

THE GOOD LIFE  
Micah 6:1-8

Intro: Recently I have been reading through the OT prophets, and I have been seeking to do it chronologically. There are some problems in trying to determine such an order among the prophets, and we have the same problem in trying to arrange the NT Epistles chronologically. But, with one or two exceptions, in both cases, there seems to be general agreement among the men who have made this their study.

According to many, Micah was #6. He was preceded by:

- 1) Joel.
- 2) Jonah.
- 3) Amos.
- 4) Hosea.
- 5) Isaiah, who was his contemporary.

All of the prophets were preachers first of all. They were raised up in special times of need. Their ministries were an act of the grace of God. They preached judgment. Their messages were not popular with a people who loved their sin. Some preached Israel; others, like Micah, preached in Judah. Some, like Nahum, had to deal with a foreign power (Nineveh). Sometimes the prophets, like Isaiah, included both. But they were all concerned with the way people were sinning against the Lord.

Our sins today are probably just as bad in the sight of God as were the sins of those ancient days, but one cannot help but be amazed at the way the children of God tried to combine the worship of the true God with the worship of various heathen deities. The prophets certainly have given us 16 or 17 commentaries on the depravity of man.

However, one thing that you cannot miss in reading the prophets is the way in which the mercy of God ultimately finds its way into their messages, and into their writings. Look for it because it will be there. This is especially true in the prophecy of Micah. Chapter 6 gives us one of those sections.

The verse that I want to pay particular attention to is a verse that I have used before many times. It is v. 8. It is one verse that you would single out if you were looking for a verse in Micah's prophecy which you would want to memorize. But it will help us to appreciate the message of v. 8 to notice what Micah wrote in leading up to it.

Note first,

I. THE SETTING (Micah 6:1, 2).

Here Micah sounded like Isaiah. The mountains and the hills

and the foundations of the earth are called upon to witness the controversy that the Lord has with His people.

The point is this: You do not find such behavior in all the earth except among the people of God. Such sins as the people of Judah were guilty of would be bad among any people, but they were a thousand times worse among the people of God. Who would ever expect to find such unfaithfulness to the God of heaven and earth as God found among His people.

This is followed by:

## II. THE LAMENTATION OF THE LORD (Micah 6:3-5).

Notice in vv. 3 and 5, "O my people . . ." How do you suppose Micah said that? How would it have sounded if it had come directly from the mouth of God?

The Lord invites their criticism. He was willing to lay open all of His dealings with them from the very beginning of their history. Where had He wronged them? How had He wearied them?

A review of all the ways of the Lord would only convince them that God had been righteous in all that He had done with them. See v. 5b.

Later on Jeremiah would ask them a similar question:

What iniquity have your fathers found in me,  
that they are gone far from me,  
and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?  
(Jer. 2:5).

He also said,

Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? (Jer. 2:31a).

One of the chief tactics of the Devil is to get us to think wrong thoughts, and evil thoughts, about our God. He did that in the Garden of Eden, and he is still at it! We need to get our thoughts about God from the Word, not from him.

The third thing in the chapter is:

## III. THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE (Micah 6:6, 7).

Perhaps Micah was posing the questions to the people of Judah because they reflect the thinking of the people. It may have been like saying, "We are doing all of these things; is the Lord not satisfied?"

There is such a tendency for us to justify all that we do by the outward observances of our lives. People will say

that they go to church, they read their Bibles, they pray. What more does He want? And yet all of these things can be done as a mere formality, just like the offering of sacrifices in OT times.

Finally we come to the revelation of God concerning:

#### IV. THE GOOD LIFE (Micah 6:8).

We hear this expression a great deal today, don't we? To the people of the world it means being able to do what you want to do, to have what you want to have, to be clothed with the clothing you desire. In short, the good life is a life in which man is able to satisfy the desires of his heart. It has nothing to do with God.

But let us ask,

A. What does God mean by "good"?

It is a word which means pleasing, the pleasing life.

But who are we to seek to please? Ourselves? Certainly not! Experience will teach you that happiness and peace do not come that way. The truly good life is a life in which the child of God seeks to please the Lord. And I say, the child of God, because it is impossible for anyone who does not know the Lord to please Him with anything that they do.

So it is good to get our definitions straight. The point is that what pleases the Lord will be that which pleases and satisfies us. God must come first.

In connection with v. 8, notice also:

B. The repeated revelation: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good."

The people were not doing what they were doing because of ignorance, or because God had never spoken to them about it before. It was all through the revelations which they already had.

The same is true for us. The Word of God contains all that we need to know about pleasing God, and finding peace for ourselves. It is in the teaching of Scripture; it is in the lives of the people of God which we read about in the Word. It is no hidden secret, but a clear revelation from God.

How many times God has to bring us back to what He has

taught us before. But He graciously does it.

And so we have God repeating it again:

C. The good life.

How good the Lord is to simplify what we often make so complicated! Notice what Micah said: "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

Let us think of these in connection with our own lives.

1. "To do justly."

By this expression Micah was bringing the people back to the Word of God. They were doing some things that the Lord wanted them to do. They were bringing their sacrifices. They would observe their special days. But the problem was that they were content to ignore those details that had to do with their daily lives--not only the outward acts, but the condition of their hearts.

Cf. Isa. 29:13. This verse, as much as any other, puts God's finger on the trouble with most of His people who at least make a pretense of wanting to please the Lord.

2. "To love mercy."

Jonah's story teaches us that, when we get away from the Lord in our hearts, it makes us hard toward each other.

Do you love mercy? Of course you do for yourself. But do you love to see it displayed by God for others? And do you delight in manifesting it yourself even toward those who may have done the wrong thing to you?

I believe there is a special order here which cannot be disturbed. When our hearts are right with the Word, then our attitude toward each other is going to be pleasing to the Lord.

3. "To walk humbly with thy God."

To walk is to live--not just at specified times, but habitually, continuously.

Think of the unspeakable privilege of walking with

God, and have Him call Himself, "thy God."

To walk with God means that you walk how and where He wants to walk--otherwise He is walking with you. And this is brought out with the word, "humbly." To walk "humbly with thy God" is to walk in submission to His will.

Enoch is the first one in the Bible whose life was described in this way. See Gen. 5:21-24. He lived only about a third of the years of his contemporaries but what a life it was. And it seemed that the Lord cut his life short to show how it pleased Him.

Concl: All of us want to be happy. All of us want to be peaceful. God has given us those desires. The trouble is that we often think we know more about what will make us happy than the Lord does. We seek happiness as the main thing in life. But true happiness comes when we place the Lord first, when we listen to His Word and seek to obey it from the heart, when our main desire is to please the Lord, not ourselves.

May God enable us to live that way in a day when even many of the Lord's people have an entirely different idea of what "the good life" is.