

Pastor T.C. Arnold  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Trinity  
Micah 7:18-20  
June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015

*Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance?*

I would love to meet many of these great women and men mentioned in the Scriptures. No less than any of them would be Micah. Why Micah? Well, he was a small town guy from a little town called Moresheth – to the west of the metropolis of Jerusalem out in the country. Yet, he had a big mouth and spouted off against Jerusalem, the sins of the kings, and the people of Judah and Israel who loved their own gods and were ignoring the one true God. Micah didn't let his "status" of being a small town, country bumpkin, stand in the way of saying what the Lord needed him to say – even when others might think, "What does that guy know? He's from Moresheth. Nothing happens in Moresheth."

Actually things did happen in that part of the world. This was near Gath. Goliath was from Gath and 250 years before the time Micah wrote these words, this area was the place of that battle between the children of Israel and the mighty Philistines where David slew the giant. With all confidence – even this small town guy – was not wavering on his message. He spoke the law when it needed to be said, and he spoke gospel message when that needed to be said.

At the beginning of last week the Missouri District had their triennial convention down in Springfield, Missouri. Yours truly was floor committee chairman for the committee on structure and administration. I'm not sure President Mirly was in his right mind when he asked me to chair this committee, but I digress. As various resolutions were presented to the convention, there was also the opportunity for delegates to speak – to have a voice – on any matter up for debate. Some of the delegates from big towns and big congregations chimed in. Others were from very small towns and very small congregations. But each could speak as loudly as the other. Each had their say and each had the opportunity to speak. And sometimes, the smaller town guys and gals would speak louder and with more boldness than any of the others.

Beloved, that is what I would like for you to imagine with Micah. He's a loud mouth from the town of "Nowhere-Ville." What gives him the authority to speak to the high and mighty kings? What gives him the authority to condemn those who are a part of the "upper class" of the large cities – those who are influential and famous? You know the answer. It's the Lord. The Lord – one and only. Micah speaks with authority because he is not speaking from his own words, but from the words of God.

And beloved, know that same thing about the words of your pastors. We may have a word of law for you – you specifically. We take care in choosing those words because they must be rightly applied. The law, you see, is the Word of the Lord and it, as Luther pointed out, is that word from God that *semper accusat* – always accuses. Why? Because that word from God shows each of us personally how our actions – even our thoughts and words – fall short of what God expects. So, when that happens, the word of the law is spoken – those words from God spoken by the ones I hope you expect to hear it from... your pastors.

Now, your sins are enormous and large in number. How do I know that? Am I spying on you? No. I know this because I'm a sinner like you and I know my own sins. So, when your pastors speak the word of law to your ears, I want you to keep in mind two things. First, every word of the law spoken from our lips is the same word we ourselves need to listen to – because the chief of sinners preaches on any given Sunday right from this pulpit. Secondly, that this word of law is from God and He speaks it for the good of His children. These are not our made up rules and

regulations. This is a word that God has called your pastors to speak – and if we didn't speak it, we wouldn't be doing the job that God has called us to do.

So, yes, you are guilty. Yes – repent of your sins and change your ways. Stop talking bad about others. Stop your premeditated actions that cause you to think whatever you are doing is a victimless crime – because if it's against God's law and you continue to do it – you will be the victim. You hurt yourself. Your relationship with your Lord erodes with unrepentant sin. Stop being selfish while hurting others. For once in your life think of someone else first. “But pastor, I think of others all the time?” All the time or every time? In what way? How have you helped your neighbor instead of ignoring your neighbor? Could there be more? Oh yes. Beloved, repent and turn from your sins – so says the loudmouth from unincorporated Rosewood Heights. From “Nowhere-Ville” Southern Illinois standing before you today. No, so says your Lord.

Now I don't speak my own words of law for you. They are the Lord's and because they are His words, they need to be heard, headed and lived. Micah did the same to a stubborn people who loved to do and say everything that was contrary to God's will. Micah needed to be a loudmouth. But after that word of law, came the loudmouth word of Gospel. And that word was not Micah's word. That word, for you – beloved in the Lord – is not my word either.

Loudmouth Micah says, “*He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our inequities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.*” If we are going to shout the law that convicts each and every one of us, we are going to shout even louder the promise of God to love and to save His people. The loudest word is the last word. Yes, the law is loud when it convicts us, stares us right in the face and shows us that we are guilty. That law was loud coming down off of Mt. Sinai. God made sure the people heard Him speak – and they would hear Him time and time again.

But that Gospel is louder, beloved in the Lord. It took flesh in a quiet town of Bethlehem but also in a “not so” quiet way to shepherds in the fields who heard angels crying out in song. And then, in not so quiet ways when Jesus' teachings were stirring up the crowd. And then in not so quiet ways when the people were lining up because Jesus was healing them out of great compassion. And then when they tried to arrest Him, they did arrest Him, and He stood before the angry crowd on Good Friday. Your Gospel message of life embodied in Jesus got even louder when they shouted – Crucify! Crucify! The shouts were loud from others and even from Jesus when He was dying for your sins on the cross – It's a noisy Gospel message of love and hope – all for you. And then death – death for you.

Beloved, the shouts are still loud – and they break forth for you. They are words like, “*never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.*” They are words like, “*I am with you always even unto the end of the age.*” We have that loud and clear Word of God for you today. No matter if you are stressed about work, about family and home, or about whatever is challenging you at this moment – the Gospel is louder than that. Jesus' blood covers it all. Receive it. It's for you.

And you are not some small town – that is, small time nothing that God doesn't care about. He loves you as much as anyone – warts and all. He loves you so much that He gave His Son, the Lord Jesus, to die for you. This Gospel is shouted out for you – small or big town – small or big time. This is for you – each of you. May God richly bless you and keep you in this loud-shouted gospel grace. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.