

Dear CRBC Friends & Family,

We hope that you are all safe and well at this time. Please see below all the links and details for this Sunday Morning's Service. Many links will become live at 10.30 am - so that we can join together virtually. Also please see the information regarding our next Live Zoom Service on Sunday 27th September 2020. Also, Revd Meghan Byerly's Sermon Notes are included.

Sunday Morning Service Details 20th September 2020

Sermon by Revd Meghan Byerly

Information for joining our Harvest Zoom Service on Sunday 27th September 2020



This week's sermon is delivered by Rev Meghan Byerly - Micah 3:1-12; Silence of God

Welcome - <https://youtu.be/KwCeKzllZks>

Worship - <https://youtu.be/cvxLR2mFaPg>

Faithful one, The love of God, To God be the glory, Guardian

Children's worship - What a beautiful name - <https://youtu.be/34Skkf6jhMo>

Children's Talk - The temptation - <https://youtu.be/JUmsVwdcOmg>

Sermon & Notes - <https://youtu.be/Ix-zLFpeTBs>

Prayers - <https://youtu.be/LfiKGt8kW8k>

Prayer reflection - Prayer walking - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owz--nR8r1Q>

Benediction and Blessing: <https://youtu.be/trbXBwgv2kI>

Micah 3 Sermon Notes by Revd Meghan Byerly



Listen, you heads of Jacob
and rulers of the house of Israel!
Should you not know justice?—
you who hate the good and love the evil,
who tear the skin off my people,
and the flesh off their bones;
who eat the flesh of my people,
flay their skin off them,
break their bones in pieces,
and chop them up like meat in a kettle,
like flesh in a cauldron.

Then they will cry to the Lord,
but he will not answer them;
he will hide his face from them at that time,
because they have acted wickedly.

Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets
who lead my people astray,
who cry 'Peace'
when they have something to eat,
but declare war against those
who put nothing into their mouths.
Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision,
and darkness to you, without revelation.
The sun shall go down upon the prophets,
and the day shall be black over them;
the seers shall be disgraced,
and the diviners put to shame;
they shall all cover their lips,
for there is no answer from God.
But as for me, I am filled with power,
with the spirit of the Lord,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression
and to Israel his sin.

Hear this, you rulers of the house of Jacob
and chiefs of the house of Israel,
who abhor justice
and pervert all equity,
who build Zion with blood
and Jerusalem with wrong!
Its rulers give judgement for a bribe,
its priests teach for a price,
its prophets give oracles for money;
yet they lean upon the Lord and say,
'Surely the Lord is with us!
No harm shall come upon us.'
Therefore because of you

Zion shall be ploughed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.

Pray: Our God who creates our lives, sustains our lives, and redeems our lives, I thank you that your world challenges us. You who are Good make us good both through your redemption and your work over our lives. I pray that we open our hearts and our minds to hear your word, that it would speak to us and further in our work to be more like you. Amen.

I wonder what the word ‘silence’ means for you as you listen to this. Not the ‘silence of God’ for just a second, but just ‘silence.’ Maybe, if you’re introverted, you love silence because you can finally stop and recharge your batteries. Maybe, if you’re extroverted, silence is draining. Maybe you imagine a walk through the Peaks District or a park and you think of the silence of people and the singing of nature. Maybe you imagine being alone in a crowd, and how silence can feel like exclusion from others. There are lots of meaning to the word, ‘silence’ and lots of ways to be receive it. The silence of God, though, not that you haven’t stopped in a while to listen to him but he is actively not talking to you. What does that feel like to you?

I imagine it to be like the eye of a hurricane. It’s hurricane season now, and for those of us who have gone through many season of hurricanes, you know how there is a silence in the middle of a hurricane that is deadly. It’s deadly because you could be fooled into thinking the storm is over, the sky even clears up a bit. But the hurricane is still coming, you are only in the middle of it so brace yourself for round 2. I imagine the silence of God here is like that. It is both a rejection of the lying and self serving noise of the elite, and a warning of what is coming.

So why the silence? Well, consider the noise in this passage. The explicitly detailed first three verses, where God lays a heavy accusation against the heads and rulers of Israel:

tearing, eating, flaying, breaking, chopping. The noise of injustice. The noise of rulers who fatten themselves off of scarce resources, and starve those they are supposed to be protecting. In verse 5, God gives further detail to this accusation by saying that the heads and rulers only cry out peace when they have had their fill and cry out for war when the people have not given them 'enough.' To all that noise of injustice, to all that noise of the powerful demanding to be kept comfortable, and to all the noise of God's people crying out to him for help, God's answer is a hurricane.

The first half of the hurricane hit when the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and destroyed its holy place of Samaria in 721 AD/BCE. The prophet Isaiah warns them and warns them of what will happen. He warns them of what will happen if they continue to trust other nations, such as Damascus, instead of the covenant they have with their God. He warns them of what will happen if they continue to not keep their covenant, especially where it concerns only worshiping God *and* taking care of the widow, orphan, and stranger/foreigner among them. When Israel did not listen it fell. When Samaria fell but Jerusalem did not, Judah thought the storm was over. The second half of verse 11 claims that, into that aftermath the heads and rulers claimed, 'Surely the Lord is with us! No harm shall come upon us.' But Micah is here to tell them otherwise; that was not the end of the storm, that was the eye of the storm. The second half of the storm is coming to Judah because, as the first half of verse 11 says, 'Its rulers give judgement for a bribe, its priests teach for a price, its prophets give oracles for money; yet they lean upon the Lord.' To that injustice, self righteousness, self seeking comfort, and arrogance, the Lord responds with a deadly silence.

The prophets all declare the leaders of Israel to be the ones most at fault when the people of God go astray. This isn't because the leaders are completely to blame, but because they have more of a responsibility to uphold the covenant and its righteousness and justice. Hezekiah and Josiah are good kings because they lead by tearing down false idols and caring for the people. However, the people are not let off the hook in this; it is not only the leaders who are to blame. The people too can make noise of injustice, self righteousness, self seeking

comfort, and arrogance. The people as, Matthew 7 says, can even cry out ‘Lord, Lord’ and yet God will not know them because they haven’t done the will of our Father in heaven. Because, as verse 9 says, they abhor (or are repulsed by) justice and pervert/twist all equity (or equality). And to these people, it shall be as night without vision, and darkness without revelation (vs 5).

Micah speaks the word of the Lord into the hurricane, and says that there is time for repentance. He is qualified to do so because, as he says, he is ‘filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might.’ Are we filled with such a Spirit? Are we, ministers and lay leaders of Cemetery Road, filled with such a Spirit to declare to our people where and when we have gone wrong so that we can correct our path to pursue righteousness and justice? Are we, the entire family of Cemetery Road, filled with such a Spirit to declare the coming kingdom of God to the world around us, which abhors justice and perverts equity? Are we filled with such a Spirit that when we cry out to God he will hear us because he knows us; because we do the will of our Father in Heaven?

Or are we too comfortable, too self righteous and arrogant, to the point where we try to drown out the cries for justice? Do we argue with victims of inequality (either in person, online, or in our own heads), do we argue instead of listen to them and ask humble questions for understanding their story? Do we worry about the reputations of the powerful and popular, and do we worry about keeping the status quo to the point where we demonise the whistle blowers for being trouble makers or, as they told Martin Luther King Jr as he sat in a Birmingham Alabama jail, tell them I agree with your point but not how you’re going about it? Do we forsake God’s creation with excessive waste and littering? Do we see people on the street who are hurting and walk on by? Do we ignore our health experts and not social distance, not for our sakes, but for the sake of those around us?

I wonder, given where we are in the world and where we are in the church, where are we in the hurricane? I don’t deny that there is one, I’m not so blind as to pretend that the world and our church needs the Spirit of God and its transformation now more than ever. I just wonder, are we in the eye and can we turn it around? I sincerely hope so, I hope it’s not

too late to start listening to each other; to ask questions first and form opinions/judgments later. I hope it's not too late to lean on God and declare his peace knowing that, through his Spirit and his will, that is what we are trying to do. I hope this not because I'm too naïve or Pollyanna about it; but because I know who our God is. He's the God that will redeem his people, not just once on the cross, but daily as we try to be more like this. He's the God who gave us his Son and his Spirit, so that we can always do and be better. He's the Creator who is always in control of his creation, and always has a plan to get us out of this mess; so long as we are willing to own our part in the mess and offer to assist in cleaning it up.

Let's pray: God I thank you that you are Holy and you call us to be holy as you are. I thank you that we do not do this in isolation, but within your Body, your Church. I pray that we would open ourselves to your Spirit of righteousness and justice, to let it into every part of our lives. May we work with you to remove the sin from our lives because we do not have the space for sin in the work that we are trying to do for your kingdom. May we be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Amen.

Preparing for our live Harvest Festival Zoom Service

On the 27th September we aim to do our Sunday morning service live on Zoom. It is also going to be our harvest festival service where we will be thanking God for his wonderful provision and will include communion, so look out for more information on that.

Most of you will be familiar with Zoom but for others it may be something which you have not used and may feel a little apprehensive about the idea of worshipping this way. The aim of this short introduction is to help you get ready for the 27th and hopefully allay some fears.

Zoom is a free application (app) which you can download onto your smart phone, tablet, or computer. To install it simply go to www.zoom.us and sign up and install. **If you don't want to do this you can phone into the service on the day from any phone (see below)** or you can watch the service after the live event by going to the church website and clicking on the link will take you to the recording of the service.

Once you have downloaded the app you can have a play with it to get used to the controls. You can start your own meeting on your Zoom home panel by clicking on the orange 'New Meeting' button.

By moving your cursor/finger over the panel which will open up you will be able to see the different controls. Make sure you check your sound is working OK, learn how to turn your video on and mute yourself. You can join a meeting without your video on, but others will only be able to hear you and not see you.

To join the service on the day from 10.15am onwards you will need a link or a meeting number and password. To obtain these email Lizzy.

You will then enter a waiting room where the host will have to give permission for you to join the service. This is just an added bit of security which helps to keep us all safe. If during the service there is the very unlikely event of there being an issue with your video or sound the host may put you back into the waiting room while you sort it out. Don't take this personally, it just makes for a more pleasant environment for us all.

Once the service starts it will help if you put your device on speaker view rather than gallery. We'll explain how you do this on the day. You will also be put on mute as again this makes it a better experience for everyone watching. **The service will also be recorded but the recording will only show those who are speaking.**

Please feel free to share the log in details with friends who you might like to invite BUT PLEASE DO NOT POST ON ANY PUBLIC PLATFORMS WHICH ARE OPEN TO ANYONE.

Phoning in

As mentioned above you can phone into the Zoom meeting using any phone by dialling 02034815240 or 0203 695 0088. You will then be asked for the meeting ID and password above. You will then be able to listen in to the service as it happens but won't be able to see or be seen by others. Standard phone charges apply.

The CRBC Team, send all our love & Blessings at this time and we all look forward to catching-up with you on 27th September via Zoom.

God Bless,

Revd Andy West, Revd Meghan Byerly, Pastor Tony Harris, Pastor John Maison, Farsi support Mohsen Dehghan & Lizzy Levy, your Administrator.

