

Reading Schedule for June 26-July 2, 2017

We are reading my favorite minor prophet. Micah's message will challenge us and give us hope at the same time. As we begin July, I want to suggest to you a certain pattern of reading. I want us to focus on the Book of Psalms for the month of July, but I also would like to suggest that you read a chapter of Proverbs as you go to bed at night. I always like to read Proverbs at least once a year, but at the same time, I want us to immerse ourselves in the Book of Psalms. The combination of Psalms and Proverbs could be a great benefit to you as you pursue the Lord during the summer month of July. I hope you will take me up on my challenge.

June 26 – Micah 4: “In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it.” (v.1) Many of you are interested in the close of the age. When the Bible speaks about the last days, it often refers to a time when God will reign over the entire earth. The mountain of the Lord is most often connected to Jerusalem. During the reign of God, there will be an era of peace and blessing—a time when war will be forever ended. We don’t know the date of Christ’s return, but the Lord has promised that it will happen. Read Joel 2:28-32 to energize you about what God plans for the Day of the Lord. Some of these statements are the forerunner to Micah’s promise that the swords will be turned in plow shares and the spears into pruning hooks. How do you anticipate the coming of the Lord? What do you learn from this chapter that encourages you or challenges you?

June 27 –Micah 5: “He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.” (v.4) Seven hundred years before Jesus is born in Bethlehem we learn of this tiny town being the birthplace of the Messiah. Matthew 2:5 & 6 specifically refers to the fact that these verses are interpreted as the place of Christ’s birth. I love the fact that Jesus will be called a shepherd, as is referred to in John 10. He will not be a weak shepherd, but a very strong shepherd king who will rule over all the earth. Don’t you love the statement, “He will be their peace?” These verses are interestingly place as we learn about the Lord’s wrath upon the nations, but at the same time giving hope through the Messiah. How does this prophecy bless you?

June 28 –Micah 6: “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (v.8) Do you see why I enjoy the prophet Micah? He presents things that are timeless, as this verse indicates. It will always be God’s will for us to act justly; and to love mercy; and to walk closely with him. This principle applies to your life right now. In your efforts to pursue God, you will want to reflect a life of justice and mercy. Are you fair in your dealings with people? Do you show mercy to those who wrong you? Are you learning to walk in humility before God? These questions accompany this amazing principle. The way Micah says it makes this verse stand out among all the others. How do you respond to it?

June 29 –Micah 7:1-13: “But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.” (v.7) As we learned this past Sunday about David’s question to God (how long?) I think about Micah’s concern about waiting on the Lord. Micah showed great patience in waiting on God. He is confident that God

will bring his people through these difficult times. God’s people must be patient because God will eventually bring them out of darkness in his timing and their enemies will be punished. This idea of waiting has become more profound to me. The spiritual discipline of waiting is directly connected to one’s spiritual maturity. The more mature we are in our relationship with God, the more we have the capacity to wait on him. Do you agree? How do you respond to waiting on the Lord? What does hope have to do with it?

June 30– Micah 7:14-20: “You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.” (v.19) This is definitely my favorite verse in the whole book. God delights to show mercy. He does not forgive grudgingly, but is glad when we repent and freely offers forgiveness to all who come back to him. He remembers our sin no more. You know that statement from the Bible. If he hurls our sin into the depth of the sea, it is gone. This marvelous word picture is meant to encourage you and not let past sins haunt you. You have been freed from the past, so let it go. Live as a forgiven person with new hope for today. How do you respond to my exhortation?

July 1 –Psalm 1: “That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.” (verse 3) On June 11 Tyler spoke on this chapter. I am sure you had some time to think about it, but maybe you missed out and I want to make sure you begin the Book of Psalm in the way those who compiled it intended you to begin. We learn about the result of a close relationship with God and absorbing his Word. It is a life of prosperity – spiritual prosperity. To prosper does not mean that you never experience failure or difficulties. It does not guarantee that you will have wealth, health and happiness. But prosperity is connected to a vibrancy that God brings as you receive his approval. Just like a tree soaks up water and bears much fruit, we also are to soak up God’s Word, producing actions and attitudes that honor God. The primary focus of a Christ-follower is to let his Word dwell richly in your heart so that it might have the result of setting you free to be all that God intended you to be. How do you respond to this first Psalm and the anticipation of reading through several chapters in this book during the month of July? Why not read Proverbs 1 as you wrap up the day?!

July 2 –Psalm 8: “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” (v.4) It is an amazing comparison that David gives in this Psalm to the value God places on you as his creation. When you look at the vast expanse of creation, we wonder how God could be concerned for people who constantly disappoint him. Yet God created us only a little lower than the angels. The next time you question your worth as a person, remember that God considers you highly valuable. We are of great worth because we bear the stamp of the Creator. That stamp is called what? His im_____! How do you respond to this inspiring psalm about God’s greatness and the value he places on you as his creation? I also encourage you to read Proverbs 2 as you end the day.

Prayers: Pray for our outreach at Northgate Park as our After School Program will have a weekly event on Wednesdays. Also, begin to pray for who God wants you to invite to the Marion County Fair as we worship God in the open air on July 9th.