

SUMMER SERMONS

MICAH 7:18

HIS MERCY IS MORE



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

One of the key skills we learn in school is the ability to compare things. We compare colors, words, number, poems, books, answers, cultures, arguments, data, etc. We do this because strengthening our comparison muscle helps us as we go on to higher education, work, relationships. It also helps us spiritually as we learn how to compare morals, ethics, truth claims, religious claims, God claims, etc.

CONTEXT

Micah was sent to strengthen Judah's comparison muscle around 750 BC. Isaiah was a prophetic colleague, but he ministered in the royal court, whereas Micah was a blue-collar prophet.

If you read the whole book of Micah, you realize that these were times of great sin in every area of life: civil, military, economic, political, religious. Bribery, deceit, lying, dishonesty, greed, oppression, idolatry, etc., were rampant.

But Micah 7:18-20 reminds us that these were also times of great mercy. Micah called Israel to exercise their comparison muscle so that they could see that their God was incomparable.



In what way is God incomparable? In the way he forgives sin.



1. JESUS CARRIES SIN AWAY

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity (18).

There are three Hebrew words for sin each with a different meaning: guilt, rebellion, fractured relationship. All three Hebrew words are used in verses 18-19. Micah is viewing sin in its totality and declares that God pardons it all. The word 'pardon' means to lift up and carry away. It pictures the guilt of sin as a heavy weight that we cannot remove, but Christ can.

MY SIN IS A GREAT WEIGHT,
BUT CHRIST IS A GREATER WEIGHT-LIFTER

Our sins they are many, his mercy is more. "But my sin also separates me from God."

2. JESUS CLIMBS OVER SIN

Who is a God like you... passing over transgression (18)

When Micah says that God passes over sin, he doesn't mean God ignores it, connives at it, or downplays it. He means it's not an insurmountable obstacle to him. It's a barrier he can get over. How can God take sin seriously and yet pass over sin? We get a clue from the fact that orthodox Jews to this day read this passage on the Day of Atonement. God can climb over sin through atoning blood.

MY SIN BUILDS HIGH WALLS,
BUT CHRIST CROSS IS A HIGHER LADDER

Our sins they are many, his mercy is more. "**But my sin overpowers me.**"

3. JESUS CRUSHES SIN

Who is a God like you... he will tread our iniquities underfoot (18-19)

Here Micah portrays sin as a bitter and hostile enemy that has invaded every part of our being. But God tramples it underfoot like insects. He crushes it and pulverizes it. a

MY SIN IS A CRUSHING POWER,
BUT CHRIST CRUSHES IT TO POWDER

Our sins they are many, his mercy is more. "But my sin hunts me and haunts me."



4. JESUS CASTS SIN AWAY

Who is a God like you...you will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea (18-19).

In Micah's day, the most inaccessible place was the sea. Now, of course, we have deep sea submersibles and Google is mapping out the sea floor. But then it was a place that no one could go and nothing could come back from. Maybe, the equivalent today would be the hundred billion galaxies outside the Milky Way, the nearest of which, the Andromeda Galaxy, is 2.5 million light years away.

Micah is telling us that when God forgives sin he throws it into eternal oblivion. It's cast so far and so deep, that it will never be washed back into shore. It's the Old Covenant equivalent of the New Covenant promise, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more" (Hebrews 10:17). When God "forgets" sin it doesn't mean that he accidentally forgets, or that it fades with time and age, but that he deliberately chooses to forget.

MY SIN I EVER SEE,
BUT GOD HURLS IT INTO THE SEA.

Our sins they are many, his mercy is more.



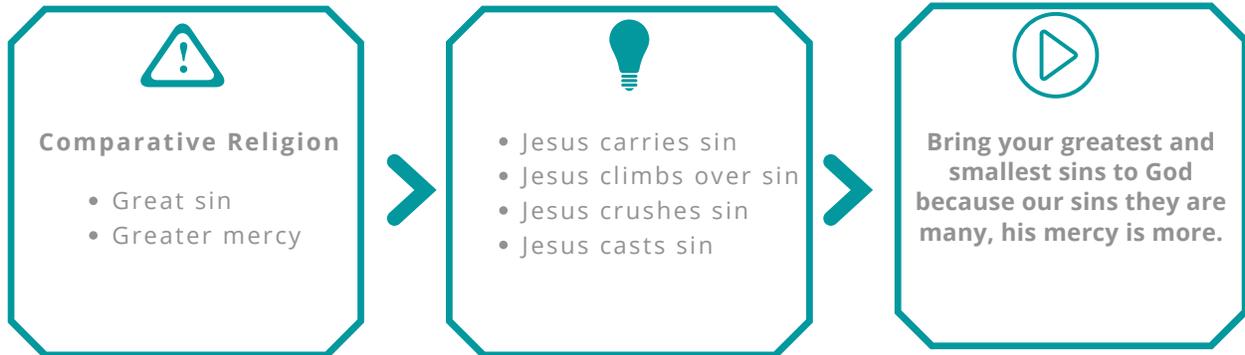
Why does God do all this for me? "He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us" (18-19). **God loves to have compassion for sinners.** The word 'compassion' here is the word used for the feeling that small babies evoke in us. That's what God feels when he looks at us.



And **God loves to love sinners.** Nothing makes him happier than lovingly forgiving sinners. Christ loves to carry sin away, climb over sin, crush sin, and cast it away. "Our sin is great, his love is greater." He is the undefeated champion when it comes to sin. He is the champion weight-lifter, climber, crusher, and thrower. "Who is a pardoning God like thee? Or who has grace so rich and free?" **Our sins they are many, his mercy is more.**



CONCLUSION



FURTHER STUDY

Online Articles

- [The Problem of Forgiveness](#)
- [The Gospel in a Handshake](#)
- [Will I be forgiven for abortion?](#)
- [Where Psalm 51 takes us \(video\).](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What are the benefits and drawbacks of comparative religion?
2. What's the biggest difference between Christianity and all other religions?
3. Which of the four images helped you most and why?
4. What does it mean when God says he forgets our sins?
5. Can you think of someone who needs to hear this message of God's incomparable forgiveness? How will you tell them?
6. What songs help you to receive and rejoice in God's forgiveness?

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