

Micah 7 - The Rhythms of Redemption

BULLIES

¹ *I feel so empty inside—*

*like someone starving
for grapes or figs,
after the vines and trees
have all been picked clean.*

² *No one is loyal to God;
no one does right.*

*Everyone is brutal
and eager to deceive
everyone else.*

³ *People cooperate to commit crime.
Judges and leaders demand bribes,
and rulers cheat in court.*

⁴ *The most honest of them
is worse than a thorn patch.*

*Your doom has come!
Lookouts sound the warning,
and everyone panics.*

⁵ *Don't trust anyone,
not even your best friend,
and be careful what you say
to the one you love.*

⁶ *Sons refuse to respect
their own fathers,
daughters rebel against
their own mothers,
and daughters-in-law despise
their mothers-in-law.
Your family is now your enemy.*

⁷ *But I trust the LORD God
to save me,
and I will wait for him
to answer my prayer.*





Micah lived in a time of bullies.

In his country, the rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer.

Outside his country, other countries were becoming very powerful and were using their armies to attack others.

Micah lived in a time of bullies.

We live in a time of bullies.

There are bullies at school.

There are bullies at work.

Sometimes there's bullies in our families.

Do you know any bullies?

How do they treat you or others?

How do they make you feel?

Sometimes it's hard to trust God when there are bullies in our lives.
We wonder if he really cares or not.
We wonder if evil will always win over good.
And we are tempted to lose hope, lose trust.
But there is one other thing that is even worse.

CONFESSION

⁸ *My enemies, don't be glad
because of my troubles!*

*I may have fallen,
but I will get up;*

*I may be sitting in the dark,
but the LORD is my light.*

⁹ *I have sinned against the LORD.
And so I must endure his anger,
until he comes to my defense.
But I know that I will see him
making things right for me
and leading me to the light.*

¹⁰ *You, my enemies, said,
"The LORD God is helpless."*

*Now each of you
will be disgraced
and put to shame.*

*I will see you trampled
like mud in the street.*

¹¹ *Towns of Judah, the day is coming
when your walls will be rebuilt,
and your boundaries enlarged.*

¹² *People will flock to you
from Assyria and Egypt,
from Babylonia
and everywhere else.*

¹³ *Those nations will suffer disaster
because of what they did.*

What makes a bully a bully?

But it's not just bullies who do wrong.

We often do wrong too.

When we lose hope or lose trust in God and in good,
we can give up on ourselves and become wicked.

Sometimes we become the bully.

When we disobey our parents, when we whine and complain, we are bullies.

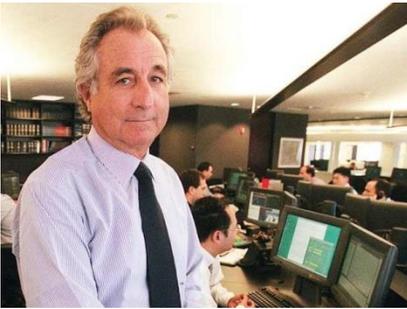
When we want to hurt other people or get our own way, we are bullies.
When we look down on others, we are bullies.
We are not innocent.
More often or not, we are afraid.
We are scared others will look down on us.
We want others to do what we want.
We think having money will make us safe.
Or maybe if we are popular and have more facebook friends.
or more people messaging us.
We keep looking at our phones waiting for texts so we don't feel lonely.
We become selfish and it's all about us.
So we need to be honest with ourselves first.
We can be selfish.
We can think only of us.

[Gift - Short Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DUYIHZsZfc>]

Before we look outside, we need to look inside.
But also trust that God does execute Justice.

The Story of Bernard Madoff

He set up a financial company for a long time
eventually people found out that he was basically stealing money from people.
He got very rich by being dishonest, by doing wrong things.
It is estimated that he stole not hundred or thousands or even a million dollars.
But 12-20 billion dollars.



He was eventually caught.
in 2009 he was sentenced to 150 years in prison.
Which meant he would be 201 years old before being released.
No one lives that long.
But in a sense, justice was served.



But there were things that even the courts and judges could not bring.
Two years after his arrest, one of his sons who had worked with him, hung himself.
The other just died last year in September.
He lived to see the death of his children.
It is easy to hate someone who did what was wrong, was selfish, unjust.
But there are consequences for their actions there is always judgement.
We may not see the justice that happens in this life, but it will come nonetheless.

In Micah's time, Israel was torn apart.
The Northern Kingdom deported and the southern Kingdom eventually exiled.
In time the nations outside Israel that were so powerful were also torn apart.
Assyria and Babylon, both overthrown.
Justice comes.

ALL THINGS RIGHT

¹⁴ *Lead your people, LORD!
Come and be our shepherd.
Grasslands surround us,
but we live in a forest.
So lead us to Bashan and Gilead,
and let us find pasture
as we did long ago.*

¹⁵ *I, the LORD, will work miracles
just as I did
when I led you
out of Egypt.*

¹⁶ *Nations will see this
and be ashamed
because*

*of their helpless armies.
They will be in shock,
unable to speak or hear,*

¹⁷ *because of their fear of me,
your LORD and God.
Then they will come trembling,
crawling out of their fortresses
like insects or snakes,
lapping up the dust.*

The people said:

¹⁸ *Our God, no one is like you.
We are all that is left
of your chosen people,
and you freely forgive*

*our sin and guilt.
You don't stay angry forever;
you're glad to have pity
¹⁹ and pleased to be merciful.
You will trample on our sins
and throw them in the sea.
²⁰ You will keep your word
and be faithful to Jacob
and to Abraham,
as you promised our ancestors
many years ago.*

The book of Micah ends with a prayer.
A desire for God to come.
And God says he will.
More than that, though, Micah lives up to his name.
Micah means, "Who is like God?"
Implying that no one is like God.
But why?
How is the God of the Bible different from any other?
How does God transform us from the inside
so he can transform the world through us?
I think this video explains why...

[Signs of Forgiveness Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxoMbPWuk0I>]

This is what makes God different.
What makes us different.
In a world full of pain and injustice and bullies,
God is really at work in our world.
And what we are about to do is about this forgiveness.
Jesus died so that we might be forgiven.
Not only does he forgive us,
He makes us forgiving.