

Title: **GOD'S CONTROVERSY,**
GOD'S REQUIREMENT, BLESSED SICKNESS

Text: Micah 6:1-16

Subject: *God's Method of Grace*

Date: Tuesday Evening — March 6, 2012

Tape: *Micah #21*

Readings: *Darin Duff and David Burge*

Introduction:

In the 5th chapter of Micah's prophecy the Lord God promised that he would send his darling Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world to save his people from their sins. By the smiting of the Judge of Israel, by the smiting of our Substitute, the Lord Jesus, to death, God's elect, "*the remnant of Jacob*" have been redeemed and shall be saved. Having accomplished all things for us, having brought in an everlasting righteousness by his obedience in life, having put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (by his obedience unto death), the God-man, our dear Savior, sat down right hand of the Majesty on High. The incarnate, obedient, crucified, risen exalted Christ has been made "*great unto the ends of the earth,*" having power over all flesh to give eternal life to chosen, redeemed sinners (Hebrews 1:1-3; 10:9-14).

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(Hebrews 1:1-3) “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of [his] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

(Hebrews 10:9-14) “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all]. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth

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expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.
14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever
them that are sanctified.”

That’s the message of Micah 5. Christ is coming. Christ shall save his people from their sins. Christ shall be exalted. — “*And this Man shall be the Peace!*” Christ is our peace! That’s the message of chapter 5.

Now, let’s read the 6th chapter of Micah. Here we see a prophetic picture of God’s method of grace, a prophetic picture of the way our great God saves chosen, redeemed sinners by his omnipotent mercy and grace in Christ Jesus. The title of my message is — **GOD’S CONTROVERSY, GOD’S REQUIREMENT, BLESSED SICKNESS.** — **GOD’S CONTROVERSY, GOD’S REQUIREMENT, BLESSED SICKNESS** — Micah 6:1-16.

Proposition: God’s whole purpose in all that he does, especially in the saving of his people is plainly stated

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at the end of Micah 6:5. — “*That ye may know the righteousness of the LORD!*”

GOD’S CONTROVERSY

First, Micah declares that God has a controversy with man. Specifically, he tells us that God has a controversy with his people (vv. 1-5).

“**Hear ye now what the LORD saith!**” — It was through Micah, by Micah’s voice, by Micah’s pen, through Micah’s personality that God spoke; but the word spoken was and is God’s Word. Though no man, no preacher speaks with infallibility, every true gospel preacher speaks for God and is to be heard and treated as God’s ambassador. — “**Hear ye now** (“*now*” while he is speaking, “*now*” while you have opportunity) **what the LORD saith!**”

(Micah 6:1-2) “Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. 2 Hear ye, O mountains, the LORD’S controversy, and ye

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strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.”

Micah calls for the mountains and hills to hear his word and bear witness. He calls for the very foundations of the earth to bear witness to his message. It is as though he had said, “These mountains and hills that echo my voice, the very foundations of the earth that reverberate my message, shall state as witness between me and God and you and God that I have faithfully declared to you the Word of the LORD.”

Illustration: The Grandfather Witnessing to His Grandson — *“This oak shall bear witness against you in the Day of Judgment.”*

Verse 3 — **“O my people, what have I done unto thee?”** — What condescension, what mercy, what grace, what love this tender question reveals. This is the Lord God Almighty, the Holy One of Heaven, the One against whom we sin, the One we neglect, the

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One with whose goodness and mercy, with whose worship and service we grow weary! — *O my people, what have I done unto thee,*” what but good, what but mercy have I done to you?

“Wherein have I wearied thee?” — The Lord God asks us to give a reason for turning from him, to give a reason for neglecting him, a reason for our coldness, indifference, and ingratitude. O my soul, be not as Israel was, but ask the Lord speak to you rather than to the hills: *“What have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me.”* O Lord God, O blessed Savior, O Spirit of God, I have nothing to testify against You! I have very much to testify for You! And I blush with shame to that I have not done so more faithfully! Oh, that I had been more faithful, more devoted, more consecrated to You!

REMEMBER MERCY

Now, look at verses 4 and 5. Here the Lord God calls for us to remember his mercy, his great, great mercy to us. Read these two verses in their context. The

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Lord is talking about his controversy with us. He is chiding us for our sin, for our neglect of him, for our turning aside from him.

(Micah 6:4-5) “For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. 5 O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.”

How grievous it must be to our Heavenly Father when we grow weary of Him and forget His mercies! Yet, even in our shame, he reminds us that we are his. — “*O my people!*”

- By His Own Choice
- In Covenant Relationship
- One with Our Savior

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After reminding us of our blessed, unbreakable covenant union with him, the Lord God calls for us to remember what he has done for us.

“I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (v. 4).
— Remember that I broke the power of your oppressors, and led you forth into joyful freedom. Let us never forget that it was the mercy, love, and grace of God that delivered us from the dominion of sin, the bondage of the world, and the delusions of the Devil, into the blessed liberty of *“sons of God.”*

“I redeemed thee out of the house of servants.” — The price Jehovah paid to redeem Israel out of Egypt was His terrible judgments upon her enemies. But the price He paid to redeem us from guilt and sin was the life and blood of his own dear Son! — *“He gave Himself a ransom for us.”* — Remember, then, — *“Ye are not your own, you have been bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and spirit, which are his!”* **We have been...**

- Redeemed by Christ’s precious blood!

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- Brought out of death into life by almighty grace and omnipotent mercy!

Read on...

“I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam” (v. 4). — These three leaders are typical of a threefold blessing (Exodus 15: 20-21).

- Moses the Prophet (Preacher)
- Aaron, the Priest (Intercessor)
- Miriam, the Prophetess (Singer)

The Lord God gave Israel his Word by Moses, taught them to worship by blood sacrifice, and taught them to sing his the praise. Has he not done the same for us?

- He has given us his Word when few are so privileged.
- He has given us liberty of access to him, to draw near to him in worship and faith.
- He has given us songs of victory through grace!

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Then the Lord reminds us of the fact that he turned Balaam’s intended curse into His own blessing upon us (v. 5; see Numbers 22, 23, 24, and 25). Three times Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel. Three times Balaam sought enchantments against God’s chosen. Three times God turned Balaam’s curses into blessings!

From Shittim to Gilgal (from the last encampment in the wilderness to the first encampment in Canaan), God turned every curse into a blessing. So he has done and is doing for us! **The very fall of our father Adam and our fall in him, by Satan’s devices, our God has made a blessing to his elect.**

- *“The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly!”*
- The bite of the serpent shall leave no harm!
- All things work together for good to God’s elect (Romans 8:28; Psalm 76:10).
- Take no anxious thought for your life. *“He careth for you!”*

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Now, be sure you see the reason for all this. —

“That ye may know the righteousness of the LORD!”

- In Redemption!
- In Grace!
- In Judgment!

GOD’S REQUIREMENT

Second, read verses 6-8 and learn what it is that God requires of us. First, Micah raises a question, a question that you would be asking yourself if you were wise. — **How can I come to God?** Read it for yourself in verses 6-7. Here’s the question...

(Micah 6:6-7) “Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, [and] bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? 7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, [or] with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn [for] my transgression, the fruit of my body [for] the sin of my soul?”

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Obviously, the answer is — “No!”

“Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear Head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

Believing, we rejoice

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To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing His bleeding love.”

Only the blood of Christ can take away sin. Only the blood of Christ can give sinners access to God. Only the blood of Christ can satisfy all the requirements of God.

I know very few people who would disagree with that. Almost all the religious people I know, and almost all the irreligious people I know would agree with it. — “Only the blood of Christ can take away sin. Only the blood of Christ can give sinners access to God. Only the blood of Christ can satisfy all the requirements of God.” — I’ve heard many say it. Then, they point to Micah 6:8, and say, “But you’ve got to live right.” — “You’ve got to lead a good and holy life.” — “You’ve got to do what God requires.”

Is that really what Micah 6:8 means? Does Micah 6:8 contradict everything else taught in the Word of God? Does Micah here given us a garment of linen

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and wool, of works and grace? Does God’s prophet tell us that God requires something from us? — You know better!

(Micah 6:8) “He hath shewed thee, O man, what [is] good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

What is good? What does God require of me? — “*Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, [and] bow myself before the high God?*”

1. **Do Justly!** — To do justly is to confess that in ourselves, by reason of our own sin, we justly deserve wrath and indignation of the holy, Lord God. — We have broken all his laws, rebelled against him all our lives, and despised his Son and the gospel of his grace! — To do justly is offer God a just and righteous reason for acceptance with him.

- Christ’s Righteousness!
- Christ’s Satisfaction!

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2. **Love Mercy!** — To love mercy is to love Christ. He is the mercy promised to poor, needy sinners and the Performer of all mercy (Luke 1:72). — All who are born of God love mercy!

3. **Walk Humbly with God!** — To walk humbly with God is to walk before God trusting Christ alone (Colossians 2:6).

(Colossians 2:6-10) “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, [so] walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

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Verses 9-12 verify everything I have said about the meaning of verse 8.

(Micah 6:9-12) “The LORD’S voice crieth unto the city, and [the man of] wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it. 10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure [that is] abominable? 11 Shall I count [them] pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? 12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue [is] deceitful in their mouth.”

In verse 9, the Prophet says, “**Hear God’s voice.** Listen to that which God speaks to you.”

- By Conscience
- By His Word

Then, in the 10th verse Micah tells us that everything found in the house of wickedness, anything you and I bring to God from within ourselves, any works we

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perform, even our most righteous deeds are an abomination to the thrice holy Lord God!

And the 11th verse a declaration from God’s own mouth that he will never save a sinner except in a way that magnifies his righteousness, justice, and truth. Remember, his purpose in saving us is — “**that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD!**” He who is our God is both “*a just God and a Savior!*”

(Micah 6:11) “Shall I count [them] pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?”

(Proverbs 16:6) “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD [men] depart from evil.”

(Proverbs 17:15) “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both [are] abomination to the LORD.”

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(Romans 3:24-26) “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, [I say], at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

(2 Corinthians 5:20-21) “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21 For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(Galatians 3:13-14) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through

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Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

BLESSED SICKNESS

Third, God’s prophet Micah gives us one more word from God about his method of grace, about the way God saves sinners by his grace.

- God saves in a way that shows salvation to be his work alone, a work showing forth his righteousness.
- God saves all who come to him by faith in Christ.
- And God saves poor, needy sinners, sinners made needy by his grace.

That need is described in Micah 6:13-16 as a sickness. What a blessed sickness that is which God the Holy Ghost creates in the soul of man by his grace!

(Micah 6:13-16) “Therefore also will I make [thee] sick in smiting thee, in making [thee]

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desolate because of thy sins. 14 Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down [shall be] in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and [that] which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. 15 Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine. 16 For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people.”

These statements are all intended to teach us the enormity of our transgressions. Omri and Ahab his son were kings in Israel. Both were horribly wicked men. Yet, Israel obeyed them cheerfully. The children of Israel chose to follow wickedness and to despise God. — So it has been and is with all men by nature!

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But, when God the Holy Ghost creates a fasting in your soul, he will cause you to eat the Bread of Life! When God graciously forces you to bear your own sin, he will show you that the Lord Jesus bore your sin in his own body on the tree! — Our Lord Jesus still heals as many as have need of healing. Do you have need of healing? If so, come to Christ and go home rejoicing!

Amen.