

“Stop Preaching”
Micah 2:6-13
(Preached at Trinity, January 8, 2023)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The prophets were God's preachers. During this period of Israel's history men like Isaiah and Jeremiah preached boldly, often facing opposition and great risk. More than once Jeremiah's life was in jeopardy.
Micah was one of the twelve Minor prophets. They were called "minor" not because they were lesser than the Major prophets. It merely describes the length of their prophecies in the Old Testament. For example, the Book of Isaiah is 66 chapters; Jeremiah is 52 chapters. Micah is only seven. Obadiah is just one chapter.
2. But Micah preached just as boldly and with just as much opposition.
In **Chapter 1** Micah preached a two-fold oracle – "Woe to Samaria, Woe to Jerusalem" It was an announcement of God's condemnation upon both the Northern and Southern kingdoms. The problem was not only their wicked kings but also the pervasive wickedness of the entire nation. The entire nation was given over to idolatry.
3. Moving into **Chapter 2** Micah gets more specific.
 - In **Verses 1-2** Micah describes the depth of their corruption. They were wicked at the very heart of their being. Micah had in focus powerful men who were seeking to increase their estates at the expense of the vulnerable. It was a case of the wealthy robbing the poor.
 - **Verses 3-5** describe the consequences – "Therefore"
Micah 2:3 NAU - "Therefore thus says the LORD, "Behold, I am planning against this family a calamity "
4. While Micah was preaching God's judgment upon the land, the false prophets were preaching peace and safety.
Jeremiah 6:13-14 NAU - "And from the prophet even to the priest Everyone deals falsely. ¹⁴ "They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, 'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace."
Isaiah 30:9-10 NAU - "For this is a rebellious people, false sons, Sons who refuse to listen To the instruction of the LORD; ¹⁰ Who say to the seers, "You must not see *visions*"; And to the prophets, "You must not prophesy to us what is right, Speak to us pleasant words, Prophecy illusions."
The same is true today and will continue until the end of the age.
1 Thessalonians 5:2-3 NAU - "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. ³ While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape."
5. In these verses we find the great contrast between the false prophets and the genuine, like Micah. And we find the opposition God's prophets faced.
Micah 2:6 NAU - "Do not speak out,' so they speak out."

In other words the people and the false prophets shouted, “Stop Preaching!”
And we find the response of God’s prophets – “so they speak out.”

ESV: "Do not preach"-- thus they preach—

6. The second half of **Verse 6** is difficult to translate.
 - A. Some translate it as the sarcastic denial of Micah’s words by the false prophets.
ESV: "one should not preach of such things; disgrace will not overtake us."
CSB: "They should not preach these things; shame will not overtake us."
 - B. Others translate it as what will happen if God’s message is not preached.
What will happen if the words of the false prophets are received.
This is represented in the NASB.
Since they will not preach the truth there is no way to prevent the coming judgment.
Micah 2:6 NAU - "*But if they do not speak out concerning these things, Reproaches will not be turned back.*"
7. **Verse 7** – the faulty theology of the false prophets.
 - “Isn’t God longsuffering?” Isn’t God a God of mercy, grace, and patience? He is never be impatient – thus He will never judge sin.
 - God will reward the righteous – The presumption that since they were God’s people they were in the favor of God.
 - These covenant breakers had no expectation of God’s goodness.

Bruce Waltke – “The half-baked theologians, focusing exclusively on God’s patience and acts of salvation, either ignored or explained away those texts that taught that God’s long-suffering is not eternal. The popular theology was probably built on Israel’s famous confession in Exodus 34:6 –
"The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;"
It was built on a half-truth, for it left out Exodus 34:7 –
‘who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."
Just as dangerous today are false teachers who apply the doctrine of the believer’s security to those who disown their Lord in their lifestyles and who do not bring forth the fruit of repentance from sin.”¹
8. **Verses 8-9** – As covenant breakers they had become the enemies of God.
God’s judgment was upon them as oppressors of the poor, the widows and their children.
The helpless among them.
9. **Verse 11** – The false prophets spoke of wine, of strong drink, of delights to the senses.
There is no danger. And the people embraced their message.
Matthew Henry: “It is not strange if people that are vicious and debauched covet to have ministers that are altogether such as themselves, for they are willing to believe God is so too.”²
10. The focus of this passage is the hatred of God’s Word and His preachers. It continues today. Stop preaching! But preaching will continue.

¹ Bruce Waltke, *Commentary on Micah* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 127.

² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1534.

- I. Preaching is God’s announcement of His perfect justice. It stands as a warning.
- A. **Verses 1-2** describe the wickedness of their sin and **Verse 3** describes God’s indictment. “Therefore . . . I am planning against this family a calamity.”
1. This is further announced in **Verse 10** – “Arise and go”
 - a. There is irony in these words. They are probably the words the wealthy spoke as they evicted the women and children from their homes. “Get out!”
 - b. Now the words are spoken by God that the wealthy themselves will have to vacate their land. They will be transported as prisoners to Babylon.
 2. It will be a devastating, painful, destruction.
- B. Micah spoke these words long before they came to pass.
1. It was opportunity to repent, to turn from their wicked ways.
 2. The preaching itself was an act of mercy. **Verse 6** is saying if the prophets did not preach there was no way the reproaches would be turned back. God’s judgment would overtake them.
 3. This has always been God’s word to the wicked.
Ezekiel 33:11 NAU - "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"
 - a. Ezekiel said at the beginning of the chapter –
Ezekiel 33:1-2 NAU - "And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ² "Son of man, speak to the sons of your people"
- C. But they would not listen. They would not hear.
1. They wanted to hear smooth words.
 “I will speak out to you concerning wine and liquor” – Eat and drink, enjoy yourselves.
 2. This is the one they wanted as their spokesman. Micah implied he was nothing more than a windbag – “a man walking after wind and falsehood.”
 3. Dale Ralph Davis – “That is still the pressure; people, the culture and, sometimes, the church prefer sucking pigs. They want to control the messengers and so control the message. Even church gurus will insist that we should have no negativism in our message—no guilt, no wrong, no justice, no judgement. We must not make people feel bad about themselves. But then the cross becomes a charade, for then there is no wrath of God that falls upon the Son of God, who took my hell as his portion. If you do not hear of your sin, your guilt, your ruin, how can the cross of Christ become the shelter of Christ from those very curses.”³

³ Dale Ralph Davis, *A Study Commentary on Micah*, EP Study Commentary (Darlington, England; Carlisle, PA: Evangelical Press, 2010), 49–50.

II. Preaching declares God's tender mercies upon sinful men.

A. **Verses 12-13** produce an abrupt change of tone. Micah turns from judgment to blessing.

1. For some expositors it is too abrupt. It must mean something else. How can the message of doom change so suddenly? This was Calvin's dilemma.

Calvin – "I see not how the Prophet could pass so suddenly into a different strain. God declares that there would be a gathering of the people,--for what purpose? Not that being united together they might enjoy the blessings of God, but that they might be destroyed. As then the people had united together in all kinds of wickedness, so God now declares, that they should be gathered together, that the one and same destruction might be to them all. When the king himself was led away a captive, and cast into prison, and his eyes pulled out, and his children slain, it was the greatest of misery."⁴

2. There is no need to deny the change in tone, however. It is indeed abrupt. From scattering in **Verse 10** – "Arise and go" To gathering in **Verse 12** – "I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold"
3. How can this be? This is the Gospel!

B. Yes, our message is a message of doom. But it is also a message of hope.

1. In the midst of Micah's message of God's burning indignation against Israel he also preaches the message of the Gospel, the hope of forgiveness.
2. For all who repent and turn to Christ there is the promise of reconciliation. We go from being enemies to God's beloved children.
3. For the people of God, their King goes before them. We are gathered together under one Lord.

Psalms 18:2-3 NAU - "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³ I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies."

C. Once again we read the message of God's holy remnant

Micah 2:12 NAU - "I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. "

1. Amos also preached this message. **Amos 5:3-4 NAU** - "For thus says the Lord GOD, "The city which goes forth a thousand *strong* Will have a hundred left, And the one which goes forth a hundred *strong* Will have ten left to the house of Israel." ⁴ For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel, "Seek Me that you may live."

⁴ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets, Volume 3*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 211-113.

2. Of the multitude that departed from Egypt, only a remnant crossed over the Jordan. These were the true Israel. Paul preached this message:
Romans 9:27 NAS - "And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved;"
3. The other metaphor of our Savior to His people is that of the Shepherd and His sheep.
Micah 2:12 NAU - "I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture "
John 10:11 NAU - "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."
Psalms 23:6 NAU - "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

Conclusion:

1. This is true preaching. Yes, there is terrifying judgment ahead for all who will not repent. But there is also the promise of God's rich provision in the Gospel
 - a. True preaching must contain both messages. The problem is most people only want to hear the second half.
They want to hear we are good people who deserve the provisions of a loving God.
 - b. True preaching will always call upon sinful men to face their sin, and such preaching will often face opposition. There will always be those who shout, "Stop Preaching!" They diligently search out preachers who will tell them what they want to hear.
2. We need men like the prophets of old who did not shrink back from declaring God's Word. Or as the Apostle Paul declared of his own ministry:
Acts 20:26-27 NAU - "Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷ "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God."
3. Only sound preaching will produce the salvation of sinners, for faith comes by hearing. And only sound preaching will produce mature Christians, for it is able to build you up.
Acts 20:32 NAU - "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build *you* up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."