

OUR UNMATCHED GOD **(Micah 7:1-20)**

The NT teaches we are to be thankful in all circumstances, and one thing I am thankful for is that I am a native English speaker. If I had to learn English as my second language, I am not sure that I'd succeed. English is a notoriously difficult language to learn. There are many reasons for that. For one, we have all these grammar rules that have exceptions which make the rules sound more like suggestions. Also, one word can have a host of different definitions.

Consider the word match—m-a-t-c-h. It can be a noun or a verb or even an adjective. There are so many different uses:

- A match stick can be lit and used to start a fire.
- Often, after my wife does the laundry, I will sort through the socks to match my socks.
- When I find a pair that are of the same size and color, I will have a match, a matched pair.
- A match-maker will try to get two of her friends together because she thinks they make a fine match.
- Two people can compete against one another in a tennis match or a boxing match.
- A golf tournament can either be conducted as stroke play event or match play.
- When I compete against my wife in a board game, I have met my match.

This morning, I am going to use that word *match*, but I am going to add a two-letter prefix and a two letter-suffix. The letters of the prefix are *u-n* and the letters of the suffix are *e-d*. You and I serve a God who is unmatched. He is unequalled. He has no worthy rival. Our God is superior and supreme.

Prior to suspending our public services, on Sunday nights, I was preaching through the last 12 books of the OT. We call those books the Minor Prophets. We were devoting one message per each book. The last book we looked at back in March was Jonah. The next book is Micah. Today, we are going to look at the last chapter of the Micah—Micah 7.

Toward the end of chapter 7, Micah does something interesting. He plays on the meaning of his own name. The name Micah literally means, *Who is like Yahweh?* or *Who is like the LORD?* In Micah 7:18 we find the question, “Who is a God like You?” If you were to turn that question around and make it a statement, it would be, “There is no God like you?” About a dozen times in the OT we read a statement to the effect, “There is no god like our God—none like Him.”

In other words, Our God is unmatched. He has no equal. Micah 7 illustrates four ways in which this is so.

By way of introduction, Micah lived in the 8th Century B.C. He wrote more than 700 years before the coming of Jesus. He was a contemporary of Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea. He was from a small town called Moresheth. It bordered Philistine territory but was just

20 miles from Jerusalem. This small-town preacher cried out against the social sins of his day: injustice, the oppression of the poor, corruption, the abuse of power, and shallow religion.

The OT scholar Kyle Yates wrote, “Micah was most probably a peasant farmer who had a natural suspicion of the cities. Samaria and Jerusalem were the places where vice and wickedness and irreligion were concentrated. The wealthy nobles who fleeced the poor lived in these cities. The rulers, the princes, the judges, the priests, the false prophets were making their home in the cities.”

God got a hold of this country fellow and used him to great effect. Look at Micah 3:8. One of the greatest passages to be found in the OT is found in the Book of Micah. Look at Micah 6:8. That is true faith in a nutshell. That’s our job.

But what does God excel at doing? That is what we will examine today.

I. OUR GOD IS UNMATCHED IN THE JUDGMENT HE BRINGS.

A quick reading of the Bible shows clearly that God brings judgment upon the unrepentant and upon the wicked. We usually think of God’s judgment as something that comes at the end of time, but sometimes His judgment comes in this life. The first book of the Bible tells of a great flood by which God judged a wicked world. It also tells of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah that were destroyed by God because of their rampant immorality. There are numerous other stories of how God brought an end to those who rebelled from Him.

Judgment is mentioned in today’s passage. The last words of v. 4 as recorded in *The New Living Bible* read, “But your judgment day is coming swiftly now. Your time of punishment is here.”

Are these just OT stories meant for another time or is it possible that we can experience the judgment of God in this life, and if so, what form does His punishment take?

I am convinced, God punishes or judges in two distinct ways. He either judges actively or passively. His active judgment is the kind that gets most of the attention in OT stories, but I believe that God most often judges passively. By passive judgment, I mean that God allows us to experience the negative consequences of our sin.

We see this passive work of judgment in Micah 7, but if we will just pay attention, we can see it happening in our own nation, as well.

1. God’s Judgment Is Seen in the Breakdown of Morality.

Look at v. 1-2. Micah could no more find a godly person in his day that one could find a cluster of grapes after the grape harvest. Everywhere he looked he found violence.

I don’t have to prove to you that violence is on the rise in our country. All you have to do is turn on the TV and watch the news or read the morning paper.

Beyond that, we have seen a moral free-fall in our country. The kind of behavior we once viewed as taboo and ungodly is practiced openly and supported by the majority of Americans and protected by the courts.

In the days of Colonial America, Jonathan Edwards preached a fiery sermon entitled, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” It was a powerful sermon about God exercising active judgment.

What I find to be far more frightening is when God throws up His hands and allows sinners to continue in their sinning ways and does nothing to restrain them.

That is where we are today, and I believe it is one of the ways God is judging us. We are seeing the breakdown of morality.

2. God’s Judgment Is Seen in the Breakdown of Leadership.

Let me read to you v. 3 from the NLT:

Both their hands are equally skilled at doing evil!
Officials and judges alike demand bribes.
The people with influence get what they want,
and together they scheme to twist justice.

We are no longer surprised when politicians are accused on insider trading, when judges remain on cases where there is a clear conflict of interest, and when elected leaders bow to the powerful influence of lobby groups. It is all par for the course anymore. It is just what we expect.

When I was in school, I read the stories of great statesman who voted for what they believed was in the best interest of the country, irrespective of party. Where did those men go? They have been replaced by those who vote the party line and refuse to cooperate. Gridlock prevails.

There is a clear breakdown of leadership. I contend that it is the passive judgment of God. He is letting us reap the fruit that comes from the seeds of division we have sown.

3. God’s Judgment Is Seen in the Breakdown of the Family.

Listen to vv. 5-6 as found in the Voice Bible:

Do not trust your neighbor or rely on a friend. Do not tell your secrets even to the spouse who shares your bed, for the son insults the father, the daughter rebels against the mother, and the daughter-in-law rises up against the mother-in-law. Your enemies can be found within your own household.

Dysfunction seems to be the norm in families. No one trusts anyone because no one seems to be trustworthy. Due to this distrust, families are fighting and falling apart. We used to lament that the family was being attacked from the outside. Now something far worse is happening. We are attacking one another from the inside!

I believe this breakdown of morality, leadership, and family are all signs of the judgment of God. It is, however, passive judgment. He is not doing these things to us. We are doing these things to ourselves. We are victimizing ourselves because God alone has instituted the law of sowing and reaping. We are simply harvesting what we so unwisely planted.

No god and no one can judge like our God because He has woven self-judgment into the very nature of reality. He is never mistaken in His judgments. With our unmatched God, there is never a rush to judgment. There is never a miscarriage of justice. He is unmatched in the judgment He brings.

II. OUR GOD IS UNMATCHED IN THE DELIVERANCE HE WORKS.

In his prophecy, Micah looks forward to the day when God would deliver His people from their oppression and give them victory over their enemies.

Listen to vv. 7-10 from the TNL:

⁷ As for me, I look to the LORD for help.

I wait confidently for God to save me,
and my God will certainly hear me.

⁸ Do not gloat over me, my enemies!

For though I fall, I will rise again.

Though I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be my light.

⁹ I will be patient as the LORD punishes me,
for I have sinned against him.

But after that, he will take up my case
and give me justice for all I have suffered from my
enemies.

The LORD will bring me into the light,
and I will see his righteousness.

¹⁰ Then my enemies will see that the LORD is on me
side. They will be ashamed that they taunted me,
saying, “So where is the LORD—that God of
yours?”

With my own eyes I will see their downfall;
they will be trampled like mud in the streets.

A three-hour drive north of Rome will bring you to the city of Florence, Italy. In Florence you can find the Accademia Gallery which houses some of Michelangelo’s greatest sculptures. Chief among those is his statue of David. That gallery also features four of his works that are known as *the Captives*. They were meant to be used for the tomb of Pope Julius, but midway through the project, he quit working on them. They are unfinished. Protruding through the marble, there is a hand here, a torso there, a leg, a part of a head, but none are finished.

It is said that when you see these works, you can sense the turmoil, the struggle embodied in those figures. It is as if they are trying to break free from their prison of marble to become what they were intended to be.

The author Theodore Roder wrote:

When I looked at those partial figures, they stirred up in me a deep longing to be completed—an ache to be set free from that which distorts and disguises, imprisons and inhibits my humanness, my wholeness. But as with those statues, I cannot liberate myself. For that I need the hand of another.

Likewise, you and I cannot be what God intends for us to be until He delivers us from our bondage to sin. He does that very thing when we place our trust in Christ. No one can deliver us like our God can. Trust Him. Let Him free you.

III. OUR GOD IS UNMATCHED IN THE CARE HE PROVIDES.

Verse 14 reads, “O LORD, come and rule your people; lead Your flock in green pastures. Help them to live in peace and prosperity” (NLT).

There is no Shepherd like our God. Scripture portrays Him as the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, and the Chief Shepherd. He is unsurpassed in His ability to take care of those who belong to Him.

The NT calls upon us to cast all our anxiety upon Him because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). No one cares for us like our God does.

As a hospice chaplain, one of my duties is to minister to those whom we refer to as primary care givers. If the patient is married, usually it is the spouse who is the primary care giver. Often, however, it is a son or daughter. It might be a friend or another relative. In any case, most of those patients need someone to be with them 24/7.

I am often amazed by the dedication of the primary care givers. Just recently, I met a daughter-in-law who is taking care of her mother-in-law while she raises and teaches five children in her home.

There is the teenage son whose father died several months ago, and he was left to care for his ailing mom. She died at the age of 57 just a week or two ago.

Last week I met a granddaughter who is caring for her grandmother. When the restaurant she works at here in Enid closed down due to the corona virus, she moved in with her grandmother. She is doing a stellar job of caring for her.

Despite the heroic job these primary care givers are doing, there is no one who can care for us like God.

- Human care givers cannot stay awake 24/7, but our God never sleeps. He never takes a nap.
- Human care givers can ask questions, but sometimes the patient doesn't have the capacity to respond. Our God knows our needs before we ask Him.
- We can comfort the dying, but our God can raise the dead, and He will when Jesus returns.

Let me ask you, who is your Shepherd? Who takes care of you? All of us are dying; we just don't know when. If you can say truthfully, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” then you have a God who surpasses all other caregivers.

We have seen that God is unmatched in the judgment He brings, in the deliverance He

works, and in the care He provides. There is one more truth to consider.

IV. OUR GOD IS UNMATCHED IN THE MERCY HE SHOWS.

Let's look at the last three verses (7:18-20).

- ¹⁸ Where is another God like you,
who pardons the guilt of the remnant,
overlooking the sins of his special people?
You will not stay angry with your people forever,
because you delight in showing unfailing love.
- ¹⁹ Once again you will have compassion on us.
You will trample our sins under your feet
and throw them into the depths of the ocean!
- ²⁰ You will show us your faithfulness and unfailing
love as you promised to our ancestors Abraham and
Jacob long ago. (NLT)

Our God delights to show mercy. In other words, "He gets a kick out of being kind to sinners like you and me." The primary way that God shows mercy is to forgive sin.

I have heard people, and you probably have, too, "I'll forgive, but I won't forget." God, however, does both. He not only forgives our sin, He forgets. According to Micah, God throws our sin into the depths of the ocean. In Micah's day, anything that fell into the sea could never be recovered. There were no scuba gear. There were no submarines. If it fell into the sea, it was gone forever.

Forgiven sin is gone forever. It will not be retrieved and held against us. Such incredible mercy is ours for the asking.

Have you asked for God's mercy? Have you humbly approached God, admitted your sin, and then asked Jesus to forgive you and to come into your life as Your Savior and Lord? If you have never done that, do that; do that today.