

To the Ends of the Earth

Sermon Text: Micah 5:1-6

Introduction

Merry Christmas! That's an odd thing to probably say in June. The reason I say it is that this passage of Scripture is often read around Christmastime. We often remember and celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ at Christmas, and read the prophecies of His humble birth in the small town of Bethlehem. Our study through the book of Micah has brought us to this beloved and memorable passage of Scripture that is about the coming Messiah. It is a message of hope and peace, a message that at the time of Micah, the Israelites would have most likely embraced. It is still a message for us today, that there is hope in the midst of life's troubles. But, it is also a call to action – a reminder to the Church, the people of God – of why we are here and what God has called us to do.

We see in the first verse of this passage how Micah called his audience to “muster your troops.” Siege was upon the Israelites and the times were tough. Micah had already told the Israelites about God's impending judgment on them through the actions of two powerful nations. The Israelites were facing the destruction of their own nation and exile to foreign lands. While we may not be in the exact same situation as the Israelites of Micah's time, we, too, face a tough enemy. He wants nothing more than to steal, kill and destroy. He has blinded many folks to the truth of God's Word – the truth of redemption, of forgiveness, and of hope. Our duty as the people of God is to muster the troops, to prepare for battle, to take the message of true freedom to those who have not heard it yet. We see from today's passage the following three ideas:

- The Humble Shepherd-King is Coming
- The Shepherd-King will be Forever Great
- God's People will Dwell Securely in Peace

The Humble Shepherd-King is Coming

When we think of kings and leaders we probably think of strong, powerful men. Humility and meekness is not often thought of in strong leader. Micah had been prophesying about the imminent attack and siege of Jerusalem, the capital city of God's people. Jerusalem was a strong city, but with a weak ruler it was helpless to withstand the attacks of Israel's enemies. God had a plan to rescue His people. The nearby little town of Bethlehem was going to be the birthplace of a strong leader, a Shepherd-King, who would rescue and care for God's people. Compared to Jerusalem with its magnificent buildings, Bethlehem was small in both size and significance. The future Savior of mankind would come from humble origins.

The interesting thing about the Old Testament prophets is that we do not always know *when* they are talking. For instance, was Micah writing about when Israel would come out of exile and go back home to the Promised Land? Was he only speaking about a time when the future Messiah would be born from the town of Bethlehem? Or was Micah speaking about a time that has not yet occurred. The

Israelites eventually went back to their land, but no king has been on the throne since. This Shepherd-King that Micah spoke of was to be a new David, a humble King from a humble beginning. For us today, Jesus was born, the Messiah has come, and the promise of Scripture is that He is going to come again to gather His people together and lead them to everlasting peace and eternal life.

The Shepherd-King Will be Forever Great

Not only would this new King be humble and from humble beginnings, His greatness would reach *to the ends of the earth*. Micah wrote in verse four that God's new King would care for and protect His people through God's authority and power. We see this repeatedly – from seeming littleness and weakness God displays His strength. For the Israelites during Micah's time this was a promise for God to restore the nation after exile with a great leader who would care for them. He would be their Shepherd-King – feeding, leading, and protecting them – essentially taking good care of them. Though this future King will be humble, He will also be great and His greatness will be known to the ends of the earth. His kingdom would endure forever.

A question for us is this: How is this King to be known great throughout the world? How would His greatness extend throughout all the earth? In one sense, God will make His rule universal. We saw in Micah chapter four how the peoples will “flow” to Him and nations will come to Him. God is drawing people from around the world to Him. For us now, we make the King great by fulfilling God's call upon our lives. We tell others about Him and about what He has done for us. That is our duty and joy of being the church – a people saved by the grace of God who love to tell the story of God's grace so more folks will come to Him.

God's People will Dwell Securely in Peace

Because God's Shepherd-King will be great and will care for His people greatly, they will enjoy peace. Have you desired peace? Have you desired a time when there will be no conflict, no war, no trouble? I suspect we all have. I have said before, that life is full of troubles. Some of us experience more of it than others and some experience different kinds of trouble. Life is not free of problems. In fact, I would say we should expect it. The Israelites during Micah's time were told to expect it. Micah told them about the trouble that was about to happen. Some did not believe another nation was going to destroy them. But it did.

However, God did not leave His people without hope. We have seen in our look through the book of Micah that both God's mercy and God's judgment was foretold. The God who was going to punish His people for their wickedness was the very same Shepherd-King who would one day lead them to freedom and victory. In fact, we are told by Micah's contemporary, the prophet Isaiah, that this Shepherd-King is also called the Prince of Peace. He will usher in an everlasting peace. Those who come to Him will dwell securely with Him without fear and enjoy a kind of peace not experienced before. This means no war and no hostility, but it also means a general well-being and even a spiritual peace. The greatest peace any of us can have is to know that we have a right relationship

with God – that when our life here on earth is finished, we will face our Heavenly Father with no fear, no worries, but an assurance that we will live securely with Him forever. That is a peace everyone who calls upon Jesus Christ can have.

Conclusion

What Micah prophesied is good news and we should want to share it with the world. The Savior of the whole world that Micah prophesied has come and has brought salvation to us. Those who place their trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will have new life, eternal life, and everlasting peace. That is a message of hope that everyone needs to hear – people across the globe and people right here in our community. There are people all around us who are lost and dying with no hope for a future, who are desperate for this good news. What Sean and the missionary team are about to do in Moldova is what we all ought to be doing right here, right now. You are not called to be complacent in your own salvation, if indeed you are saved. God has called each one of you who has placed a genuine trust in Jesus Christ, to go, make disciples of everyone, starting right where you are, and then reaching to the ends of the earth. Scripture says:

Romans 10:15 *For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!*

Do you believe that? Do you, as the church of God, a people saved by the Shepherd-King Jesus Christ, really believe that it is your duty to tell others about Him? This is not a calling for just pastors, preachers, and missionaries. Everyone who has been saved by Jesus Christ is expected to share the good news. The real motivation for faithful telling others about Christ is to focus on what He has done for you. I could preach every Sunday about the need to reach others for Christ, and it would not make a difference if you do not get it yourself. If you do not understand what Christ has done for you, how you have true freedom because of what He has done and not anything you have done, then you will not be able to effectually share that hope others. We have to realize the depth of our depravity and the greatness of God's grace to save each one of us before we can effectively share the hope, joy and peace of Jesus Christ with others.

Imagine standing before God, the righteous Judge of all people. In your mind, are you tempted to list your good deeds in defense of your salvation or are you aware that you are dependent on the work of Christ—his obedient life, sacrificial death, and powerful resurrection—for salvation. Are you genuinely and currently trusting Christ to be both the forgiver of your sins and your only hope for eternal relationship with God? That is the same situation everyone will face. Have you trusted in Jesus for salvation? If you have, how is your relationship with Him? Are you telling others about Him? The humble Shepherd-King of Israel brings peace to all people who come to Him for safety. This should compel us, the church, to know Him more and to make Him known more by sharing the good news of salvation to the ends of the earth. May it be so!