants to understand, what have I done to weary you?
So what has God done? In verse 4 and 5, he's going to take us through a brief history. A few things that God has done for his people. In verse 4, I brought you up out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery.
And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. God is answering his own question here. God has not wearied them. In fact, just the opposite.
[19:21] God has brought them up. He has redeemed them. He has liberated his people the same as he has done for you and for me. God has redeemed us and broken us out of the chains and the

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bondage of our sin.

God has done an incredible work in our life. He's not wearied us. He's not wearied the Israelites. Yet we do not live in a way that reflects that.
We return to those sinful practices over and over and over and over again. We're all guilty of it. Constantly going back.
We're going back to those sites on our smartphone that we shouldn't be going to. We're going back to gossip about people. We're skipping times of fellowship that we should be a part of.
We return to sin over and over and over again. Yet God has redeemed us.
[20:24] He's brought us up out of that. Verse 5 says, And again, we are reminded of God's love and emotion.

Oh, my people. He wants them to remember what they have done. What he has done for his people. What their history is. And how he led them to the promised land. So working backwards through this verse, Gilgal was the point of entry into the promised land.
Shittim was the last place that they settled before they entered. And those things are detailed in Numbers 25, 1, Joshua chapter 2 and chapter 4. In Numbers 22 and 24, the king of Moab, King Balak, hired Balaam to curse the Israelites.
And many of these things would have been painful memories for this culture. They would have looked back and said, Wow, that was a very difficult thing we went through that God delivered us from. At least they should. So we review the history of the Israelites in verse 4 and 5.
And it's a reminder of how God has been so good to them. He's delivered them. He's fulfilled his promise to bring them into the promised land. That's the whole narrative, the majority of the narrative of the Israelite people.
[21:45] They're created in the garden. And they begin to sin. And God says, okay, I'm going to bring some redemption.

Noah, I'm going to kind of start things over with you. More sin. Gives them Moses. Leads them out of slavery. Makes a promise to Abraham and to Jacob.
puts David in place. Says the Messiah is going to come from him. On and on and on and on throughout Israelite history. It's God taking care of his people.
Delivering them. Promising them. And he is faithful. I want to try to apply some of this to our context today.
Because I think there's a lot of people that are very unfamiliar with what the Bible has to say. I think there's a lot of people that are not aware of the history and the testimony that Scripture bears of who God is.
[22:44] And how he loves and cares for his people. Have you heard the term to step out in faith? Or to have blind faith to follow God?

I think everybody has come to a point in their life where we have a moment of having to step into something. We have to trust a process or take a new job or do some new ministry or something like that.
And there's a level of stepping out in faith. Yes. But I think that the idea of blind faith can become a very subtle heresy in our life. Because we have a whole book that bears testimony of who God is. And what he has done for his people. And time and time again them stepping out. And they know that God will deliver and take care of them. Because this book tells us. And we have a church body, people around us, who God has worked in their life.
We have a history of the church that God has worked in the life of the church. So I say our blind faith should really be us stepping out in an experienced faith.
[23:47] Or a well documented faith. We should know scripture well enough to know that God is a God that delivers on his promises and will do what he says he's going to do. We don't live that way.

We turn it all around on ourselves. To ourselves. This is the trap that Israelites are constantly falling into. God delivers them. He does a great thing. Say, okay, this is great. They live for him. After a while, they get self-centered.
They say, wait a second. I want more than this. This isn't right. I don't like this. They forget their history. And they go and they do whatever they want to do. And that is what we do as a people. We forget what God has done for us.
Church, I'm telling you, we need to get back into our Bibles. And we need to look at what God has done in our life and trust him to be faithful. And our lives should reflect that.

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God has done much more than just redeem us from our sin. And we didn't deserve that in the first place. He's also taking care of us throughout our earthly lives. And he has an expectation for how we're to live our lives because of the way he is taking care of us.
[24:54] Number three, God's expectations are his requirements for his people. Verse six says, what shall I come before the Lord? And with what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first board for my transgression and the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
So now in verse six and seven, the tone begins to change. And Micah is giving us what would have been a typical response for the Israelites of that day. There is no admission of guilt, just laying on of sarcasm.
So Micah opens up with, what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? He's really asking the question, how do I go before God? How do we worship God? What do we do in response to what God has done for us?
And it's important to remember that before Christ gave his life on the cross at Calvary, that God had a sacrificial system in place.
[26:05] He had temporary place settings, atonement place settings, placeholders, I'm sorry, for people's sin. And so they would go and offer a sacrifice for their sin.

And until Jesus came, he was the ultimate sacrifice, the once for all sacrifice. And we no longer have to do that. So this says in the second half of verse six, shall I come before him with burnt offerings with calves a year old?
What is this talking about? Well, the idea here is to present a burnt offering is laying down the best of what people had in their possession or the best that they had in their flock.
Why? Because Jesus was the very best. He was perfect. He was without blemish. So they would bring the calf that had no blemish. And at a year old, the calf would have provided the very most tender meat.
And they would sacrifice it as an offering for the sins of their people to God. In verse seven, questions begin to get a little more exaggerated.
[27:06] Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams and with ten thousands rivers of oil? A thousand rams were obviously more than anyone could afford.

And ten thousand rivers of oil is just a bit absurd to even say that. And all the more, it's just pointing to the fact that this is just a childish, sarcastic hyperbole from God's people back to God.
No one can obviously make these sacrifices that are being made. These are not real suggestions. They're just a smart, alky child addressing their parent.
They're upset and they're angry. And they act as though God has put a ridiculous standard on them when it comes to their sacrificial system. And they're really just trying to make God the bad guy in all of this.
And how dare mankind address our God like this? How dare them? Yet, I think in our hearts, we do this all the time.
[28:06] Because we often think, I can't possibly give any more of my time to the church. I couldn't possibly show up for another service. I couldn't possibly serve in that way.

I've served so long. I've done so much. I can't possibly go help this person. Because I've already done all of these other things. I've already helped all these other people. How dare us think like that?
How dare us have a heart that would look at God and think, What more can I possibly do when God has given everything for us? The last question that's mentioned in verse 7.
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? And this statement is just dripping with irony. No, Israel, this is not what God has required.
Why? Because God has already determined that he would give his firstborn child for the sins of your soul. Church, God sent his son to die for our sins. He is taking care of the work of the sacrifice.
[29:12] He's done it all for us. And we simply live as a reflection of that. How has God wearied us? What has he done for us? How could we possibly give more?

Are you kidding? Church, God has done it all for us. He sent his son to die for us. Christ is our way of salvation.

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He's the savior of our sin. And if you are unsure today of where your eternity lies, know Christ today.
Come to Christ today. Don't leave this place without finding out more about who Jesus is and what he has done. Because the consequences of our sin is an eternity separated from God in a place called hell.
It's a place we don't want to be. And God gave us a sacrifice and atonement for our sin. So what does God require?
[30:17] What does God require of us? Verse 8 says, Has he told you, O man, what is good and what the Lord require of you?

And what does the Lord require of you? But to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. So these three questions that the Israelites ask, these rhetorical, sarcastic comments, there are three things that God gives expectations for the way that we live.
The first is to simply do justice. We see this in Proverbs 21, 15. When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous, but a terror to evildoers. Justice is often just taking care of those who can't help themselves.
It's handling our affairs in fairness. Taking care of the things that we're responsible for. And I'm not talking about 21st century America social justice stuff that's going on.
I'm talking about just loving and caring about the people around you. Loving people the way you would want to be loved and cared for. Next is love kindness.
[31:28] And while justice is what we do, loving kindness is who we are. We should have a deep love for people around us because God has a deep love for people. He's had a deep love for us.

And we reflect that love in the way we love other people. Last is to walk humbly with your God. We should walk humble.
We should learn to humble ourselves. We should walk humbly. Recognize that God is who he says he is and live according to his standards. Submit ourselves to him and understand our place under his authority.
This is a hard thing. Because I think so often we think very highly of ourselves. Much like those Pharisees did in Egypt or in Israel.
God led his people out of Egypt for a reason. And today God leads us out of the bondage of our sin for a reason so that we can reflect that goodness to the people and the world around us.
[32:29] If you would just look at chapter 7 real quick. Verse 18. It says, Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?

He does not retain his anger forever because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us. He will tread our iniquities underfoot.
You will cast down all of our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham.
As you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old. Micah ends his whole book on a note of hope. Here in chapter 7 verses 18 through 20.
God will have compassion on his people. He will cast our sins into the sea if we call upon him. He will fulfill the promises that he made to Jacob and to Abraham.
[33:35] He will send a Messiah and he sent a Messiah. Jesus Christ, our Savior. Let's pray. Father, we come before you in the name of Jesus.

And Lord, I'm so grateful for the opportunity to gather as a body of believers together. God, I pray that our lives would reflect that of what you have done for us.
Of what you've done in our lives to release us from the chains of bondage. I pray that we would not follow the example of the Israelites. But that we would live like Christ.
We would honor you. Submit to you. And come under your authority and your authority alone. God, if there's anyone in this room who does not know you.
I pray that you would convict their soul today. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. I'd like to remind you that if you have any questions, please fill out the card in the box.
[34:45] Amen.

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