

Peace

Scripture: Micah 5:2-5a

2 But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.

3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.

4 And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.

5 And he shall be their peace.

Judgement is coming, but peace is here

As we consider the theme of peace this morning and look at Micah chapter 5, Scripture reminds us

Judgement is coming

Context: We often live with a false sense of security. We don't take heed of a warning and the people of Israel were the same. In this book Micah is prophesying to the people of Israel. God was trying to wake His people up. He was trying to give them a warning of what would come in the future! But His people Israel were rich, well off, and content. They had what they needed; why listen to this warning?

The beginning of this book begins this theme; in chapter 1 we read, 3 "For behold, the Lord is coming out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth. 4 And the mountains will melt under him, and the valleys will split open, like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place."

- Can you imagine God coming? The Great King of the universe? The Creator of all things? The One Who cannot be measured? The One Who is Righteous and Holy in all His perfections?
 - A couple of years ago, in Nevada, a group of teens found a vacant home. Though there were security cameras, they used the home to have parties three times over the span of one weekend. They broke into the property and had friends over, having pool parties.
 - Imagine if someone walked in. No problem, just another person to join the fun.

- Imagine if a police officer walked in. That would have gotten their attention! That would have brought about immediate changes in behavior from everyone present.
- But Israel wasn't worried either. They had their religious leaders and rituals. They were God's people, after all!
 - When Micah prophesied, the Israelites continued to live without change. They did not heed the charge of Micah.
 - That is what happened when Micah prophesied to the nation of Judah - the elders of Judah said in Jeremiah 26 - 18 "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and said to all the people of Judah: 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, "Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.' 19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord and entreat the favor of the Lord, and did not the Lord relent of the disaster that he had pronounced against them? But we are about to bring great disaster upon ourselves."

Application: What about you? Judgement is coming. The King of the universe is coming. He is Holy, He is Sinless Perfection, He is Righteous in all His ways, He will bring justice to the earth. He will be manifested on the earth again, He will be seen by all, throughout all the world. And we will be seen in all of our sin, selfishness and pride.

Judgement is coming. Advent is a wonderful time, which we're about to get to, but it is a holy time. While we look back to Christ's birth and life on the earth, we also look forward to His coming. We look forward to the physical presence of God here on the earth. We look forward to when He will call all nations to account.

Are you ready? Let every heart prepare Him room. Do not let this message go unheeded. Do not let your comfort, your wealth, your ease, cause you to be like Israel - ignoring the warnings, unconcerned about the future. Prepare for Jesus, right now. Know that He is really coming. Get ready!

Thankfully, that is not the end of the story, either of Advent or of what Micah says. Next, know that

Judgement is coming, but peace is here.

- In the midst of the warnings, in the midst of the forceful reminders that God would come and judge, Micah gives a glimpse of peace, the hope of peace. Peace through the Messiah.
 - This is a dual prophecy - the first part of the passage relating to the first coming of Christ, and the second to the second coming of Christ.
 - God has given us peace in three ways here:
 1. The peace God has already brought through Jesus.
 - Micah prophesies 800 years before Jesus is born, that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem. He says that He "Who is from of old" would be coming into the earth. Though Bethlehem was small, was not to be

counted on militarily, from there would come the Messiah, the Ancient of Days. God Himself would become a man.

- And over 2,000 years ago He came in the person of Jesus Christ. He came to bring peace through His blood on the cross. He came to bring spiritual peace with God. Though we deserve to be found out for our sin, punished for our sin, left to ourselves in our sin, Jesus came and became sin so that through faith in Him we might be forgiven! Clean and pure before God! No longer scared of Him but serving Him with loving fear as His precious sons and daughters.
 - **Application:** Do you have peace with God through Jesus Christ? When you think of the coming of God, the Holy and Righteous One, do you know that you will have nothing to stand on except for the righteousness of Jesus? Follow Jesus, trust your life completely to Him, and repent of your sin.
2. He will bring peace through Jesus. Verse 3 says that Jesus “will give them up until the time that she who is in labor has given birth, then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.’
- The “time that she who is in labor has given birth” has a few different interpretations, but is likely referring to the dispersion of Israel when Assyria conquered them in 722 B.C., and the” return” will be a future gathering together of Israel when Christ returns.
 - The people of Judah were exiled for 70 years, then returned to the homeland of Israel. Unlike Judah, the people of Israel were exiled, and dispersed, and were not gathered back in.
 - We await the coming together of Israel again, at the second coming of Christ, as we read in Romans 11 - 26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; 27 “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”
 - When Jesus does come back the text tells us that He will shepherd His people. That they will have peace, as they dwell secure in His Kingdom. When Jesus returns there will be peace for His people as He tends to them, cares for them, and shepherds them.
3. Not only has God brought peace through Jesus in the past and promised peace through Jesus in the future, but He gives us peace right now in the person of Jesus. The beginning of verse 5 says 5 And He shall be their peace.
- This is the awesome promise of Advent - Immanuel, God with us! When God is with us we can have peace.
 - When the disciples took Jesus into the boat in Mark chapter 4, and a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling, the disciples were afraid. They did not remember Who was with them in the boat. They feared for their lives and woke up Jesus in a panic.
 - After Jesus commanded that the storm stopped, He asked His disciples - why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? He knew that if they had

remembered Him, Who He is, they would not have need to fear, whatever the danger.

- When I was a young boy, I went to D.C. I remember it being late at night and my dad driving me somewhere and saying, “this is a bad part of town.” My attentiveness increased but I wasn’t afraid. My dad was with me!
- **Application:** As we live here on the earth we will face trouble, trials, dangers, and hardships. We will face situations that we wish we didn’t have to face. But we can find our peace in Jesus. Peace that does not come from having a positive outcome in the circumstance we face, but peace that comes from knowing that Jesus Himself, our Peace, is with us whatever the outcome is. Knowing that He will never leave us or forsake us. Knowing that we do not need to fear because He is with us and will always be with us. Knowing that we can be strong and courageous because He will be with us wherever we go.

Safety consists not in the absence of danger but in the presence of God.

If you know Jesus this morning you know the Prince of Peace. You know Him Who is Peace Himself. You can be a child with your Father, trusting Him to care for you and give you what you need.

Heed the words of Micah. Know that judgement is coming. That Christ will return, that we must be ready to meet our Maker, later, or sooner. But heed the words of Micah - that God has given us peace, will give us peace, and does give us peace. Find Jesus, your Peace, by heeding His words and trusting in Him.

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