

“We’re Living in a Micah Moment”

Jeremiah 17: 7-8 Micah 6: 1-8 (NRSV)

September 6, 2020 - Labor Day

by Pastor Heather

7 Happy are those who trust in the Lord, who rely on the Lord.

8 They will be like trees planted by the streams, whose roots reach down to the water. They won’t fear drought when it comes; their leaves will remain green. They won’t be stressed in the time of drought or fail to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17: 7-8

As our children and grandchildren head back to school either through e-learning or to actual classrooms, these 2 verses went thru my mind. Dakota sent me pictures of his 1st day of “at home” school Kindergarten, including lunch break with Carter. What fun to see the eagerness on his face! We want the best for all our children this school year, don’t we?

We hope and pray that we have helped them to be independent, kind, compassionate, strong, intelligent and happy. One of the things that I have been thinking about more often than these qualities is whether I have helped my children, grandchildren and now great grandchildren to trust in the Lord, and rely on Him. I know, I am a pastor, that should be a given, but with Covid-19 the past 6 months, have I truly helped them to have their own trust in God?

The Book of Micah has become one of my go-to resources lately for getting perspective about the time in which we are living. Micah looked at Israel and Judah and said in effect, “We are in deep trouble.” It is easy to look at life today and draw a similar conclusion. I’d like to encourage you this week to open your Bible to the Old Testament Book of Micah. It is short - just 7 chapters and sits between Jonah and Nahum. It is a true “gem” filled with timely instructions for our current situation.

We are living in a time akin to the one Micah lived in 2,700 years ago. It’s not the 1st time his words have spoken directly to the people since he wrote this book. History goes through cycles. Our time is one in which Micah’s message is needed. We are living in a period of history when the question “How then shall we live?” is on our minds. Micah provides us with a broad stroke answer. He does it by showing us what kind of moment we are in, and by offering guidance in how we should live in it.

Our Annual Conference theme this year is based on Micah 6: 8 DO NO HARM DO GOOD
(Walk humbly) STAY IN LOVE WITH GOD.

First, what is a Micah Moment? In chapter 1, Micah names the fundamental problem and repeats it as the book continues. It is a moment of national crisis in need of moral restoration. In other words, it is a time when according to Steve Harper, who has taught Wesley Studies to divinity seminary students for more than 30 years, “a nation is experiencing rootrot, and in

doing so bears the bitter fruit of unrighteousness”. Like every crisis, Micah reveals in the 1st 5 chapters that it is a time fraught with danger, but not bereft of opportunity. Wow! is Micah ever on target for 2020! In chapters 2 and 3 Micah exposes the root issue: leaders have defaulted on their assignment and pervert God’s will, reversing what God intended. They hate the good and love the evil” (3: 2). Leadership failure is doing great harm to the people.

But something else is happening in a Micah Moment. There is an awakening among the people. There is a stirring in the national consciousness. There is a movement mounting. Micah describes this in chapters 4 and 5. It begins small but genuine and begins to grow when people say “enough is enough”.

Sociologists call it a tipping point. It is a pivot away from passivity. It aims to topple the status quo (“the kingdoms of this world”) and restore righteousness (“the kingdom of God”). a tipping point is usually something people do not see coming, something unexpected that throws a wrench into the imperialist works. A tipping point includes a period of hesitancy (i.e. “Is this something I should get involved in?”), but as it becomes increasingly evident that the status quo has become a sacred cow no longer worthy of honor or support, more and more people find the courage to join the movement.

We are living in just such a moment - a Micah moment - when a leadership failure glossed over by false prophets has brought us to an “enough is enough” moment which ignites passion and invites participation. It is a Micah moment in that people are awakening from their sleep, recognizing they have been deceived, and taking actions that overcome evil with good.

And it is when we recognize this moment for what it is that Micah helps us answer a second question: What do we do?

Micah put it this way, “What does the Lord require of you?” (6: 8) the “you” is the people - not the corrupt leaders and false prophets. The “enough is enough” moment is one in which God turns to the people. A Micah moment is a MOVEMENT - a people’s movement. It is a resistance movement characterized by 3 verbs:

Each Verb carries an implicit meaning:

Do is a word of advocacy. We voice our values, we support the oppressed, we stand up for what we believe. This is what Eugene Peterson called “lived theology” and Dietrich Bonhoeffer defined as “the cost of discipleship.”

Love is a word of devotion - to God and to others. It is the devotion that strengthens our resolve to obey God rather than people - an obedience Micah described in chapter four of his book, the obedience Jesus named as the two great commandments (Matthew 22: 34-40).

Walk is a word of endurance. The reform that is needed is not accomplished quickly or easily.

It is achieved little-by-little, step-by-step. Sometimes it loses ground, but rather than giving into despair, we heed the Spirit who simply says, "Keep walking." As we do so, we learn the lesson of history: achievements are won by those who do not give up. One of God's repeated exhortations in history is, "Don't stop!"

DO NO HARM DO GOOD WALK (STAY) IN LOVE WITH GOD

A prayer I have read before, which some mornings I pray is:

"Lord, what are you doing in the world today that I can help you with?"

We started with our Kids and I want to end our time together with another question we can ask them. Instead of asking them what they want to be when they grow up or graduate, let's ask them what God has called them to be or do. So often we expect answers that require further study or training, but we don't expect them to tell us that they believe God is calling them to something.

Our faith isn't just what we do on Sunday mornings while we are at church, or when we become compassionate and help someone in need. Our faith needs to include helping our children and grandchildren not only trust in God for themselves, but also to listen and see what God is calling them to do with their lives.

The prayer I have for all God's children is that they are happy, trust in God and rely on God. Then they will not fear or be stressed out about life, but instead bear fruit for the Kingdom. Let's help them live out their entire lives to the honor and glory of God as we all live in the Micah Moment.