

# UNABANDONED

## A Study in the Book of Micah

### Week 4: When the Law Doesn't Hold

#### This week's Text: Micah 3:1-12

#### Sermon Points To Discuss:

##### 1. *God lashed the Lawless leaders*

- Proverbs 2:27-28

The corruption level of the leaders in Israel, at this time, had reached a disturbing level, and so God sent Micah to warn them that at some point he would no longer be able to rescue them, and that they would receive the just punishment that they deserved. The scriptures are full of reminders of God's lovingkindness, patience and mercy, but he also warns people of his judgement should they not repent. In this case, the leaders would not end up taking Micah seriously, and would continue their atrocities, in spite of the fierce warnings, and as a result, they would end up facing the punishment Micah warned them about.

God takes leadership very seriously. All leaders need to be held to account for those they have been entrusted to lead. There is so much corruption happening all around us. We are not to just turn a blind eye to what is happening in the political realm, and hope it comes right. We are to do what we can, by engaging meaningfully and intentionally. God calls us to carry out justice wherever we are.

There are many of us who don't know or are indifferent about how our politics work, or know how and where we can make a difference. The first way that we can grow in this area, is to educate ourselves about the ins-and-outs of SA politics, and then learn how we, as regular citizens, can contribute to the health and stability of our country. As followers of Christ, we have the right and the obligation to lead, influence and contribute to the flourishing of our nation. So, let's commit to grow in our understanding and participation in this area.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think God eventually punished Israel's political leaders, even though he was extremely patient in getting to that point?
2. Why do you think God takes leadership so seriously, and why is this a good thing for you and I, whether we ourselves are leaders or not?
3. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 (10 being amazing), of how educated you are about our South African politics. (How up to date you are with what is happening, not just in the areas of corruption, but in the areas where things are going well and flourishing. Consider where your education comes from and what bias it may have on your perspective.)
4. Why is it essential for Christians to participate in the flourishing of our political landscape, where possible?
5. In what ways can regular Christians participate in the flourishing of our political landscape? As a group, if we are unsure of the answer, who can we contact, so that we can get involved in helping to build, support, strengthen and bring light into the political sphere.

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### ***2. God confronted the Colluding Corporates***

After lashing the political leaders, Micah zoomed in on the leaders in business. They were making money in unethical ways and through exploitation. Sadly, the laws of the land often protect the rich and don't protect the poor, and the leaders of Israel knew how to take advantage of the systems in order to grow richer. This is nothing new, of course. Our own country is guilty of this in so many ways. Businesses and individuals continue employ people on the lowest possible wage, because it is legal. They grow their wealth by keeping costs low, and don't consider the impact on the low-income earners. It is legal but its unethical. God does not have an issue with us making wealth, but he has a big problem with us doing it the wrong way. As believers, we live to a higher standard than what is just legal. God is looking at the motives of our heart, and will call us to account for the way in which we have made money. May we be able to stand before him one day and know that we had complete integrity in our choices in how we made money, and with those we have employed.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. What is the difference between conducting business/employment ethically and legally, rather than just legally?
2. Why is it so important to God that we are ethical in any way that we make money?
3. In what way do you think our culture still underpays people (though it is legally acceptable) and what do you think God would want us, as believers, to do about it?
4. Is there any specific area of your business dealings/employment that the Holy Spirit is prodding you to do differently, as a result of hearing this message?

### ***3. God pummelled the profiteering prophets***

Israel's spiritual leaders were just as bad as the political leaders. They had become so deceived by sin, that they too had become corrupt. They did nothing as the country unravelled into debauchery. Instead, they added to the lies and deceit, by teaching what people wanted to hear. They should have been ministering truth, and demanding justice. But instead they gained from the system. This has happened repeatedly throughout history, where the church has become weak and eventually corrupt itself. We do not ever want to be guilty of standing by and watching South Africa dissolve into full debauchery. We have the Holy Spirit of God in us, and we are the voice of justice, light, hope and truth. We have got to be living as salt and light, and we do that first by making sure our lives are lived for Christ and not ourselves. We add to the light in the world when our lives are lived righteously, and for the gospel. Secondly, we do this by making sure that we hold fast to the gospel, and we do not allow other false gospels to come into the church, corrupting us and leading us astray. As believers, we have the responsibility to know the scriptures for ourselves and to make sure that the church stays on track theologically. We are partners in the gospel, which is a great and wonderful responsibility, and one that we need to pass on to the next generation.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. List a few ways where the church, historically, has gone astray through wrong teaching.
2. In what way do we see the church out there teach rubbish, because it is what people want to hear, rather than teaching the gospel?
3. Why is it so crucial for us as a church to hold tightly to the gospel, and to guard it for the next generation?

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### 4. *The judge judges justly*

- Micah 12:12 & Proverbs 21:13

God fulfilled his promise to judge Israel and Judah for their exploitation of the poor, by sending them into exile. Everyone was punished for their continual rejection of God. But he did not leave them there for good. We know that God eventually brought a remnant of his people back and restored them to Jerusalem.

There are many of us who are guilty of similar sins, either by actively participating in them, or by doing nothing and watching oppression and injustice unravel in our nation. We too deserve God's punishment for it. However, when Jesus died on the cross for our sin, it included all of this sin too. He took the punishment that we deserved. As a result, he has cleansed us from our unrighteous acts. Our response is to repent for what we have done, which not only requires a confession, but an active and intentional change in our behaviour, attitudes and choices going forward. We are forgiven, so let's live that way. Let's honour God with the way we treat the poor.

### Discussion Questions

1. How has Jesus dealt with our sin of injustice?
2. Why is repentance for this sin so important?
3. *Person reflection: What do you think repentance in this area will look like for you?*