

BIBLE STUDY HELPS

TITLE: Waiting on God (Hope Found)

TEXT: MICAH 7:1-10,18-20

TARGET: SESSION IN A SENTENCE

Waiting on God is only possible when we understand God's plan.

LOOK UP: FOCUSING THE GROUP

Introduce: (Display the following: Upcoming Surgery, Medical Test Results, Traffic Jam, Amusement Park Line.)

- Have you ever spent time waiting during one of these situations?
- What kind of emotional responses might one of these situations prompt while you are waiting? (i.e., Surgery – fear; Medical Test Results – dread; Traffic Jam – frustration; Amusement Park Line – impatience)
- Why do we have these kinds of responses when we have to wait?

Imagine you were Micah, and you were waiting for God to work once again with the people of God. Micah had observed the reality of their sins repeatedly. They had followed the cultural patterns of their society instead of God's patterns for living as His covenant people. Their sins were so numerous and glaring they had no defense. It was during this period of waiting that Micah expressed his struggle with all he had observed and his reliance on God's promises and redemptive actions. Micah 7:1-6 begins with the reality once again regarding all Micah had observed and how this made waiting on God so difficult.

LOOK IN: UNPACKING THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Waiting on God is difficult when things appear hopeless – Micah 7:1-6

¹ How sad for me! For I am like one who — when the summer fruit has been gathered after the gleaning of the grape harvest — finds no grape cluster to eat, no early fig, which I crave. ² Faithful people have vanished from the land; there is no one upright among the people. All of them wait in ambush to shed blood; they hunt each other with a net. ³ Both hands are good at accomplishing evil: the official and the judge demand a bribe; when the powerful man communicates his evil desire, they plot it together. ⁴ The best of them is like a brier; the most upright is worse than a hedge of thorns. The day of your watchmen, the day of your punishment, is coming; at this time their panic is here. ⁵ Do not rely on a friend; don't trust in a close companion. Seal your mouth from the woman who lies in your arms. ⁶ Surely a son considers his father a fool, a daughter opposes her mother, and a daughter-in-law is against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household.

Micah begins with the phrase, "How sad for me!" He is expressing despair and hopelessness. He grieved about what he was observing taking place in society.

Guide Option: (Draw two columns on the markerboard. Label the first column "Then" and the second column "Now.")

- Examine verses 2-6 and identify the godless actions of the people that grieved Micah. (As the actions are identified, list them in the "Then" column.)
- How might these be expressed today in our society? (List responses in the "Now" column)

"Then" (References)

- Vs. 2 – Faithful and upright people had vanished from the land.
- Vs. 2 – The only people who remained in the land were those who were looking for the opportunity to *shed blood*.
- Vs. 2 – If no one came along to attack, then they went out hunting for their prey *with a net*
- Vs. 3 – They were very proficient or ambidextrous in their ability to do what was evil. They were "all in" when it came to doing evil.
- Vs. 3 – Officials and judges demanded bribes. It was a well-oiled machine of political and judicial corruption.
- Vs. 3 – The powerful banded together to plot evil.
- Vs. 4 – Even the best of them were like briers. They were worse than a hedge of thorns.
- Vs. 5 – Can't trust or rely on anyone including friends and family.
- Vs. 6 – Children and the children's spouses turn against the parents. His own household becomes his enemy.

"Now" (Examples)

- It appears that faithfulness to God is vanishing, even among professing believers.
- Mass shootings.
- Mistreating people with whom you don't agree.
- Seeking to destroy others' reputations, just to do evil against them or to advance a certain agenda.
- Mistrust of politicians and the legal system because of corruption.
- People who are held up as "good" are not examples of more uprightness and godliness.
- Friends betray friends for personal gain.
- Spouses betray spouses.
- People are hesitant to trust anyone.
- Families are divided because of moral choices.
- Parents aren't respected and are mistreated.

Micah had remained faithful to God, but as he witnessed the depravity of the people of God, he felt alienated, isolated, and discouraged. He compared his feelings to the farmer who gathers the summer fruit and grapes, only to discover he has nothing to show for it.

Respond: How could experiencing these situations today make waiting on God more difficult?

As we wait for God, it can become discouraging when it seems that people are continually moving far from God. One must ask, "How can we demonstrate our commitment to love God and others even if it doesn't seem to be making a difference?" Micah gives us the answer to this question in the next passages.

Waiting is sustained by God's promises - Micah 7:7-10

⁷ But I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. ⁸ Do not rejoice over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will stand up; though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be my light. ⁹ Because I have sinned against him, I must endure the Lord's fury until he champions my cause and establishes justice for me. He will bring me into the light; I will see his salvation. ¹⁰ Then my enemy will see, and she will be covered with shame, the one who said to me, "Where is the Lord your God?" My eyes will look at her in triumph; at that time she will be trampled like mud in the streets.

Micah looked to the promises of God and how He had worked in the past to help him overcome the brutal reality of what he was observing. He knew God would deal with sin and he knew God would keep His covenant with those who loved Him and remained faithful to Him. Micah emphatically stated that he would *look to the Lord and wait for the God of [his] salvation*.

Respond: As you consider everything Micah said in this passage about looking to the Lord and waiting for God, how might you apply this to your life as you strive to remain faithful to Him in an ever-increasing evil world?

Looking to the Lord and waiting on His salvation means that, even in the most desperate of situations, we will not only hold on to our belief that God CAN deliver us, but we will also believe that He WILL deliver us. Micah was confident that God would bring about His perfect redemptive plans in the right way, at the right time, and measured with the right amount of judgment and grace. He trusted God even though his personal observations and experiences challenged his patience and faith.

Micah's patience was not only sustained by the hope he had in God's redemptive plans but in what he personally knew about God.

Experiencing God's love and forgiveness makes waiting worth it! - Micah 7:18-20

¹⁸ Who is a God like you, forgiving iniquity and passing over rebellion for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not hold on to his anger forever because he delights in faithful love. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us; he will vanquish our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. ²⁰ You will show loyalty to Jacob and faithful love to Abraham, as you swore to our ancestors from days long ago.

After all Micah had proclaimed about the rebellion of the people and God's judgment, Micah concludes by remembering the wonderful works of the Lord that he and the Israelites had experienced. Micah reminds us that God is:

- Forgiving.
- He doesn't destroy all people because there is a remnant that will follow God.
- He doesn't hold on to his anger because He delights in faithful love.
- He has compassion - suggesting a tender, maternal love that a mother would have for her child.
- He vanquishes our iniquity. He liberates us from our enemy which is sin.

LOOK OUT: LIVING OUT THE TARGET

While Micah was speaking to the Israelites, this promise was ultimately accomplished through the person and work of Jesus. If we have truly experienced the love and forgiveness of Christ that only comes through confessing our sins and turning to Him to receive His salvation, then we know that waiting is something we can do. While we wait, we can live faithfully, knowing that God, through Jesus Christ, will ultimately complete His plan of redemption.

Challenge:

- As we close out the study of Micah, what is one action you believe God is asking you to take, or one truth He desires you to obey, based on this study?
- How can you demonstrate an attitude of faith as you wait for God to continue to work to bring about His redemptive plans?