

## The Messages That Will Do You Good.

Text: Micah 2:7-13

Suggested Hymns:  
261, 203, 502, 268, 269

- 1) Listen To The Messages From Those Who Proclaim God's Word
- 2) Listen To Both The Law And The Gospel
- 3) Do Not Be Conformed To This World
- 4) Deliverance Is Promised

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Micah 2:7-13, <sup>7</sup> *You who are named the house of Jacob: "Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good To him who walks uprightly?*

<sup>8</sup> *"Lately My people have risen up as an enemy — You pull off the robe with the garment From those who trust you, as they pass by, Like men returned from war. <sup>9</sup> The women of My people you cast out From their pleasant houses; From their children You have taken away My glory forever.*

<sup>10</sup> *"Arise and depart, For this is not your rest; Because it is defiled, it shall destroy, Yes, with utter destruction. <sup>11</sup> If a man should walk in a false spirit And speak a lie, saying, 'I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,' Even he would be the prattler of this people.*

<sup>12</sup> *"I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, Like a flock in the midst of their pasture; They shall make a loud noise because of so many people.*

<sup>13</sup> *The one who breaks open will come up before them; They will break out, Pass through the gate, And go out by it; Their king will pass before them, With the LORD at their head." (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

A most deplorable condition existed in Israel at the time of which our text speaks. The people opposed the messages of God's prophets.

Many people despised the Word of Truth and endeavoured to silence the faithful ministers.

When a prophet censured them or corrected their faults, they turned away from him. They wanted prophets who would flatter them despite their sins and say *“smooth things.”* We read in Isaiah 30:10, *And to the prophets, [they said] “Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”*

Many people actually demanded that the prophets proclaim what they desired to hear. They wanted prophets who would not disturb them in their security.

We have similar conditions in our time. What type of ministry is considered popular today? A ministry that tells people the truth, censures the sins of the people, calls people to repentance, or the ministry that proclaims *“smooth things”*?

Let us thank God for the faithful ministry that He has given our Church. Let us not oppose the prophets that bring God’s messages. Messages from them will bless us. The theme for today is *The Messages that will do you Good.* May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. Listen To Messages From Those Who Proclaim God’s Word**

Our text begins, *’You who are named the house of Jacob: “Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good To him who walks uprightly?”*

In his answer to the false prophets, Micah addressed Israel as the *“house of Jacob,”* to remind the Israelites how unlike their namesake they were acting. Jacob was a man of faith who clung to the Lord and His Word, especially in times of fearful uncertainty and serious crisis. Yet here were his descendants challenging the Lord’s threatened judgement.

Speaking for the Lord, Micah explained how every word of the Lord is good for all who walk uprightly by faith. His Law does good, even when it threatens punishment for sin. For then it drives the penitent back to the Lord for forgiveness. And, of course, His Gospel is good, showing the unfailing love and mercy of the Lord who forgives sins through His promised Messiah.

In the Old Testament, God gave His words into the mouth of His prophets. Those men came to the people and introduced their message with the words: ***“Thus says the Lord.”***

The prophet Micah, standing before the people in our text, makes an appeal to the experiences of the generation of the upright. ***Do not My words do good To him who walks uprightly?*** They can supply the answer themselves: ***“Yes, certainly they did.”***

Why, then, are they opposing God’s words? They also knew that the doings which had been going on in the land were not God’s doings. The Spirit of God was not with those unprincipled prophets who preached to ***“itching ears.”***<sup>1</sup> They were depriving themselves of the benefits which were designed for them by the Word of God.

In like manner true Christian ministers today should always proclaim God’s word. Those are the messages that will do the people good. What are people benefited by those pastors who preach human wisdom or by those who even associate themselves with the sins of the people by merely glossing over the wickedness of men?

***“Thus it is written,”*** should be the motto for all those who are called to preach. Then their messages will ring with authority and be of benefit to the people.

Much of modern preaching is similar to that of the prophets mentioned in verse 11, which says, ***“If a man should walk in a false spirit And speak a lie, saying, ‘I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,’ Even he would be the prattler of this people.***

Since most of the Israelites had rejected the message of God’s true prophets, they were all the more ready to listen to the false prophets in their midst. These false prophets quickly learned that they could enjoy a comfortable living if they told the people only what they wanted to hear.

So they prophesied messages pleasing to their listeners, promising ***“plenty of wine and beer,”*** lives of ease and pleasure. Threats of punishment for sin never crossed their lips, because such preaching would get them no favours from the people.

Micah calls such a prophet “*a liar and deceiver,*” or somewhat more literally, “*a deceiving wind-bag.*” That is the only kind of prophet the faithless people deserved, one whose prophecies had no more substance than a gas-filled balloon.

Time has not diminished the stature or the appeal of false prophets. Telling people only what they like to hear may produce a larger congregation or television audience, and maybe even a greater personal income — than telling people what God wants them to hear.

People like to hear good tidings about themselves and the good they do. The social gospel makes for appealing preaching and comfortable listening. And when these prophets even disguise their falsehoods by quoting Scripture, their appeal becomes all the greater. Everything about them looks so legitimate.

Overlooked amid all the religious airs, emotional rhetoric, and frequent showbiz hype of these false prophets is the sobering truth written in Rom. 16:18 that they “*do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.*”<sup>2</sup>

They have “*a spirit of falsehood*” and are deceiving the hearers for the sake of personal gain. How much of God’s Word is still being preached from the modern pulpits in our land?

There is no need of going to church in order to hear the discussions on politics, social reform, or how to prevent wars, etc. You can read about those topics in daily newspapers and in magazines. If ministers resort to all modern pulpit tactics, that is their doing and not the Lord’s.

Our ministry must remain “*the ministry of the Word.*” Thank God for true prophets, for pastors and teachers who speak the Word truthfully, who serve the Lord and His people and not themselves!

## **2. Listen To Both The Law And The Gospel**

The ministers of God are also to proclaim a message that will not be so flattering to the hearers. Micah’s message to the people in is summarised in verses 8 & 9. <sup>8</sup> “*Lately My people have risen up as an enemy — You pull off the robe with the garment From those who trust you, as they pass by, Like men*

*returned from war. <sup>9</sup> The women of My people you cast out From their pleasant houses; From their children You have taken away My glory forever.*

Here he directs attention to his hearers' grievous sins. Like enemies at warfare they committed ravages against men, women, and children. Fearlessly the prophet of God reproved them for the frauds they had practised against their fellow-men. We can well understand why they opposed the faithful ministry of this prophet. The preaching of God's Law was not to their liking.

Likewise our preaching must contain the stern rebukes of God's Law. That message is necessary if people are to be brought to the knowledge of their sins. It may hurt the pride of the people when the search-light of God's Law is directed against them, when their sinful ways are exposed and condemned.

But dare messengers of God omit doing this and so be like the those mentioned in Isaiah 56:10, <sup>10</sup> *His watchmen are blind, They are all ignorant; They are all dumb dogs, They cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.*

What would you think of a doctor who would hesitate to perform a painful operation if that operation could save the life of his patient?

We read in Ezekiel 3:17-19, <sup>17</sup> *“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me:*

*<sup>18</sup> When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.*

*<sup>19</sup> Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.*

The majority in Israel did not accept the message of their true prophets and heed their warnings. They had to suffer the consequences. The Assyrians came and took their land from them.

They had to go out of their own gates and allow themselves to be led into captivity. That was the Lord's judgement upon the sins of the people. This is

written for our warning. Today, when you hear God's voice, do not harden your hearts. There will be a day of reckoning. Woe to the person who falls into the hands of the righteous Judge!

When sin is seen for what it is, disobedience of God's holy will and defiance of the One who demands perfection, then God will be seen as a just God who must punish sin. God is indeed just when He threatens, "*The wages of sin is death.*"<sup>3</sup> But is He not equally just when He promises in His Gospel, "*But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*"?<sup>4</sup>

God's justice in the Gospel is twofold: He punished mankind's sin with death, the sacrificial death of His own Son. And, He keeps His word of promise, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.*"<sup>5</sup> Let all who want to challenge God's justice view their action in the light of both His Law and His Gospel.

### 3. Do Not Be Conformed To This World

Our text continues, <sup>10</sup> "*Arise and depart, For this is not your rest; Because it is defiled, it shall destroy, Yes, with utter destruction.* <sup>11</sup> *If a man should walk in a false spirit And speak a lie, saying, 'I will prophesy to you of wine and drink,' Even he would be the prattler of this people.*

Another message that will do you good is "*Arise and depart.*" Quit this world; prepare to leave, for this is not your rest. Canaan, the land of milk and honey, was still in this world. But it was polluted by the sins in this world. Being attached to it, living entirely for it, can only bring destruction.

This may be applied to our present estate in the world. This world is not our portion, but merely a land through which we are to pass as we seek "*our better country,*" that city fair and high which is eternal in the heavens.

Let us take the advice of Hebrews 13:14, <sup>14</sup> "*For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.* And in Philippians 3:20, <sup>20</sup> "*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.* This should arouse anew a fervent longing in our hearts for heaven, our true home.

This world is not our rest; not only because these things are fleeting and must be left behind, but also because there is so much corruption in the world. Unless we diligently avoid the pollution, we shall be destroyed with the world.

We read in Romans 12:2, <sup>2</sup> *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Let us note the words of 1 John 2:15–17, <sup>15</sup> *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* <sup>16</sup> *For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world.* <sup>17</sup> *And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

#### **4. Deliverance Is Promised**

So far in chapter 2, Micah has been using the cutting edge of God’s law in speaking to his people, denouncing their blatant sins with God’s word of judgement. It must have come like a breath of fresh air to the penitent believers in Israel to hear Micah then speak the Gospel, referring to God’s gracious promise of deliverance through the Messiah.

The heavenly home is guaranteed to us by the message of God’s mercy. After pronouncing God’s judgement upon the unfaithful and disobedient people, the prophet comforted *“the remnant in Israel.”*

Our text says <sup>12</sup> *“I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together like sheep of the fold, Like a flock in the midst of their pasture; They shall make a loud noise because of so many people.*

The remnant of which Micah speaks refers to is the spiritual Israel, all who are faithful to the promise God made with Abraham, the father of the Israelite nation. *“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise,”* Paul told the Galatian Christians.<sup>6</sup> This latter-day Israel is none other than the New Testament church, made up of believers of all races and nations, all who have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Those who heed the words of God and serve their Lord in true faith, God will number them among the sheep of His fold. ***“I will gather them together as the sheep of Bozrah.”*** Bozrah was the capital of ancient Edom. The literal meaning of the word is “stronghold.” God will put a hedge around the sheep of His pasture. They shall be safe in His care and protection.

The Saviour’s role is pictured as that of a shepherd, the Good Shepherd. Through the Gospel He gathers His sheep into the pen, that is, the Church, the entire group of believers. And what an assembly! The church will throng with people, of all races and nations, so numerous they cannot be counted, all rejoicing over their deliverance.<sup>7</sup>

The way to God and to heaven is open. Now His redeemed may pass ***“through the gate and go out”*** to serve Him during this life and to follow Him into eternal life. He, our Lord and King, will go before us, providing needed protection and offering guidance and comfort in His Word.

Let us value the messages of God when they are brought to us. If we accept the offers of His mercy, God will help us through all the difficulties along the way and at last take us unto Himself in heaven. Never despise *“the messages that will do you good.”*

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,<sup>8</sup>

Word of the ever-living God,  
Will of His glorious Son:  
Without thee how could earth be trod,  
Or heav’n itself be won?

Lord, grant that we aright may learn  
The wisdom it imparts,  
And to its heav’nly teaching turn  
With simple, childlike hearts. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 4:3

<sup>2</sup> Romans 16:18

<sup>3</sup> Romans 6:23



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<sup>4</sup> Romans 6:23

<sup>5</sup> Acts 16:31

<sup>6</sup> Gal 3:29

<sup>7</sup> Revelation 7:9, 10

<sup>8</sup> Hymn 268