

UNABANDONED

A Study in the Book of Micah

Week 8: Live in Hope

Introduction:

Our sin and brokenness can often lead us to the place where we want to give up, either on life itself, or on God. In this week's final text in the book of Micah, we learn that God does not want us to camp in our brokenness and shame. Despite our past, sins, stubbornness, shame, guilt, pain, addictions and other profound struggles and failures, we do not need to live in them any longer. God continually extends his grace and forgiveness to us, and calls us to repent. During Micah's time, even though they were as rebellious as could be, God did not abandon them in their sin, nor has he abandoned us in ours. What a call to hope!

This week's Text: Micah 7:1-20

Sermon Points To Discuss:

1. Living in hope begins with acknowledging and repenting from our sins

Text: Micah 7:1-7

Though aware of the dire spiritual state of the Israelites, Micah knew he was guilty of sin himself. Just as the nation was in desperate need of God's mercy, so was he. Being set free from sin requires us to first acknowledge the sin in our hearts for what it is, before we can repent of it. This means taking a good, long, hard look in the mirror and acknowledging the ugly truth about what is going on at a deep level.

There are 3 audiences to whom we must acknowledge our sin and brokenness to:

- **Ourselves** – our own self-deception can be our biggest hurdle. We deny the magnitude of our sin by either comparing our sins to others and feeling self-righteous, or by feeling sorry for ourselves, and using the low self-esteem card to continue in self-absorption (which is sin). We fear failure, and so we deceive ourselves into thinking we are better than we actually are. Micah was able to face his sin head on, which allowed him to repent. You need to know your sin to repent of your sin.
- **God** – Micah also owned up to God. Many of us are afraid of taking our deep, depraved, warped or sinful thinking, feelings and behaviours to God, because we fear rejection or anger. So, instead of repenting of the things that eat away at us, we tend to take to God just the surface sins or we pray “blanket” prayers, in the hope that we will cover all of our wrongdoing in one go, and that they will then all disappear. This is tragic, because God longs for us to bring it all to him so he can set us free and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He sent Jesus to die in order to give us this freedom.
- **Others** – Micah's prophecy was remembered and then recorded, which means the acknowledgement of his own sin was known by others. Choosing to reveal our sin to trusting people in our community, will help us to grow and change. It is key to our transformation. Keeping sin secret allows us to continue when we want to, which will ultimately destroy us in some ways. Not only does the secrecy keep the guilt and shame going, but we can also begin to feel trapped and God can begin to seem far out of reach. Our sin eventually starts to wear down our faith. But when we entrust our profound struggles to faithful, honouring Christian

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brothers/sisters, they can walk alongside us, and help us to confront the sin, and to keep us thinking rightly about God and ourselves. It is critical to our spiritual health to let others in.

2. Living in hope looks to God for vindication

Text: Micah 7:8-10a, John 8:12, 2 Corinthians 5:21 & Romans 5:1-2

Micah knew that he couldn't just sweep his sins under the carpet. He desperately wanted for them to be made right. Having our sin made right and wiped away, is impossible without God choosing to do so, because he is the only one with the power to deal with sin. Fortunately for us, Jesus has paid the penalty for our sin already, and when he comes again, sin will be removed from us in every way, once and for all. God, in his grace, also deals with so much of our sin in this lifetime, and graciously removes the stain of it. But whatever the timeline, God will deliver us fully and finally, and will vindicate us in the end, which means we can live in hope in this life.

God's vindication comes to us in the person of Jesus Christ, and what he accomplished on the cross for us. Christ's light, righteousness and glory is brought into our darkness, guilt and shame.

3. Living in hope trusts in the character of God

Text: Micah 7:18-20

The book of Micah demonstrates God's character as loving, forgiving, compassionate and faithful, which is the reason why our lives can be transformed. God's promise to Abraham, that the whole world would be blessed through him, was fulfilled in Christ. This means that we are blessed because of what Christ has done. Therefore, we can live in hope because of God's incredible love for us. Let us remember from this text that God:

- pardons our iniquities and passes over our transgressions.
- does not remain angry forever, but he delights in love towards us.
- has compassion for us and treads our sins underfoot.
- casts our sins into the depths of the sea.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think that our self-deception about the depth of our own sin can often be the biggest hurdle to real repentance?
2. Which of the 2 denial tendencies do you tend to lean more towards, and why do you think this is the case? Being self-righteousness ("I am not as sinful as others") or do you tend to feel like a victim and someone who cannot help themselves, in their sinful choices?
3. Why is it important to acknowledge your sin to other believers and what do you think is the primary reason we tend not to do this?
4. When last did you share a sin struggle with another believer (other than your spouse) and what was the result of opening yourself up to this person? What were the benefits?
5. How does God deal with our sin in Christ, and how has this impacted your life since becoming a believer?
6. God has the last word on sin, and will wipe away every trace of it in the end. Why should this give us hope in this life?
7. How is our hope directly linked to God's character being loving, forgiving, compassionate and faithful, and what does that mean to you personally?