



Community Group Discussion Guide

October 19, 2025

Micah 5:1-5; 6:6-8; 7:8-9,18-20 | God's People Warned

MOTIVATE

⇒ *Starter Question: Think of a book or movie you've read or watched multiple times. Even though you know what's going to happen in this story, why do you still read/watch it over and over?*

DISCUSS

Every great story has its hero as well as its villain. Every great story has times of peril and times of victory. These stories reveal the truth of the history of our world: there is good and bad, and yet, there is always hope. Many of the Old Testament prophets shared both sides of the story of God's relationship with His people—His judgment and His mercy toward them.

During the reigns of Judah's kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, God sent the prophet Micah at a pivotal point in the histories of Israel and Judah. The book of Micah is classified as one of the Minor Prophets, but the term "minor prophets" only refers to the length of their messages, not the significance of their words. A contemporary of Hosea and Isaiah, not much is known about Micah, but his stern words observed the imminent fall of Samaria (Israel) as he also warned the people of Jerusalem (Judah). Micah spoke the word of the Lord and foretold the judgment, destruction, and exile that was coming due to their continued rebellion against God. Micah 5:1-5; 6:6-8; 7:8-9,18-20 emphasize that in the midst of the promise of God's judgment, there is also a message for the future, a message of hope, peace, and restoration.

⇒ *Discuss your insights into this statement: Disobedience results in God's judgment, but God's grace and mercy abound as well.*

1. Amid judgment, there is a future hope of the One who will bring peace.

Micah 5:1-6: ¹ Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. ² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵ And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men; ⁶ they shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod at its entrances; and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border.

Micah's prophecy in chapter 5 opens with Jerusalem being attacked by her enemies. At one point, Assyria was on Jerusalem's doorstep, but the future threat of Babylon may also have been in mind. "Nimrod" in verse 6 was associated with both Assyria and Babylon (Genesis 10:8-12). Micah pictured the horror of God's judgment and Israel's future exile as both excruciating and humiliating, like a rod striking someone on the cheek. Yet this note of judgment was quickly followed by a

promise of grace.

In verse 2, Micah uttered a promise to the people that is both specific and beautiful. He first made it clear that the deliverance for the people would come from a person. God would send someone who would deliver the people. He would come through the clan of Bethlehem Ephrathah, a distinct, small people living in an obscure place in Judah. No one would expect the promised One to come from there. Long before, Israel was told to anticipate a king from the tribe of Judah who would reign over God's people with perfect justice and righteousness (Genesis 49:10), though most assumed this promised King would come through a prominent clan at the center of the nation. Many overlooked Bethlehem Ephrathah, but God chose to send His promised Savior through an unexpected place to unsuspecting people.

- ⇒ *What does this prophecy about Jesus coming from Bethlehem Ephrathah reveal about the kind of Savior He will be?*
- ⇒ *When have you witnessed God using an unexpected place or unsuspecting people?*

Micah also pointed out that the origin of this Savior was from ancient times. In other words, people may have thought that God devised a new plan since Israel persisted in their waywardness. But God wanted to make clear through Micah that this was His plan all along. At the time of Micah's prophecy, the Messiah had not yet come, or to use the birth imagery from verse 3, the woman had not given birth to the Messiah. The judgment Israel endured was the birth pangs.

- ⇒ *How does it comfort you to know that God keeps His promise to out His plans?*
- ⇒ *Do we experience "birth pains" in anticipation of Jesus' return? Explain your answer.*

Micah 5 illustrates the "now-and-not-yet" property of some biblical prophecy. In verses 4-5, Micah spoke of the One who would come to shepherd the people and be their peace. This is one of the prophecies about Jesus, who came to be the Good Shepherd and the Prince of Peace. It's unclear what Micah 5:5 means exactly. The imagery of seven shepherds likely denotes a sense of perfection. Even when "Assyria" marches against the people, they would find perfect security through the promised Messiah. This Messiah will protect those He saves from a far greater exile—being cast out of the presence of God. Like a faithful shepherd, He would protect His sheep from destruction (John 10:1-18). This Messiah would do what the kings of this earth could not do; He would provide lasting peace and security.

- ⇒ *How has Jesus, the promised Messiah, brought peace and security into your life?*

Micah 6:6-8: ⁶ *"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?"* ⁷ *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, 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?"* ⁸ *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

The people of Israel and Judah knew they had blown it. Not only could they read or hear God's law and feel a sense of their sin, but the threatened and coming exile was unmistakable proof that God was greatly displeased with their persistent rebellion. Israel was trained to understand what to do

with their sin by virtue of God's gift of the law. In Leviticus 1–7, God prescribed five types of sacrifices so the people could receive atonement for their sin and once again enjoy fellowship with the Lord.

- ⇒ *Because of Jesus's sacrifice, what are we to do with our sin?*
- ⇒ *Do you ever question what God requires of you when you have sinned?*

Yet even though they were well-informed, in verse 6, we see the people of Judah question what God required of them in light of their sin. Verses 6-7 list various offerings someone could make because of their sin. The people even wondered if they should sacrifice a firstborn son for their sins, a pagan, idolatrous practice that God forbade. The only firstborn son the Lord ever accepted as a sacrifice was His own—the sinless, only begotten Son of God, who died on the cross and rose again to cover our sins.

Israel didn't merely sin in small ways. They literally destroyed the nation and renounced their right to the land. There was no sacrifice they could offer to make up for the damage they'd done. In verse 8, Micah listed what God actually required of His people. He actually wasn't after all of these sacrifices in the first place, since the sacrifices themselves were a sign of the sin of the people. God simply wanted His people to obey. He wanted them to act in a way that was good, right, and fair, to love faithfulness to God and one another, and to live in humble submission to God and with God.

- ⇒ *Why do we tend to complicate what God wants from us?*
- ⇒ *What might it look like for you to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with God?*

2. Evil would be judged, but God would also provide a way of salvation.

Micah 7:8-9: *⁸ Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. ⁹ I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication.*

The Assyrians thought they were a superior people. Not only had they won a military victory, but they crushed the Lord's people. They had every reason to gloat in their supremacy. But Micah warned them to avoid such a celebration. It appeared as if Israel were destroyed forever, but the prophet knew they would rise again through the coming Savior. They were in darkness at that time, but the Lord would be their light.

The prophet Isaiah also spoke of the promised Messiah—Jesus—as being light in a dark world: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness" (Isaiah 9:2). In John's Gospel, Jesus said: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). Those who repent of their sins and turn to Jesus for salvation live in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:5-7).

- ⇒ *How have you seen Jesus be a light in a dark world?*
- ⇒ *How has Jesus brought His light to you?*

In verse 9, speaking for God's exiled people, Micah did what true Christians throughout history do. First, he owned their sin, taking responsibility for their wrongdoing and admitting that God's judgment was the just result of their sin. He knew that God is a God of justice who must judge sin.

The Lord will not turn a blind eye or pretend that sin is no big deal. But Micah also looked forward with hope. Judgment would not be the end of the story. Though the situation was bleak, he knew God would save His people and in His mercy would provide the way for them to be restored to Him again.

⇒ *How have you experienced God's promise of restoration for His people?*

The same is true for Christians today. We cannot make light of our sin or erroneously believe that God will not judge. God is right to judge sin. In light of this reality, Christians agree with God by admitting our sin. God still disciplines His children for their sin, but the difference is we know that Jesus Himself experienced God's judgment and wrath on our behalf. It is the height of grace and mercy that Jesus, fully God and fully man, would step between us and God's wrath and take it on Himself. God is able to cleanse us through the work of His Messiah, Jesus Christ.

⇒ *Why should our response to this truth be one of humility and gratitude?*

⇒ *Why should this inspire us to a life of devotion and mission?*

Micah 7:18-20: ¹⁸ *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. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. ²⁰ You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.*

Israel worshiped false gods, and they were judged as a result. Yet God reminded them that He still delights to show faithful love. The idea of "faithful love" shows up over two hundred and fifty times in the Old Testament. It is translated using different words in various places, but the point is that God keeps the covenant promises He made to Israel. This isn't something He does begrudgingly. He doesn't have to love the people, but He delights to love them. He has promised to love the people and not abandon them, and He reminded them that He will do just that, even though they were judged and exiled.

⇒ *What are your insights into God's faithful love?*

⇒ *When you are faced with the consequences of your sin, how will God's faithful love give you hope?*

God has compassion on the people by forgiving their sin when they repent. And He will do more than merely stop the exile or bring them back to the land. He will deal with the root issue—their sin. Micah said that God would "vanquish" their sin. The word vanquished means to overcome or overthrow, like what a winning army does to those they defeat. Micah also said that God would cast all of the people's sins into the sea. God does not hold on to forgiven sins and bring them up again in the future. He is active and intentional in removing the sins of the people.

Often the parallel phrase "sea of forgetfulness" is used to describe this idea. As an illustration, God does not just forget sin, He intentionally hurls sin into the depths of the sea where it cannot be found again. God isn't like us. God is distinct because He is able and willing to forgive great offenses against Him. He can actively choose to "forget" our sins by not holding them against us or dealing with us as our sins deserve ever again. This is who God is. It's who He has always been and who He will always be.

Christians find great comfort in this. We know our track record and the evil things we have done. We remember our sins and feel shame over iniquities. We certainly remember the sins of others and often move through life dealing with the fallout. We're tempted to think that God does the same. Shame and guilt result when we fail to embrace the reality that God has forgiven and forgotten our sin.

⇒ *How should you address your struggles with sin in light of God's faithfulness and forgiveness?*

Micah 7:18-20 uses many action verbs, and most of them are God's actions in response to the sins of the people. To use this many descriptions of how God would forget their sin shows how much Micah wanted to emphasize God's eternal covenant-keeping that endures. Despite the sins of the people, God would not abandon the promise He made to Israel. God's faithfulness to forgive sin and have compassion on His people is one of His essential attributes. Micah praised the Lord for His uniqueness in love, grace, and forgiveness to remind the people of who God is so they could have hope in their coming exile.

⇒ *Why is it important for our sharing of the gospel to speak the truth about God, that He is both the righteous judge and the giver of mercy?*

⇒ *If these were the only Scriptures you had about God, what could you observe about Him?*

TRANSFORM

God is almighty, holy, and sovereign; He alone sets the standard for His world and His people. And because He is righteous, He punishes sin. But amid this judgment, He is also gracious and compassionate, full of love and mercy. So the Lord has made a way back to Himself, regardless of the transgressions we have committed. These words were true for the Israelites and they are true for us: God is both holy judge and compassionate rescuer.

1. HEAD: Sometimes we get stuck in our own heads about our sin. We can swing the pendulum from wallowing in our sin to shrugging off our sin as not a big deal. Either way, we are not treating sin the way God demonstrates it should be treated. Yes, God offers His forgiveness to all those who repent and believe in Jesus. But we must never forget that our punishment for sin was paid by the death of Christ in our place.

⇒ *What are some reasons we fail to deal with our sin as we should?*

2. HEART: Our weaknesses are opportunities for God to reveal His strength. As we saw in Micah 7:8-9, though we experience turmoil, discipline for our sin, and darkness, God mercifully steps in and is the very thing that we need the most. God lifts us up when we fall. God is the light in our darkness. God is justice and salvation even when we sin.

⇒ *How do you need the Lord to be your light, your champion, your justice, and your salvation today?*

3. HANDS: God's forgiveness for sin is the most marvelous and miraculous thing to ever occur. What is even more amazing is the fact that God is all-knowing and He chooses to forget our sins and not hold them against us. He has no problem being just and forgiving because He has punished our sins and forgiven us our sins in His Son, Jesus Christ.

⇒ *How can you use opportunities to forgive to share the gospel and point others to Jesus?*

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The Gospel Project® for Adults
Leader Guide, Unit 15, Session 2

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