

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. So, we have a passage from Micah, and it's an unusual passage. It has God calling upon heaven and earth to give account and witness to the indictment of His people. And it might sound a little bit familiar. You might have heard this, but not quite sure where. "Oh, my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you?" If that sounds vaguely familiar, you're going to hear this again on Good Friday with the remonstrances where we focus upon how we have grieved our Lord, how we have sinned against Him in thought, word, and deed. So, they use this Micah passage as a framework for it. So, you're going to hear something similar to this a little bit later on.

But what does the Lord do? He's calling upon heaven and earth to bear witness, to be judge and jury or be jury, in essence, to witness to God's frustration with the people. And He really wants an answer. How have I wearied you? Now, what must the people have done to have God ask, how am I wearying you? How am I causing you to feel weary in my presence? Well, the only way that really happens is when we disobey God or when we listen to the word of God and say, "I don't like that." I mean, we're wearied of the word of God because it doesn't do what we wanted to do. It's like a two-year-old having a temper tantrum because their parent won't give them exactly what they want.

And that's, in essence, what we are doing when we don't listen to the word of God and we are wearied by His presence, wearied by His commands, and laws, and all the weight of serving Him. Well, we're wearied because we're failing to understand what it's all about because God makes it clear. He says, "What have I done? What have I done to you?" And then, He goes and lists some of the things that He has done for them. He brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. How is that wearisome? He parted the Red Sea. He brought them into the wilderness when they complained about the food and thought that God was going to kill them, like He couldn't kill them in Egypt for some reason. He goes and He says He gives them manna, and quail, and water from Iraq, and they still complain against God.

And He talks about Balaam and how Balaam was forced to give a blessing to God when Balak hired him to give a curse. And you can go on and on and on with the blessings that God has given to the people, and yet, they're complaining. And I wish, I wish I could say, "That's not us," but you could very well easily put us in there as well. The names and places have changed, but the result is the same. We are weary of God, especially when He doesn't answer our prayers the way we want, in the time that we want, at the place where we want. We're weary of God because we feel like he's ruining our fun or there's just too much demand from God. We don't understand because we have sinned against God in thought, word,

and deed. We are not wearied of God. If anything, God should be wearied of us. How long, oh people, will you despise His word? How long will you reject His love?

And so, Micah then switches voices and he talks about the people's response. He's speaking for the people. What will please the Lord? Shall burn offerings, 1,000 calves, shall rivers, 10,000 rivers of oils, does that please God? Is that really what God wants? God demanded it in the Old Testament, but He demanded it as a grace given to the people because what God really wants is for us to love Him, to serve Him, and to obey Him. And we can't even do that. So, what are we going to do? Should we give up our firstborn, the fruit of my body for the sins of my soul? Now, the nations would do that. They would sacrifice their children on their idols, but did that do them any good? Is that what God demands or desires? No.

But amazingly enough, God did exactly that. Rather than, shall I give my firstborn for my transgressions? Well, God says, "I will give my firstborn for your transgressions. The fruit of my body, my son begotten from all eternity for the sins of your soul." Because we don't know what God needs because we fail to listen to His word, which is what the First Corinthians said. "The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing." The word of the cross, not the cross itself. The physical wood that forms the cross, that does nothing, but the word of the cross.

And what is that word? It's not just the words that Jesus spoke, but it's Jesus Himself. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. And why did that word become flesh? So that it might be sacrificed on the cross. You see, we preach Christ and Him crucified. It's not about what we can do or how well we can work because we cannot do justice or love kindness or walk humbly with our God. We can't do it. What does Jesus say? Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Blessed are the merciful, and the pure in heart, and the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

A lot of times, we see this as a laundry list of things we should try to achieve. But the fact of the matter is a lot of this stuff is just stuff that happens. Why do we mourn? Because bad things happen. So, we're blessed not because we've done anything. I'm going to mourn more, or harder, or deeper, or something. What God is saying is, "No, it's not, if you do this, you're going to be blessed. It's, I'm going to do this because you are mourning, because you are poor in spirit, because you don't seek after righteousness. I'm going to bless you in spite of this. You're not pure in heart, but I will bless you and make you pure in heart. We're not peacemakers, unfortunately, but I will make peace between you and God. And I will do that through the folly of the cross," because that is the one thing that answers all of the questions.

That is what gives us the ability to do justice because quite frankly, God did an injustice. Was it just for Christ to die on the cross? No, that was the most unjust thing in the entire history of the world. But God in His mercy, counted it as justice because He counted His death for ours. Is God saving us just? If it was just, we would be held accountable for what we did. If God is just, without Christ, we would be lost. And so, He does justice, but He does justice in an unusual way. He does justice to Himself. He pays for the penalty of sin, but not by punishing you, but by taking your sin upon Himself so that the word is folly, but it is wisdom.

It doesn't make any sense, but God did it because He loves us and He cares for us. And He knows that we are incapable of doing it ourselves. We would love for God to give us signs. We would love to see miracles and wonders. Of course, our definition of miracles and wonders is pretty darn specific. The fact that the sun rises every morning, quite frankly, is a miracle. The fact that we can breathe in and breathe out and are alive is a miracle. Pretty much everything that happens in life is a miracle.

But the most important miracle, the one miracle that can bring us to faith, the one sign that we hold onto is that Christ died and rose again. If that sign is not enough, no sign will ever be enough. If that's not proof enough, nothing, no sign, no miracle ever will be. And wisdom. We want proofs. We want logic. We want everything explained to our own satisfaction. But God, if he's really God is beyond us. There are going to be things that we never understand, but in His wisdom, He brought His word to earth to bear our sins for us. The wisdom of God is the son of God is the word of God, and that word of God is sufficient for our salvation.

Faith comes by hearing. Hearing what? Hearing the word of God. The word made flesh. The word of the cross. The word of Christ crucified for us so that He might do justice by paying the price in our stead, so that we might be able to love the kindness, the greatest kindness that was ever done, the forgiveness of our sins, so that we might walk humbly with our God because Christ walked humbly before His Father.

When He was about to face the cross, what did He say? "Lord, if there's any other way, if there's any other way for this to work out, that we can work out the salvation of humanity, let's do that. I really don't want to go through this." I mean, it's not like Jesus was all sunshine and flowers going to the cross. He really didn't want to do it. But for the sake of the love of His father and for the sake of His love for us, He did. He walked humbly before His father and said, "Not my will, but yours be done for the sake of the people that they might know they're loved and cherished, and that they might not have to give up their firstborn, or their sacrifices, or anything else, but they might hear and believe."

FEBRUARY 1, 2026 SERMON

And in believing, then seek to serve Him, to do justice in this world, to share the love of God and to proclaim the glory of God, that He has forgiven us all because Christ was crucified and He has risen. May His grace, and His mercy, and His peace be and abide with you always now and forevermore [inaudible 00:13:31].