

Micah

Study 1: Who is like our God?

1. Find out how familiar with the book of Micah people are. Is it a book they have read, heard sermons on, now what it's message is or know any verses from the book?
2. How would you define idolatry?
3. Read Micah 1
4. What does verse 1 tell us about the author and the book?
5. What pictures of God do we see in verse 2-4? What is your reaction to these?
6. Why is God coming to earth? (v5)
7. What will God destroy? (6-7)
8. What do the idols that Judah and Israel had look like in our culture? What harm do these idols do?
9. Rebecca Manley Pippert wrote*, "Love detests that which destroys the beloved" How does this explain why it is loving of God to destroy his peoples idols even though it is painful for them.
*I think the book was 'Out of the Salt Shaker'
10. Verses 8 to the end Micah expresses his grief and reaction to God's message. The places he lists are probably chosen because in Hebrew they would have been play on words with what he describes there. (e.g. v10 "Beth-le-aphrah" means "house of dust" and v11 "Zaanan" sounds like the Hebrew for "come out") What point is Micah making about their idolatry?
11. How does Micah show the correct response to understanding the judgement they deserve to face? (v8)
12. Do we respond in the same way? Read James 4.4-10. Do we take idolatry as seriously as God, Micah and James? Is there some attitude or behaviour we need to change?

Study 2: Micah 2-4

God's Judgement, Justice & Mercy

Summary so far – Micah warned the people that their injustice, immorality and idolatry had left them facing God's judgement.

In this study we will spend some of the time looking at Micah 2-4 and some of the time looking at the subject of Biblical Justice.

1. Read Micah 2
 2. What behaviour is Micah describing in verse 1-2, 8-9?
 3. How would the oppressed be like today?
 4. What is God going to do in response to this?
 - First look at v3-4
 - Then 12-13.
 5. Read Micah 3.1-12
 6. How does Micah say power is being used (or misused) and who by? (v1-2, 9-11)
 7. Do we have a tendency to treat someone with more influence differently than someone with less? Or do we use age, gender, class, race, education or position to get what we want from a situation? Does this behaviour perpetuate injustice?
 8. Watch this 6minute explanation of Biblical Justice
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A14THPoc4-4>
- (if using Zoom you can screen share and display it from your computer. If you are using other platforms such as gotomeeting you might be best to share the link in the chat, ask people to watch it on their own device and come back once they have watched it)
9. What stood out to you from that video?
 10. Read James 1.26-2.5. How does what we have looked at in Micah, the video and this passage influence/change our understanding of the role we play in justice/injustice?
 11. Who around us might need support, especially in this pandemic?
 12. Where do you find hope when there is injustice around you? (If you have time it would be good to read Micah 4 and quickly pull out some of the hope we find there.

Study 3: Micah 5

To leaders: I've deliberately written more questions that you might need for one session's study. This enables you to pick and choose how you group together the questions, or omit some entirely (perhaps in favour of others of your making), to create the right study for your circumstances.

Micah 5, particularly 5: 2-6. The sermon outline above might be helpful.

- 1) *Does anyone have a funny or interesting story about 'waiting' that they are happy to tell the rest of the group? E.g queuing up to meet a famous pop-star.....*
- 2) *What are you waiting for at the moment? (This could be one or several things).*

N.B. this question is supposed to be about practical everyday/work/health realities, not "The Second Coming of the Lord" or something.

Be honest with yourself. You might, or might not, want to share every part of your answer with the group.

- 3) *In your particular circumstances, what words come to mind to describe your thoughts about such waiting?*
- 4) *How are you feeling about 'celebrating Christmas' in all this (including the newly announced COVID-19 related measures for the Christmas period)?*
- 5) *We can't know for sure, but what do you think the prophecy in Micah 5:2 might have meant to the original hearers?*
- 6) *Micah 5:3 is a hard verse to read. How do we understand or respond to that, in the light of all we have learned about Micah in the last couple of weeks?*
- 7) *Verse 4, what does the word 'shepherd' say to you when applied to Jesus, or perhaps the combination of shepherd ruler/king? Can you think of helpful Old or New Testament verses or passages which elaborate this idea?*
- 8) *How do you imagine or experience the kind of peace that we say Jesus brings, or in fact, is? You could refer to Micah 5: 5,6 or any other biblical passages that come to mind. Is it the kind of peace we might expect?*
- 9) *We've used the word radical quite a bit over the last few weeks in Church or homegroups – e.g. radical generosity, radical change, radical waiting. What does the word 'radical' mean to you?*

- 10) *What strikes you as radical about God sending God's son to live among us? Or about Jesus's willingness to be sent?*

- 11) *What perspective does that lend to any 'radical' behaviour on our part?*

- 12) *What does the hope we have in Jesus look like for you this Advent/Christmas? What do you want it to look like? (Perhaps the responses to this could lead into a time of praying for each other).*

Study 4: Micah 6

Recap

1. Recall when Micah lived, and what happened during the reigns of the kings mentioned in Micah 1:1
(Background reading 2 Kings 15-20; 2 Chronicles 27-32; Isaiah 36-39.)
2. What is biblical prophecy? What is the difference between foretelling and forth-telling? How does this difference inform the way we approach passages like this?

Micah 6

3. What is the substance of God's accusation against His people (1-5)?
4. What are events that God refers to in v4-5? What do those events tell us about God's character and His love for His people?
5. Is it fair for God to bring these particular accusations? Do we feel comfortable with the notion that God can accuse people for not obeying his word?
6. The case for the defence is set out in v6-7. Are the things mentioned there reasonable? If not, what is wrong with them? What might be modern parallels for the things mentioned in these verses?
7. V8 starts with the words, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good". Where has God shown us? How do we respond if someone says they have never been shown? What is our part as Christians in showing people?
8. How do we act justly?
9. The word translated here as mercy (*hesed*) covers so much more than just God's mercy. Read Exodus 34:6-7 where God declares his character to Moses, twice using the word *hesed* in that. What can we learn about God's character in this description?
10. Share examples of where you have experienced *hesed* from God in your life. What can we do better to love *hesed*? How will that show itself in our everyday lives?

11. What should we think of when we walk humbly with our God? What are common pitfalls for us to walk with pride rather than humility with God? How should we respond if we think that God is not fair or loving, or if we do not like what is written in certain parts of the Bible?
12. Do we really want God to show justice to us (v9-12), and how do we square God's justice with our need for his mercy and forgiveness?
13. Is God's judgement (v13-16) fair? How does God demonstrate here acting justly and loving mercy (*hesed*)?
14. Going back to v8, what will you do 'to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God'?

Study 5: Micah 7

1. In what ways have you seen people respond to set backs or great difficulties. What did you admire about the ones you felt handled it well what did you learn from those who you feel didn't handle it so well?
2. Read Micah 7
3. What is Micah reacting to in verses 1-6?
4. Micah's reaction is not to judge but lament what he sees (v1) What causes us to say 'woe is me' (what misery is mine)?
5. Micah doesn't only lament what does he do in verse 7? (three things)
6. How good do you feel you/we are at waiting for the Lord to act? If you/we struggle, why do you think that is?
7. Looking at v8-20 what will happen in the end to God's people and God's enemies?
8. Look at v18-19 & Romans 3.21-26. How does God justly deal with sin and compassionately forgive and restore us?
9. If we forget the reality of the seriousness of our sin or the completeness of our forgiveness how will this affect our relationship with God and our relationships with others?
10. If you were to sum up in a sentence what God has shown you by looking at the book of Micah, what would it be?