**Micha 3:5-12- ‘Haters of Good, Lovers of Evil’ Wednesday 4th November 2020**

In our passage this morning we hear from the prophet Micah. Through the book his message alternates between prophecies of doom and prophecies of hope; the theme is divine judgment and deliverance. Micah is writing to the people to warn them that God’s judgment was approaching because they had rejected him and his law. Micah is also encouraging the faithful few, assuring them that judgment would not permanently destroy Israel. The nation would eventually be restored. The book balances God’s divine attributes of justice and mercy.

Micah 3:5-12 can be divided into two sections. The first section we read we hear a harsh message against the prophets (verses 5-8), while the second section is a broader condemnation (verses 9-12): rulers, priests, and prophets who have oppressed the innocent. In the first section, Micah lashes out with a specific attack on prophets, who preference the wealthy over the poor. The preferential treatment, according to Micah, typically occurs in the form of delivering messages that please the wealthy and then delivering opposite messages to those who cannot afford to pay up. In these instances, the prophets aim to please people by giving them whatever they wanted to hear, not deliver the true message of the Lord (verses 5-6).

Micah is unique, he was a prophet in his time who was paying attention to the voice of God. He is filled with power, with justice, with might, and most importantly, the Spirit of the Lord. Micah does not give false words or promises to just please the people, he only tells them what the Lord has spoken to him. Micah then turn’s from just looking at the prophets to speaking about the rulers who are ruling for bribes; priests who are teaching for a fee, and prophets who are performing their duty for money. While they claim to do these duties in the name of the Lord (verse 11), Micah believes otherwise. He declares the whole of Jerusalem is corrupt because of their poor leadership, and punishment is coming to everyone by way of God.

What could this all mean for us today? What does this, his heavy message and condemning passage, tell us? Where does this passage ring true in our society or culture today?

In this passage, Micah was anything but neutral in a situation of injustice. When the prophets were oppressing the innocent, Micah chose to stand up for those who were suffering because of the work of those in power. Micah chose to criticise the wrong doings of others who were bringing pain to the innocent. In his case, speaking out was better than remaining silent.

This passage illustrates that any of us who speak against injustice should always ask the question of timing. Are the time, the place, and the message we are delivering appropriate to the situation, the people, and their place in life? It is clear that some in leadership were abusing their power and doing so in the name of the Lord. Their timing, their message, and the situations to which they were speaking were misguided, indirect, and therefore damaging. But, wise and discerning prophets like Micah, have the option to take another path: to speak against wrong, but to do so by bringing the right message at the right time.

We can only do this with the wisdom of God and discernment from the Holy Spirit. Micah spoke out again these injustices with the power of the Spirit. He didn’t do this alone or off his own back. He listened to God and spoke when God called him to speak. It wasn’t an easy situation and Micah wouldn’t have been a very popular person but he knew that’s not why he was called. He was chosen by God to be a prophet and to speak truth to God’s people.

How can we be truth speakers in our world today? What situation’s have we found ourselves in when we need to speak God’s truth?

And remember we need to speak God’s truth in love. This doesn’t always mean it is an easy message but we say it only from a place of love. Micah wasn’t speaking from a place of hate, he knew how much God loved his people and wanted to stop the wicked that was going on. We as Christians have to represent Jesus to the world and represent him well.

What situations have we kept silent in when we knew we should have spoken out? When have we been oppressive to others and pleased people rather than being pleasing to God?

As we go into another lockdown we may wonder where does faith fit’s in with COVID-19, with media reports of violence, corruption, war, and terrorism occurring around the world? The prophet Micah reminds us that even when God seems distant and uninvolved, he still cares and offers hope to those who choose to remain faithful to him. Gods truth always comes with hope. He is our hope and the hope of the world.

Let us choose to remain faithful today, despite the difficult and challenging situations, because God is a faithful God, he has never not been and will always continue to be.

There is always injustice in this world and we need to pray to God and ask him to open our eyes so that were can see and act rightly. So let’s spend some time this morning in prayer.

Prayers:

* For the injustices of the world be be made know.
* For those in power, to lead and govern well.
* To show us the light on dark situations.
* To remind us of your hope this morning, in what feels like a hopeless situation.
* Pray for those who are being persecuted for their faith and where to stand up for their faith they could be killed. Pray for God’s protection and strength for them.