

“God Pleads His Case”
Micah 6
(Preached at Trinity, February 5, 2023)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we enter this chapter we find a courtroom scene. The same word is used in **Verses 1,2** “Plead your case” in **Verse 1** and “Indictment” in **Verse 2**.
It describes a legal procedure.
Micah is standing as the prosecutor or court official. The participants are Israel, the mountains as God’s witness, and God who is bringing the indictment.
2. It opens with Micah calling the court to order.
Micah 6:1 NAU - "Hear now what the LORD is saying, "Arise, plead your case before the mountains, And let the hills hear your voice."
 - A. **Verses 1 and 2** open with imperatives – “Hear.” “Listen.”
Micah 6:2 NAU - "Listen, you mountains, to the indictment of the LORD, And you enduring foundations of the earth, Because the LORD has a case against His people; Even with Israel He will dispute."
 - B. It is divided into an orderly discourse.
 - In **Verses 1-2** Micah stands as God’s prosecutor, calls the assembly, and gives the indictment. The mountains serve as God’s witnesses.
 - In **Verses 3-5** God pleads His case.
 - In **Verses 6-7** someone asks a question regarding what God expects of His people and then in **Verse 8** Micah gives him the answer.
- I. God begins by giving His self-defense.
Micah 6:3 NAU - "My people, what have I done to you, And how have I wearied you? Answer Me."
 - A. We sometimes find others doing this in Scripture.
 1. David in the Psalms
Psalms 26:2 NAU - "Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart."
Psalms 139:23-24 NAU - "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; ²⁴ And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way."
 2. Job declared his innocence
Job 31:5-6 NAU - "If I have walked with falsehood, And my foot has hastened after deceit, ⁶ Let Him weigh me with accurate scales, And let God know my integrity."

3. Paul placed himself before God's scrutiny.
1 Corinthians 4:4 NAU - "For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord."
 4. Now God with infinite condescension holds himself before man's scrutiny.
 - a. It is amazing that God opens Himself to the judgment of man
Malachi 3:10 NAU - "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows."
 - b. Isaiah describes God reasoning with man.
Isaiah 1:18 NAU - "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool."
It is the same word translated "dispute" in **Verse 2**
Micah 6:2 NAU - "Even with Israel He will dispute."
 5. God has entered into covenant with Israel and has blessed them with covenant faithfulness. Israel, on the other hand has continually rebelled against God in covenant unfaithfulness.
In this courtroom scene God is saying, "What have I done that justifies your rejection and distrust?"
- B. God recounts His actions throughout the history of Israel. God had always been faithful to His covenant.
Micah 6:5 - "So that you might know the righteous acts of the LORD."
1. God delivered them from their bondage in Egypt – **Verse 4**
 2. He sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to lead them and care for them.
 3. Balak counselled a curse upon Israel – did God allow it to happen. In other words, instead of curses God sent blessings.
 4. From Shittim the final encampment before crossing into Canaan to Gilgal their first encampment in Canaan—They were to remember all of the details of entering the Promised Land and God's faithfulness.
 - a. In Shittim they broke God's covenant.
Numbers 25:1-3 NAU - "While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. ² For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. ³ So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel."
 - b. In Gilgal the covenant was renewed.
 5. God says, "remember." This is an oft repeated command. "Remember!"
In various forms, over 200 times.
 - a. God knows how prone we are to forget.
Ecclesiastes 12:1 – "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth"

Isaiah 46:9 – “Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me,”

- b. This is an important element of the Lord’s Supper
Luke 22:19 NAU - "And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

II. What does God require?

A. **Verses 6-7** are the words of a worshipper as to how God should be approached
"With what shall I come to the LORD *And* bow myself before the God on high?"

1. They are asking the right question. It is the question that every human being must ask, “How shall I approach God?”
It’s as if they are complaining, “Look at all of these religious acts we’ve done. Why is God bringing a complaint against us?”
 - a. They asked the right question but presumed the wrong answer.
They presumed their religious works would merit God’s pleasure.
 - b. This will be rehearsed at the final judgment.
Matthew 7:22-23 NAU - "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"
2. Is God pleased with burnt offerings and yearling calves.
The idea is the cost to the worshipper. Burnt offerings were consumed and the worshipper got none of it, and yearlings had to be cared-for for a year.
3. What about increasing it to thousands of rams?
What about ten thousand rivers of oil.
Again, the focus is on the extravagance of the cost and effort.
4. What if I sacrifice my first-born child? This was not mere hyperbole.
Some had practiced this abominable act.
2 Kings 16:2-3 NAU - "Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David *had done*. ³ But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out from before the sons of Israel."
2 Kings 21:1 NAU - "Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hephzibah."
2 Kings 21:6 NAU - "He made his son pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and used divination, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD provoking *Him to anger*."

B. God's answer is shocking in its simplicity.

Micah 6:8 NAU - "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"

1. God is saying, all of these acts of religion are useless!
This may be shocking to the legalist, but it should be no surprise. This has always been God's demand.
Micah 6:8 NAU - "He has told you, O man, what is good . . ."
2. God is honored by justice and righteousness
Isaiah 1:17 NAU - "Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow."
3. This has not changed.
James 1:27 NAU - "Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world."
4. It is important to understand this. Micah is not describing the way to salvation. He is not replacing one legalistic path with another. He is simply describing the life of those who have received grace.
 - a. Those who have received grace become dispensaries of grace.
 - b. Those who are living the life of faith are also living the life of righteousness.
James 2:15-18 NAU - "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
5. "to do justice" - Micah had already described the injustice that was being perpetrated upon the weak. Those involved in this activity knew nothing of God's grace.
6. "to love kindness" – This is the well-known Hebrew word חֶסֶד
It refers to a steadfast covenant love. The KJV translates it "Mercy"

Conclusion:

1. **Verses 9-12** describe specific crimes in the indictment. Unjust business practices and lying tongues.
In **Verses 13-16** we read the Divine sentence—God's curses. Sickness and want and loss. As we pass on to **Chapter 7** we will see the consequence of God's judgment. Social upheaval.
2. Covenant unfaithfulness continues today. We can add to God's list of righteous acts the sending forth of the Messiah, His earthly ministry, and death upon the cross. We can add the apostolic ministry and the preserving of God's Word. God continues faithful, even in the midst of such spiritual corruption today.