

Open your Bibles up to Micah 3. While you're doing that, I want to tell you where we're going to go. I'm going to steal an analogy from a buddy, and I want us to think of this sermon as a flight. So we're going to take off in Micah 3, we're going to cruise through our core values and then we're going to land in Micah 4. So we're not going to land where we took off. It's going to be kind of a Dallas to Houston flight. While we're on this mini puddle jumper, I want the Lord to do three things. There are three things I have asked and begged and pleaded with the Lord to do in our people for His glory today. One is I want Him to remind us of the future that is to come, to remind us of the future that awaits the church, that awaits the redeemed. I want Him to remind us that we are after holistic transformation and that we are after being a people who are completely transformed by the gospel. We don't just want men and women who know the Scriptures but don't do anything with them. We don't want men or women who go and preach the gospel in their neighborhoods but are ignorant to what the Bible says and don't love one another. We want holistic transformation. And then the third one is I want Him, in His mercy and His grace, to protect you and me from the subtle outworkings, the subtle forms of the prosperity gospel that exists on our campus right here.

So I'm going to ask the Lord to do that. "Father, we come grateful that You have sent Your Son into the world. I pray that right now that the redeemed in this room would see the majesty of Jesus and that You, by the work of Your Spirit, would cause us to desire to be holistic Christians, holistic believers and that we be a reflection of the day that is to come to the world around us. We know that You are the only One who can do that. We can't sing that into being, and we can't preach that into being. So we ask You, sweet Spirit, to come and do it. We love You. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen."

So by a show of hands, how many country music fans do we have in this room? That's impressive. I am happy with y'all. For the rest of you, we live in Texas and it's more than okay to like and listen to country music. There is a country band called The Eli Young Band. They have a song and one of the lines goes like this, "Always hoping to find something quicker than heaven to make the damage of her days disappear." Now this is the message of the prosperity gospel. We want heaven now. We want the peace of heaven, the comfort of heaven now. And the prosperity gospel believes that financial gain is the means to get what they think heaven will be like in the future right here and right now. And we rail against this, and we absolutely should. It is a distortion and it's another gospel. We should rail against it. The problem is that we functionally do the same thing with community. We say, "I'm lonely, and I don't want to be lonely anymore. So I'll go to church." And then we come to church and we're still lonely, so we go to a home group or Recovery or we serve. And what happens is community, one of our core values, becomes an end in itself. And when that happens, home group becomes a pseudo-Christ, Recovery becomes a pseudo-Christ, a substitute Savior. You see, the premise of the prosperity gospel, be it the financial prosperity gospel or the subtle outworking down here on our campus, is, "If I do X, God does Y. So if I tithe, God will make me rich. I have enough faith, God will bless me. If I take my kid to church, God is going to save them. If I go to church, God will give me a husband." When we buy into this, we put God in response to us. And over the last decade, I have watched too many friends buy into this. Because when you buy into this, you're buying into the idolatry of the self. I have watched too many friends buy into this, only to fall away from the faith. So what I'm asking the Lord to do today is to expose it in us today to protect us from it tomorrow.

And I want Him to expose it through a guy named Micah, who was a prophet 2,700 years ago. So let's go to Micah 3. If we traced the history of Israel, we have a people to whom God says, "Go right," and they go left. At the same time there seem to be always constant battles, constant war and constant struggle. But leading into Micah, there was fifty year

quiet period. During that quiet period, there became an elevation of an upper class, which means prosperity. But you and I know, we can look around our land, our world right here today and know that prosperity is not always a good thing. It's not always a blessing. And what's true today was true in Micah's day. And Micah was charged to go and speak to the world that was corrupting the prosperity that was taking place. So if we looked in the book of Micah, we find Micah as a series of, "Don't do that," followed by, "You're doing that," followed by, "God's going to redeem that. And we're going to pick up in Micah 3, which is a, "You're doing that" chapter, but when we land, we're going to land in Micah 4, a "God's going to redeem that" chapter. So let's look at verse 1. "And I said: Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel!" It's easy for you and me to read that and go, "I'm not a head of Jacob, I'm not a ruler of the house of Israel, I'm not an elder and I'm not a pastor. I'm not even a home group leader. So what's coming next is not for me." But what does 2 Timothy 3:16 say? "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work." So you and I don't get out of this. I don't care what role you play inside of the body; you don't get out of what's coming next. "Is it not for you to know justice?" So these men were charged with knowing the Law, and God is saying, "Listen, My Law is just. If you delighted in Me, you would delight in My Law. But since you don't delight in Me, you don't delight in My Law. And because you don't delight in My Law, you act unjustly." And listen to how the men who act unjustly are described. ". . .you who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones, who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces and chop them up like meat in a pot, like flesh in a cauldron." If God is calling you a cannibal, that's not a good thing. If you came up to me and said, "Hey Brandon, how is marriage going?" and I said, "It's like eating skin, bud," that's not a compliment to my wife. I am not going to have the 4th of July fireworks I'm hoping for tonight if I respond to that question like that. But what could possibly be worse than God describing you as a cannibal? Verse 4, "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 made their deeds evil." If you need to repent, you do it today. Don't roll the dice that these men rolled. Right now, while we do this, Geoff Ashley is in Flower Mound and he is preaching Hebrews 3, that if you hear the voice of God, don't harden your heart. If you hear the voice of God today in this room, don't harden your heart. It is a serious God who has serious things to say to us today.

Verse 5, "Thus says the LORD. . ." Listen, Micah's words do not carry authority in and of themselves. They are authoritative because God spoke them. Part of the prosperity DNA is you'll hear things like this, "I'm going to speak blessing over my finances. . .I'm going to speak blessing over my this job interview. . .I'm going to speak faith into my child. . ." I have an eight-month-old daughter. I desperately want her to be a believer in Jesus Christ. I want her to grow up worshiping King Jesus as King Jesus. I do not want my daughter's testimony to be mine. But what I can't do is speak faith into being. I pray to the God who grants faith. God is the One who is able to speak things into being, not me. "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 him who puts nothing into their mouths." Now in this day, if you had excess food, if you had enough food to just give away, you were part of that upper class. If you didn't have that kind of food, you had to pray for a harvest, you had to hope for a cow to barter with. But what the prophets were doing was manipulating the people. They were going around, and if you had food to give away, they would say, "You're under the blessing, the shalom, the peace of God." But if you didn't, they would say, "Cursed are you. War to you. You're under the judgment of God." You see, the prosperity gospel is not new. It has been around since the beginning. It's also not only for riches and prosperous lands, but it just looks different now. So today if you have bought into the prosperity gospel in America, you believe that if you believe, God is going to make you rich. But if you are in a third world country somewhere, the prosperity gospel that we export becomes, "If you believe, your babies aren't going to die." It just looks different depending on the culture, and it has always been around. The reason for that is because we can trace the idolatry that drives the prosperity gospel straight back to the Fall, which has pervaded all of humanity, all of cultures and all of time.

So how do we know if we've bought into a subtle, outworking of the prosperity gospel? Because it's not explicit, especially on our campus. Here's how it looks. I'll have conversations that look like this. Someone will come to me and say, "Hey man, I went and checked out that home group, and it was cool. They read a chapter of the Bible and we talked, but it just wasn't really what I was looking for." To which my response is always, "What kind of community were you looking for. You do know that we're a church, right? The Bible is what we do." Listen, biblical community that does not point you to Jesus is not biblical community. Home group leaders who do not open the Scriptures for the people will not be home group leaders for long. Any desire for community apart from Jesus is called idolatry.

So when community becomes the idol, when a core value of the church becomes an idol, what happens? I want to read this next text through that lens. Verse 6, "Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision, and darkness to you, without divination." So just as the prophets would be given nothing divine to say, that there would be darkness over them and there would be darkness over us, that home group will be void of spiritual power, Recovery will be void of spiritual power and what we're doing right now will be void of spiritual power. If it's not for the divine work of the Holy Spirit of God in this room right now or on any given Sunday, we might as well be somewhere else. So what happens when the divine is not taking place in your midst? "The sun shall go down on 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." Lamentation 4 says that prophets who act this way are to be treated as unclean. You don't want that; I don't want that. Micah says that, on that day, the seers who see the divine will be silenced, there will be no answer from God and He won't be giving divine revelation. That which is divine won't be taking place.

So we don't have prophets like Micah running around today. So what I want to know, for you and for me, is what does it mean to see the divine? What does it mean for you and me to see the divine in our midst? What is it that we are to see? What are we to be seeing? What is it that the eyes of our hearts are to see? Well I think 2 Corinthians 3 speaks to it well and very clearly. 2 Corinthians 3 is talking about Moses and reading of the old covenant and it being a veil over him when he's reading the old covenant. It says, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another." You and I were created for the glory of God (Isaiah 43), we are redeemed for the glory of God (Ephesians 1) and we will partake one day in His glory physically and tangibly (Revelation 21). And right now, in the middle of this, as we go from redemption to consummation, we are being transformed as we behold Jesus. We believe that this transformation has some tangible features to it. We call these our core values. We believe that these tangibles features exist because Jesus was the fullness of truth, and so we are to be people who grow in our longing for truth. He was unwavering in missions, so we are to grow in our devotion and commitment to the mission of God.

So I want us to to through our core values one by one and just take a self-assessment, both individually and corporately. If you're a covenant member here, I want to ask you if you know the core values. Could you list the five core values off the top of your head? If the answer is yes, then are you disciplined to integrate them into your life for the purposes of the exaltation of Christ and are you disciplined to disciple them into others? If you don't know them, then let me remind you of two things. First, you signed off when you became a covenant member that you were going to pursue these core values. We also have a charge to teach them. And as the person charged with equipping on this campus, I want to ask for your forgiveness. I don't think that we have taught our core values well. We haven't found ways to integrate them into the life of the church well enough that they're always before you, always being taught to you and and always being taught that they're what we are to strive after corporately. So I want to publicly repent to our campus. But I think we both need to do a better job. I think our campus needs to do a better job at pursuing the core values, and I think we need to do a better job at putting them before people and equipping our people with the core values.

So with that said, let's dive into the first one and talk about Truth. Do you see biblical community as a means to grow in your knowledge of the Scriptures? Are you seeing Jesus throughout the Bible? Do you care to know the deeper things of God? Do you walk in submission to the Scriptures? Last week, my wife was going through junior high year books of mine, which is never a good idea. She came across this one line that read, "Hey Brandon, thanks for making math class smell so good." And she looked at me and was like, "Hey babe, did you wear cologne in junior high?" "No honey, I did not. Those smells were all natural." I don't wear cologne now; I did not then. But if I had a Jesus year book of the last decade, you would find a series of snapshots of different men that I was dialoging about the Scriptures with. You would find from year to year that it might have been a few new guys in there, but you would find that I was always dialoging about the Scriptures with somebody. And it would look different from year to year as well. So in some years, there might have been a lot of late night Mexican food runs. I'm 32 now, so I'm not longer allowed to do that. It would be coffee, but not for me. I believe that tea is a gift from God and that coffee is going to end up in the lake of fire, because it's disgusting. There would also be phone conversations, and there would be e-mails. My favorite days are when I open up my e-mail and I see a dialogue between four other guys about the Scriptures. I love being able to correct them in the Scriptures and be corrected by them in the Scriptures. I love to dialogue about the Scriptures. So when it comes to Truth, I think our campus does a pretty good job of this. I'm encouraged with our campus. I think that we long to know the depths of God found in the Scriptures pretty well.

Our next core value is Community. In college, I was a brand new believer. The Lord raptured my heart. I was standing outside of class and this girl came up and invited me to go to the beach. Now we were were not going for Beach Reach or Bible study at the beach. But I was a brand new believer and I willingly said yes. As I was walking out to the car, my buddy Mike just said to me, "Hey man, if you don't care about your walk with Jesus, go ahead and go. If you do care about your walk with Jesus, then you know what you need to do." That was biblical community in action, pointing me away from sin and pointing me to Jesus. So does your transparency lead to repentance and action? Married men and married women, do you flirt for attention? If you do, do the people around you wish that they had your game or do they call you out? When called out, do you do anything about it? Or is repentance some verbal "I'm sorry" with no action to it? Single men and women, is singleness a season to grow or simply a chance for you to get married? Do you think living together is a good idea? If so, do the people around you open the Scriptures and show you why it's not? How do you view Recovery? Most of us in here think our Recovery ministry is a place where you just go to fix your problems. But Psalm 34 says, "I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears." It does not say, "I went to Recovery, worked on my fear, God honored my effort and now I'm cured." It says, "I search, I pursue the Lord." Recovery is a place where you come to engage the living God, and in doing so, fear gets dealt with. What about home group? How do you view home group? Is that a place for you to grow and help others grow? Or is it a place for you to get your relationship needs met?

And I want to pause here and tell you that ten years ago, when the Lord grabbed my heart in a way that I don't ever want to change, there were some men who started a Saturday night Bible study. I was a brand new believer, and so on Saturday nights I had plans and Bible study was not it. But I got dropped by my bar hopping friends, so it was either be a lame 22 year old sitting alone every Saturday night or go to Bible study. And so Bible study it was. In that season, God redeemed my loneliness, and He'll redeem yours. But I don't want you to hear me say that if you go because you're primarily lonely, then you're not welcome. That's not true at all. What we want is for you to check your heart, on why you do these things and then for us to be able to walk with you in that. That's my hope today. My point is simply to say that biblical community is much more than friendship with Jesus in common.

Our third core value is Christian Spirituality. I have three brothers: one is a pretty good athlete, I was pretty average and the other two were not allowed anywhere near an athletic field growing up. Now that was for their safety as well as the people around them. One of those two marries a girl from England, which is his only affiliation with soccer. Last

weekend, he was watching the U.S. soccer game and he is screaming about their loose passes. The thing is my brother doesn't know what a loose pass is, neither do I and I bet neither do you. We are a culture of pretend soccer fans down here. I promise that no one is going to care about soccer a month from now. If two months from now they fire the head coach of the U.S. soccer team, I bet you SportsCenter won't even cover it. But I cannot completely judge my brother or you fake soccer fans because every four years, there is something that happens to me. All of a sudden, I care who can swim the fastest. I think curling becomes an exciting sport, which it isn't. And Matt is repeatedly saying, "Listen, that's evidence that there is something inside of you that we were created for something larger." You and I were meant for something much larger than ourselves. And so my question to you is this. Do you point to that larger something? Or do you point them to what the Scriptures would call vanity? Does the gospel factor in your decisions? Three days ago, our TV broke, so now we don't have a TV in our house. And it's a chance for my wife and I to just hit pause and go, "Okay, do we need a TV? Through the lens of the gospel, do we need a TV? If so, where should it be in the house? If we do that, should we have cable or not cable?" It's a chance to go through the lens of the gospel. We should do that with every decision. Is the bulk of your activity gospeldriven activity? Or is it the activity for activity's sake? Do the sacraments stir your affections? When we close our services and one of us stands up here and we go, "This is the body of Christ," does that stir your affections? Last weekend when we baptized and watched people get buried in the water and raised into new life, did that stir anything in you? Does that stir anything for your King in you? If it doesn't, I don't know what else is going to. What about your creative talents? Is painting something you're good at or something God gave you to express worship with?

Our fourth core value is Foot Washing. I was reading John 13 in preparation for this, and it's the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. There were two things that just leaped off the page at me when I read that. The first one was that He knew that Satan had a hole of Judas' heart. He knew what Judas was going to do, and He still washed his feet anyway. And the question that raised in me for you today is this. Do you only serve those who serve you? If so, that's called politics, not Christianity. The second thing that just leaped off the page at me was that He was in the middle of something important. Jesus had left the throne of the Father, came down to earth, took on flesh, was in the middle of the Passover right before He was going to go to the cross and He stopped and washed their feet. So are you too busy? Are you too busy for those in need around you? If so, maybe we ought to just do a comparison. Your meetings vs. the redemption of humanity. If Jesus had time, I'm pretty sure you have time. This is by far my weakest of the five. It's not even close. For whatever days or years the Lord would have us together, I'm looking forward to growing in this one with you.

Our last core value is Missional Living. Christian community, biblical community was meant to be an agent in redemption. It's part of God's redemptive plan. So my question is are you active and are you spurring others on to be active in evangelism? Do you share the gospel at work? Or has work become the new high school, where we're just trying to fit in? What about in your families? Do you share the gospel, do you speak the gospel in your families? Or do you just hope they're going to come to church one day. And if so, is that because you're afraid to speak up? Do you recognize that God has placed you where you are for a reason, a purpose? What about the nations? We are to preach the gospel among the nations. If we opened up your checkbook, would we find you sponsoring missionaries, funding missionaries, funding the proclamation of the gospel world wide? And some of you don't belong here. For some of you, the Lord has put a burden on your heart, the Spirit has just burdened you for the nations and you're suppressing it. On July 15, I'm getting on a plane to go to India to teach at a pastor's conference with an organization called Vision Nationals. They have a mission to plant a thousand churches by 2030. Some of you belong in India with them. For some of you, the Lord may have put the burden for the nation of India on your heart, and you're suppressing it. What about the nations? I want my life to be marked by this. I want my life to be marked by the mission of God, the redemptive mission of God. I'm only 32, so I don't know a lot, but I know this for sure. The next brain tumor could be mine. And whether I've

got ten, twenty of fifty years left, I want to look back and know I spent my days for the redemptive mission of God in the world. And there will be a day when we look back.

Now none of us do all five perfectly. None of us even do one perfectly. But there was One who did, and there will be a day when we do. So I want to go back and land in Micah 4, looking forward to the day that is to come. As I read this over and over, just prepping for today, I had the Lord burdening me. I long for Jesus to come back, for His return right here, right now. I do not want to preach again at 5:00 today. I want Jesus to come back right now. I want our King to come back. I want to be in His presence. I want to be near Him. "It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain. . ." Now in this day were centers for pagan, political and religious practices. But there is coming a day where there will be no more pagan, political or religious practices. And In that day, the mountain "of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. . ." Does that sound familiar? Perhaps in Philippians 2, where there is one name above all names, that Jesus Christ is the exalted One and in His name, every tongue will confess, every knee will bow, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. There is one mountain that is the exalted one above all other mountains, and that mountain is Jesus Christ. ". . .and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." If you're in here and you're checking out Christianity, you cannot walk perfectly in the ways of the God of Jacob, so the God of Jacob came down and did it for you. Jesus' perfect obedience to the Law is why the cross is so beautiful. Where we were imperfect, He was perfect, and so because of His perfection, the cross can take on our sin rather than needing a sacrifice for Himself. And so we have a substitutionary atonement because of a substitutionary obedience, and you are invited in. Because this day is coming. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples. . ." So when Jesus returns, He's going to return as Judge. ". . .and shall decide for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore;. . ." When He returns, He's going to create war to end all war. ". . .but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever." Listen, there is a church plant to come that is for you and for me. There is a church plant coming when you and I get to walk with the Lord forever and ever, where we're in the presence of King Jesus forever. "In that day, declares the LORD, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore." When Jesus returns, He's going to plant a church to end all church plants. It will be the first one that has no bickering, no fighting, no gossip. There will be just us the redeemed enjoying Jesus at the deepest possible level for all of eternity. He is going to gather all of His elect together, and that's what you and I are going to be doing. There will be no need for the sun anymore, because the glory of the Son will provide all the light that we need. And our holistic transformation, our holistic biblical community matters. Because are a foretaste, a foreshadow of that great church plant to come. We're a forerunner to that day. We're a forerunner inviting the world round us to come and see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And I'm praying, I'm begging the Lord that He would do that in our city, in our world. And I'm praying that maybe, in His mercy and grace, He might will to do that through our people.

Let me pray. "Father, I love You. I love our people. Father, if I said anything that was in error, anything that was not of You, I ask that You would erase it from their memories right now. And I pray that, in Your mercy and by Your Spirit, that our people would long to be holistic believers, transformed fully into the image of Your Son. For those in this room right now in whom the Spirit has begun to prick something in their heart, I pray that they would not harden their hearts, but that they would respond to the voice of God. We love you, and we love our people. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen."