



YEAR 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 5: The Message of the Prophets

Lesson 5: God's People Are Sheep In A Pen—Micah 1-2

BIBLICAL REFLECTION

(A theological and biblical reflection on today's Scripture passage.)

GOD'S STORY

Micah was a prophet from the country whom God sent to preach to the city. Within the warning he had to deliver to the people about their sin was a promise that the Lord would gather the faithful remnant of His people back to Him like sheep in a pen. As only a good shepherd can, He would then lead them out into the open and they would follow their King to green pastures.

Nonetheless, this was a period of tremendous crisis and upheaval. People had become lethargic in their faith, turning away from God in their hearts while trying to keep up the appearances of their religious practices. All of this came about because Israel had yet again allowed pagan nations to influence them. The Lord provided what they needed to remain faithful and godly, and yet they turned away from Him and embraced false ideas. Corruption and injustice took root even among political rulers and holy leaders.

God's position must always be in the front, but when His sheep become restless and chaotic He has to assemble them so order can be reestablished. Micah, whose name means "Who is like God?" simultaneously exposed the sin of the people and the heart of the Lord to save those who would be saved. Their authority as the chosen people of God didn't negate the authority that needed to be over them.

OUR STORY

A relationship with God means that by trusting your life to Him you receive the trust of His life into you. He makes you a new creation in that regard, freeing you from guilt and empowering you toward an unwavering faith in Jesus Christ. As your character develops under Him, sin will no longer have the same grip over you that it once did.

The only variable is that God doesn't remove the aspect of freewill from our lives even after salvation. If we begin to take on bad influences from others, the guilt that the Lord swept away will show up again in our lives. It's like having a maid come over to clean your house, only to follow her around while wearing shoes caked in mud.

The remedy is to come before Jesus Christ from a place of humility and declare that for all of your temptations you still want him as the Lord over your life. You are a different person today than who you were yesterday, even if it's only unconsciously. By being intentional in who you follow, you recognize you're able to be protected like a sheep in a pen is guarded from getting lost or attacked.

OTHERS' STORY

There will be times that you need to leave activities or others behind in order to follow God. This may mean severing a dating relationship or friendship with someone whose company you enjoy but who is dragging you away from the Lord. It may also mean you keep a relationship intact but change the access you give people into your inner world. There may be certain weekly events or parts of your day that you change up to avoid being tempted by others.

The purpose of this type of separation isn't to be cold toward people, but to make sure you're not being pulled down by them. Peer pressure can be amazing if you're the one doing the influencing because you've let God influence you. If it's the other way around, though, you can compromise your faith because you don't want to offend someone.

Other people may not always understand why you're doing this, especially if you handle this legalistically rather than personally. Over time and with the use of the right tone you may find some people will actually respect you for what you stand up for. In fact, if you live with integrity and are a blessing to those around you some people may even stand up for you if others push against you.

THE WORLD'S STORY

The message we carry into the world is the restoration of all things and all people under Jesus Christ. Although faithful Christians get brought into the "sheep pen" by following the Shepherd, we also play a role in bringing truth and hope to all nations. It is a powerful message that Light comes after the dark, for the Resurrection comes after death.

What can't be ignored is there can only logically be one truth about God. All of creation is unconsciously aware of His existence and laws, but consciously has an incomplete understanding of the fullness of His love and identity. Every time the Lord gathers His people together and shares more about who He is and His mission in the world, a gap gets filled through Christendom that remains a gap in every other religion.

Just as God will put us into a special place to lead us out under His care, we also must recognize our opportunity to speak to those in our own circle of influence. Christians have a charge directly from Jesus to be His witnesses in all the world, making disciples of all nations. The "sheep pen" begins with "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). For us today, this means our neighborhoods, counties, states and nations.