

Indictment, Idolatry - Micah 1:2-16
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

I can picture Kevin Bacon's character Captain Jack Ross addressing Lieutenant Daniel Kaffee (Tom Cruise) in the movie *A Few Good Men* as they talk about the legal situation for two accused soldiers. Ross looks at Kaffee and says, "I represent the government of the United States without passion or prejudice and my client has a case!" He follows these words with a warning, "Your boys are going down!" Of course, in the case of this movie, the outcome of the legal case came out differently. But imagine the prophet Micah, serving as God's prosecutor speaking to God's rebellious and idolatrous people saying, "I represent the Lord God almighty without passion or prejudice, and my client has a case!" Most of Micah's book is God's loving presentation of a case to the people of Israel warning them that their current trajectory leaves them guilty, will destroy them, and deserves God's justice. That indictment begins with the core problem for them, and for us, the issue of idolatry.

Now, we may hear the word idolatry and think, "You know, I don't recall having any carved images of some insane god or goddess on my mantle. And I can't remember the last time I sacrificed a chicken in a shrine." Therefore, it might be easy to discard Micah's message here. But the truth is that our idols may have an more powerful hold of us because they are much more subtle. God begins giving His covenant to the His people by giving them the 10 Commandments. He has already rescued them from slavery and brought them into a relationship with Himself. The Law is God's way of offering them blessings as they live in faith and obedience to their good and holy God. The structure of the Law is important. In the First Commandment God tells them that nothing else can be a god to them. The issue in the First Commandment is affections and identity. Something becomes a god to us when things we want become central to our affections, to who we are as people. The Second Commandment is that they are not to create any image of Him as God or any other god. In other words, they are not to make tangible the intangible God who is a Spirit. God knows that when we do this we are actually trying to reduce God down to something we can control so that He will give us whatever we want out of life. In other words, idolatry is our way of making a god who lets me be god and fulfills the desires of my heart. God is getting at the core issue in our lives. Our sinful human trajectory is to make a god out of ourselves. We put ourselves in the place that belongs to God in our affections. Yet, God made us as worshipers, and once we have dethroned Him in our lives we begin to long for something transcendent, so we look to the things God has made to fill our souls and bring meaning to our lives. This is the natural inclination of the human heart that does now know the True and Living God. Yet, to know Jehovah is the greatest need for every human on planet earth. And to make Himself known God saved His people so they could be living pictures of people who know Jehovah as their King. Yet, from the earliest moments in their story the Hebrew people were building idols (remember the golden calf), disobeying God's commands, and mixing the worship of Jehovah with the spiritual practices of the other nations. One generation after another moved further away, leaving them involved in wicked and detestable practices. The rest of Micah's prophecy will show us the levels of injustice, unrighteousness, and abuse happening in their culture. Our text this week points to their involvement in prostitution, shrines of sexual worship built on "High Places", usually near the top of a mountain. These are the people God saved to picture His glory and goodness to the rest of the world. They were to be a light to the nations.

So we need to be honest at this point. Idolatry is everywhere. What do we look to for salvation, what are we seeking that will give our lives meaning and hope? Where do we look for purpose? What is the basis of our identity? The American Idols (pun intended) of celebrity, wealth, individualism, political power, and sexuality are all around us. For those who don't have Christ, it is the natural inclination of their hearts to build their lives and identity on something else, and to create gods for themselves who will give them whatever they want.

And we can hold these gods in our hands, we call them cell phones. In one shrine we have access to everything that fulfills our desires and gives us meaning. But these gods lie, do not keep their promises, and cannot save. Their greatest need is to know the True and Living God who is mighty to save and the giver of true hope in the world. Our greatest problem right now is how deeply the idols of the culture are entrenched into the people whom God has redeemed. We have churches who tell us of a God who will make us rich and powerful, others who promise sexual liberty in the name of Jehovah, and yet others who spend all their time showing us how God is the true leader of a given political party. These are all idolatry, same as the folks in Micah's day. As a result, we are no longer known for holiness as we live lives that are different from the culture. So we too need to repent of our idols, we need a radical sorrow and turning away from the gods we have made for ourselves. Then we must turn our hearts back to Jesus, set our affections on Him, and worship Christ alone.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Ezekiel 20	Ezekiel 21	Ezekiel 22	Ezekiel 23	Ezekiel 24	Ezekiel 25	Ezekiel 26

Reading from this past week: Micah 1:2-16

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Micah 2:1-13

Family Worship

Song - *Lovingkindness*

<https://youtu.be/xV-fNmt6ZAo?si=w2-RVMxmObOOct3FI>

Gospel Project

Unit: The Warnings of Jesus

Story: Jesus is our perfect prophet.

Big Picture Question: How is Jesus the Prophet?

Answer: Jesus perfectly reveals God the Father and fulfills what the prophets spoke.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18

New City Catechism

Question #40: What should we pray?

Answer: The whole Word of God directs and inspires us in what we should pray, including the prayer Jesus himself taught us.

Verse: Ephesians 3:14-21

Scripture

Micah 1:2-16

- What is the problem being addressed by Micah in this passage? What is the coming judgment as a result?
- What is idolatry and why is it such a significant problem for God's people?
- What tends to be the source of your idols? In other words, what things in life do you tend to love more than God, build your identity on, and pursue in the place of God?
- Micah offers the source of true hope in verse 16. What is that hope, and what does it look like in our lives?

Prayer

*Ask God to help us see and repent of our idols.

*Spend time reading, learning, and teaching your kids the Nicene Creed. Use the first stanza as a prayer declaring faith in God the Creator.