

4th S. after the Epiphany 2/2/14
Micah 6:1-8 A

TEXT IS OUR OLD TESTAMENT LESSON, FROM THE 6TH CHAPTER OF THE PROPHET MICAH

During these brutal, harsh, winter days that we have had the joy of experiencing lately, I have to confess that I have found one bright spot of joy. What is this you ask? Re-runs of that classic court room drama, Perry Mason, have been showing on TV. I have to admit I like that show – especially that climatic moment at the end when all the mystery is solved by the guilty person confessing their guilt.

What if God put you on trial? That's in essence, what God is doing to Israel through the prophet Micah in our Old Testament lesson. The plaintiff in this case is the Lord God Almighty. He says in spite of the fact that He had loved and cared for His Israel, they have responded with an attitude of ingratitude. He is seeking repentance from the defendant..

The defendant is the nation of Israel. Israel says that God has wearied them. All they want is to be let alone to live a life according to their own way and their own standards.

As God takes the witness stand in our court room to plead His case before the mountains, the hills, and the foundation of the earth there is no reason for Him to swear to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth” because God always speaks the truth. So, the Lord's case against Israel would go something like this: I chose Israel to be my own people. I loved them, I cared for them, I did everything I could for them. When they were enslaved in Egypt, I redeemed them. I gave them leaders and good leaders, at that: Moses, Aaron, Miriam. I provided for them with manna and quail. I led them to the promised land, a land flowing with milk

and honey. I made sure they had all they needed. And what happened? Every time they got in a bind, every time something seemed to be going wrong, they would complain against me and their leaders. They would say things like, “Has the Lord bought us into the desert to die? We detest this miserable food He has given us. Life was so much better in Egypt under Pharaoh.”

They don't seem to remember that I'm the one who brought them out of the slavery of Egypt. I'm the one who saved them from, sin, death, and hell. If I saved them from all that, do you think I would let them wallow in their woes? Of course, I would help them in all their troubles. If I rescued them from slavery, sin, death, and hell, I can rescue them from any trouble. But, if the jury needs more proof about how it is that I loved and cared for my people, then let's remember what Balak the King of Moab had devised and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal.

As my people were making their way to the Promised Land, they camped out on the plains of Moab. There they were – as numerous as the stars in the sky. Balak, the king of Moab looked out at them and thought, “Oh, that's a lot of people. Maybe they're going to come and take my land and my kingdom away so me.” So he consulted with Balaam, the son of Boer, to curse the Israelites, thinking that if Balaam cursed them, then they would be cursed and he could defeat them. But, I refused to allow Balaam to curse my people. I loved my people so I spoke to him through the mouth of his donkey so that he would not curse my people. Rather, I blessed my people through him not once, not twice, but three times.

And in the final push into the promised land, all the way from Shittim to Gilgal, from the last place in the wilderness to the first place in the Promised Land, My ark, the ark of the covenant, went ahead of them,

which means I went with them. I was there to lead them and to bless them, because that's what I do.

And what did my people do? They are quite comfortable with this land flowing with milk and honey. They quite like it that they have houses and homes, clothing and shoes, food and drink, and all kinds of wonderful things. So, they act like they are responsible for all of it. They thank themselves. They live as though I don't matter; as though I've done nothing. All they've done is expressed an attitude of ingratitude towards me.

Concordia {Zion}, what if God put you on trial?

Things really haven't changed much as the years have gone by. God could say: I still love, I still care, I still provide, And even my people today, when things start to go badly for them, when things aren't going quite as they think they should go, what happens? They complain against me and their leaders. They say things like, "Where is God? Why doesn't do something?" When someone get sick or dies, when someone has an accident or a child breaks their parent's heart, they say, "God obviously doesn't care about us." And, they grumble about their leaders, like when the preacher tells them they are sinners or practices closed communion or does something they just don't like.

I am with my people even unto the end of the age. I would never leave them nor forsake them. I am with them to bless them and turn their curses into blesses. And what happens? They are quite comfortable. They quite like it that they have heated and air conditioned homes, big screen TVs, feet to put into shoes, cars, Xbox 360s, and all kinds of wonderful things. But, they act like they are responsible for all of it. They thanks themselves. They live as though I don't matter; as though I've done

nothing. All they've done is expressed an attitude of ingratitude towards me.

Having heard from the plaintiff, God, its now time to hear from the defendant. So, Israel, Concordia {Zion}, what do you have to save for yourself? The Lord is not a man who can lie, so, like Israel, we really have no defense. As if it were the end of an episode of Perry Mason, our guilt is exposed. Everything God says is true. We have lived as though He does not matter. We have lived as though we are responsible for all we have. We have lived with an attitude of ingratitude. We have sinned against the Lord. And, for that, we are truly sorry.

So, "with what shall I come before the Lord?" God does not want our burnt offerings, our calves, our rams, our oil or the sacrifice of our first-born. These will not atone for sin. God is going to atone for our sin through the sacrifice of His first-born. God took His first-born, Jesus, and laid upon Him all your sin, all the times you lived as though God didn't matter, all the times you thanked yourself, all those times you've looked and said, "Its all up to me because God doesn't care." He put your attitude of ingratitude upon Jesus and hung Him on a cross on Calvary. There He asked Him, "O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer Me." And the answer came from the lips of Jesus, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do... Father into Your hands I commend My spirit ... Father it is finished." And indeed it was. God's indictment against you and your sin is finished. For God has laid them all upon His first-born, Son, who gave Himself in sacrifice for you. And His sacrifice pays off in full the debt of sin you had to God. And three days later, He appears to Israel, appears to you, and says, "Peace be with you." That's the peace of knowing all your sins are forgiven and God is no longer angry at you.

That's the peace that gives to you a life in which you really do do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God. To do justice means to do to others as you would want done to you; to give each one what is their due, as Luther teaches us in the Table of Duties in his *Small Catechism*. To do kindness means that when you see someone in need, you help them, you give them what you can. To walk humbly with your God means to do all things to His glory and the good of your neighbor; that you see your sin, confess it, and receive it. That's the life of repentance. That's the life of gratitude.

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Concordia Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

801 Beacon Lane

Beulah, North Dakota

Rev. Toby H. Heller, Pastor

February 2, 2014



*"Blessed are poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Matthew 5:3

Divine Service Setting One

Hymn of Invocation # 427

Confession & Absolution p. 151

Introit

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,

but the way of the wicked will perish.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of
the wicked,

**nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat
of scoffers;**

but his delight is in the law of the Lord,

and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its
fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers.

The wicked are not so,

but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy

**Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be
forever. Amen.**

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,

but the way of the wicked will perish.

Kyrie p. 152

Glory to God p. 154

Salutation & Collect p. 156

Almighty God, You know we live in the midst of so many
dangers that in our frailty we cannot stand upright. Grant
strength and protection to support us in all dangers and
carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ, Your
Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy
Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Old Testament Reading: Micah 6:1-8 (ESV)

Hear what the Lord says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.

Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel.

"O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord."

"With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Gradual

Praise the Lord, all nations!

Extol him, all peoples!

For great is his steadfast love toward us,

and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;

bring an offering, and come into his courts!

Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 (ESV)

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Therefore, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

"Alleluia"

p. 156

Holy Gospel: St. Matthew 5:1-12 (ESV)

Seeing the crowds, [Jesus] went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Nicene Creed	p. 158
Hymn of the Day	# 567
Sermon	<i>"Arise, plead your case"</i>
Prayer of the Church	
Offering	
<i>The Handbell Choir will ring "Cares Chorus" during the gathering of our morning offerings.</i>	
"What Shall I Render"	p. 159
Service of the Sacrament	p. 160
Distribution Hymns	# 851, 619, 643
"Thank the Lord"	p. 164
Post-Communion Collect	p. 166
Benediction	p. 166
Closing Hymn	# 842

Today we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion in which we joyfully receive Christ's Body and Blood, under bread and wine, for the forgiveness of our sins. As we celebrate the Sacrament, we also give public witness that we are in complete agreement with the denomination's doctrinal teachings at whose altar we commune. Therefore, we ask that only communicant members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod commune with us. All guests are asked to talk to Rev. Heller before coming to the altar to receive the Sacrament.

In our thoughts and prayers,

† Carmen Dschaak, Kyle Miller (Nona Blaisdell's brother), and Agnes Wiedrich.

Stewardship of Offerings & Attendance

Attendance: 39 Offerings: \$1,245.00

Welcome to worship as Jesus reveals Himself to us as the Son of God in this season of Epiphany. In this season, when we see and hear Jesus, we see and hear God. Visitors, please sign our guest book and worship with us again soon.

1 Peter: Please join us as we continue our study of 1 Peter this morning.

Topic Leaders will meet on Tuesday, February 4th, 1:00 p.m. The topic will be "Praising God Even When He Seems Silent," from the Winter 2013 *Quarterly*.

Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday February 23rd, following worship. Following the Voters Meeting, we will have a potluck brunch. Everyone is invited to join us!

Baby Shower: The joint baby shower for Kollen Korbyn and Aackley Backus has been rescheduled for Sunday, February 9th at 2:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend and welcome the new babies into the Family of Concordia.



An updated telephone directory of Concordia members has been completed. If you would like a copy, sign your name on the sheet of paper on the table in the fellowship hall. A copy will then be put in your Church mailbox.

The February Human Care Project is collecting tuna for Women's Action & Resource Center. Please put your donations in the shelf unit in the entryway. Thank you.



The February calendar, birthday and anniversary sheet, Pray for Us Calendar, December council minutes, unapproved minutes from the November 17, 2013 Voters Meeting, and *Happy Times* for the children are in the black stacking trays in the social hall.

† This Week at Concordia †

Sunday	8:30 am	Divine Service
	9:30 am	Sunday School/Bible Class
	11:00 am	<i>Worship @ Glen Ullin</i>
Monday	10:00 am	Circuit Pastors @ Mandan
Tuesday	1:00 pm	Topic Leaders
	2:00 pm	Bible Class
Wednesday	3:30 pm	1 st -year Catechism
	4:30 pm	2 nd -year Catechism
	7:00 pm	Chime Practice
	7:30 pm	Bell Practice
Thursday	1:30 pm	Vesper Guild
Sunday	8:30 am	Divine Service
	9:30 am	Sunday School/Bible Class
	11:00 am	<i>Worship @ Glen Ullin</i>
	2:00 pm	Backus & Korbyn Baby Shower

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Church: 873-4388 Parsonage: 873-4223
revheller@westriv.com
concordiasecretary@westriv.com
Website: www.concordiabeulah.org

*Please use a pew card to record your worship and/or
Communion attendance this morning*

Love without Fear Week



February 9-15, 2014 is Love without Fear Week. Each year this week draws attention to healthy and loving relationships, and reminds people how too many relationships are marred by violence. As we celebrate Valentine's Day this week, let us reflect on how we love one another. In the coming year may we continue this thought:

**By learning how to discipline our children without humiliating them.*

**By learning how to touch each other without overpowering those we love.*

**By learning how to nurture families which are supporting circles of strength and intimacy rather than binding circles of isolation.*

**By learning that love does not mean possession.*

And may we work together to learn new ways of creating a world in which there will be love without fear. For further information, or if you would like a speaker for your group, contact Women's Action & Resource Center at 873-2274.