

# UNABANDONED

## A Study in the Book of Micah

### Week 5: When HIS presence reigns

This week's Text: Micah 4:1-7

#### Sermon Points To Discuss:

##### **1. God has established his eternal presence**

- Read 1 Corinthians 3:16

The book of Micah is full of warnings to the Israelites about their idolatry, telling them that if they did not return to God and repent, he would judge them. But in amidst these warnings, God also paints a clear picture of redeeming and restoring his people to himself. In this particular text, we see God declaring what the future will hold with absolute assurance; he will establish his presence once and for all among his people.

We know from how the story unfolds that God's word through Micah came to pass. He brought about judgement on the Israelites though being conquered by surrounding nations. But we also read of his promise being fulfilled when the Israelites returned to Jerusalem many years later, where they rebuilt the temple and could worship God once again. We call this initial fulfilment of the prophecy, the immediate or "first horizon of meaning", because it was the literal meaning to the people of the time.

But Micah was also prophesying the same promises into the distant future, which we call a "second horizon of meaning". Later on in history, God would establish his presence with his people again, once and for all. This happened when God came down to earth in human form, as Jesus, where he established his kingdom on earth. God then gave the church his Spirit so that he could be present with his people permanently. Then there is a final horizon, which is yet to be fulfilled, when Christ returns to rule and reign permanently with his people. This will be the full and final fulfilment of the prophecy that Micah and the other prophets spoke of.

As the church, we are blessed because we live in the era of the Holy Spirit, where God's eternal presence is with us all the time. We are never without him, regardless of the circumstances that we face.

##### **2. God's presence should evoke worship**

As believers, we realise that we live, breathe and experience daily life purely because God has given us life. Everything that we are, and all that we do belongs to him. We understand that we are not our own, and that our lives should be lived as an act of worship before him. Because of God's grace given to us in Christ, we live as his children, not in fear but in freedom. Our posture before him should be one of delight. As loved children, we should want to do what our Father desires. We are also confident that his desires for our lives our good, and so we can trust him. Obedience to God should be something we delight to do, because it is for his glory and for our good.

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### 3. God's presence restores his people

- Read Revelation 21:1-4

Micah prophesied that the time of punishment and exile would eventually come to an end, and that God would restore the weak, afflicted and lame who were there, and he would once again gather them give them peace in his presence. Even though they would have suffered immensely under the oppression, God would restore them and give them back their identity and back, and establish them as a holy nation once again. Israel's peace was always contingent upon their living in God's presence, as a holy and set-apart people.

Peace and rest is only found in the presence of God, and nowhere else. How often we make this mistake. As believers, we are not like Israel, who were threatened with God's judgment for their sinful behaviour all the time. When Jesus came, he lived Law perfectly and he obeyed God fully in every area of his life, on our behalf. He was punished by God on the cross for our idolatry and disobedience. Therefore, the punishments has been given once and for all, and we no longer need to fear God's judgement in our lives, like the Israelites did.

We do, however, experience a lack of God's peace when we choose our flesh over the Spirit, or when we submit ourselves to idols and sin. Though we do not fear his judgement, we only fully experience God's peace when we are living lives that are surrendered to him, in loving obedience. We have peace when we are living freely in God's presence, unhindered by our own sin.

### Discussion Questions

1. What is different about how the Israelites experienced God's presence in Micah's day, to how we experience God's presence today?
2. What difference should it make to us knowing that we are permanently living under the gaze of God?
3. What is the difference between living a life of obedience to God out of a place of fear or from a place of love? Which one (fear or love) do you gravitate towards and why do you think that is?
4. Why should God's presence invoke worship from us and what do you think that means for your everyday life?
5. Why is it so encouraging to know that God restored Israel even after their judgement through exile? What does that teach us about God's character?
6. Why do believers in Jesus Christ not need to fear God's judgment for their sin?
7. Why do we experience less peace when we are not living obediently?
8. Why do you think some Christians incorrectly view obedience to God as a negative thing? (Explain why obedience is actually life-giving and joyful.)
9. *Personal Reflection: is there one area of your life where you are struggling to submit to God, and to live obediently? What is the lie you are believing and what are you going to do about?*