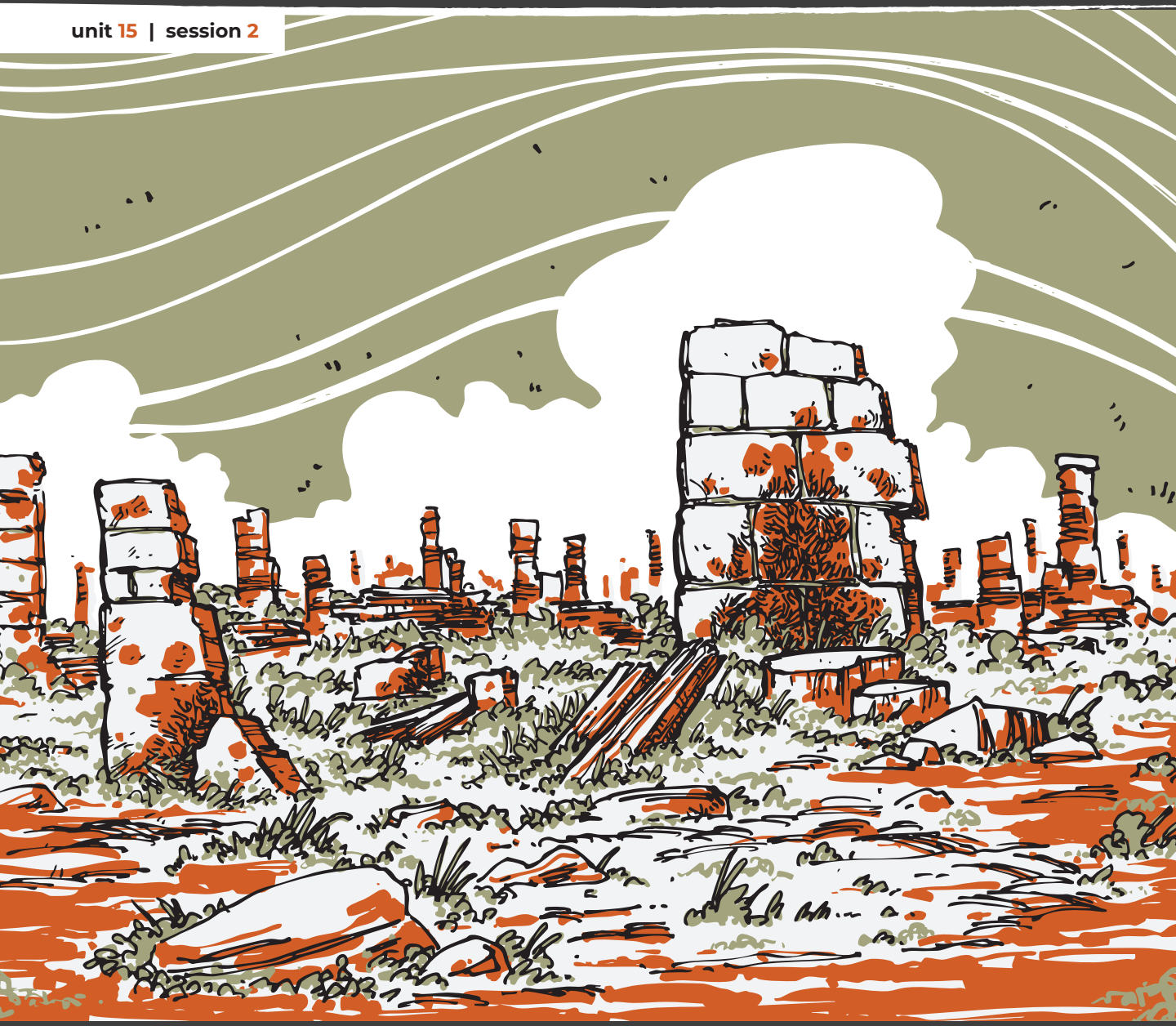
THE DEPTHS OF *THE SEA*

unit 15 | session 2



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection fulfilled prophecy, but we wait for the day when He will return and fulfill God's promise of a King who will reign over the new heaven and new earth forever.

DOOM AND DELIVERANCE

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Micah 1–7

GOD DESIRES AUTHENTICITY FROM HIS PEOPLE

MICAH 3:9-12

9 Listen to this, leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor
justice and pervert everything that is right, 10 who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem
with injustice. 11 Her leaders issue rulings for a bribe, her priests teach for payment, and
her prophets practice divination for silver. Yet they lean on the LORD, saying, "Isn't the LORD
among us? No disaster will overtake us." 12 Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed like
a field, Jerusalem will become ruins, and the temple's mountain will be a high thicket.

GOD PROMISES TO RESTORE HIS PEOPLE

MICAH 5:1-4

1 Now, daughter who is under attack, you slash yourself in grief; a siege is set against us! They
are striking the judge of Israel on the cheek with a rod. 2 Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small
among the clans of Judah; one will come from you to be ruler over Israel for me. His origin is
from antiquity, from ancient times. 3 Therefore, Israel will be abandoned until the time when
she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of the ruler's brothers will return to the
people of Israel. 4 He will stand and shepherd them in the strength of the LORD, in the majestic
name of the LORD his God. They will live securely, for then his greatness will extend to the
ends of the earth.

MICAH 7:18-20

18 Who is a God like you, forgiving iniquity and passing over rebellion for the remnant of his
inheritance? He does not hold on to his anger forever because he delights in faithful love.
19 He will again have compassion on us; he will vanquish our iniquities. You will cast all our
sins into the depths of the sea. 20 You will show loyalty to Jacob and faithful love to Abraham,
as you swore to our ancestors from days long ago.

MAIN POINT.

Judgment is certain, but repentance brings restoration.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

THE CHRISTIAN AND SOCIAL ORDER

In the spirit of Jesus, Christians should oppose racism, greed, selfishness, and evil, and all forms of sexual sin. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

DISCUSSION

GOD DESIRES AUTHENTICITY FROM HIS PEOPLE

MICAH 3:9-12

- **How did the leaders convince themselves it was okay not to live how God had called them to?**
- **What are some reasons you think leaders have a greater level of responsibility?**
- **What is ignorance? What is rebellion? How are the two alike? How are they different?**

GOD PROMISES TO RESTORE HIS PEOPLE

MICAH 5:1-4; 7:18-20

- **What promises do you see in Micah 5:2-4? How have some of these already been fulfilled?**
- **A remnant is something left over from a whole. What are some ways believers today are like a remnant?**
- **What does God do with our sin when we repent (7:19)? How does this shape your view of God?**

MICAH'S MESSAGE WAS WILDLY UNPOPULAR. HOW CAN WE BE COURAGEOUS WHEN GOD CALLS US TO TAKE AN UNPOPULAR STAND?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

It's funny—many of us say that we don't like fakeness. Some of us might even feel like the church is made up of frauds or hypocrites. In fact, many of us may have leaned on this idea as an excuse for not going to church or for not consistently and actively participating. Here's the truth: Many of us pose as something we're not. We put on a good face to hide what's in our hearts. Israel's leaders did this too; they looked the part, but they didn't look anything like the God they were supposed to be imitating. God had given them the Ten Commandments (and the rest of the law), which is basically split between two ideas—love God and love people. The law showed them (and us) how to do that. But the evidence revealed that the leaders in Israel weren't loving God or people. God calls us to authenticity. He calls us to really follow Him, to really love Him, to really love others. He calls us and equips us for so much more than simply pretending and posing.

DAY ONE

MICAH 3:8

Have you ever felt like you should speak up about something that was wrong, but you felt intimidated? Maybe you speaking up would offend people or put a target on your back in some way. This week, we learned about Micah's message to Israel. Part of the message was full of hope, but a lot of his message was brutally honest. In fact, much of what God gave Micah to say was directed at Israel's leaders, calling out their hypocrisy. He announced coming judgment. How did he do it? How did Micah have the boldness to speak against such powerful people, along with the rest of the nation?

Today's verse tells us exactly how Micah stood boldly in such a difficult situation. During the Old Testament, people were filled with the Holy Spirit for specific times and purposes. The Spirit would "rest" on people and empower them; we see this with people like Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and the prophets. Today, things are different. As believers, we have the Holy Spirit living within us at all times. He doesn't fill us or "rest" on us for a time or for certain tasks only, but He dwells within us permanently. And this means we have the same power that raised Jesus from the grave with us at all times, enabling us to stand and to speak boldly when He calls us to do so. This doesn't mean we'll never feel fear. Obedience to God often requires us to stand up *anyway*—whether we feel courageous or not, whether we feel qualified or not. You may still feel shaky or worry about how others react. But God is with you, and He will strengthen you to do what He has called you to do. He will teach you what it means to lean on Him instead of relying on your own strength. He is with you in the moments you shake with fear, in the moments you feel courageous, and in all the moments in between.

- **WHY DOES GOD CALL US TO DO THINGS THAT MAY SCARE US?**
- **WHAT MIGHT GOD BE CALLING YOU TO DO NOW WHICH WOULD REQUIRE YOU TO LEAN ON HIM FOR STRENGTH?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME YOUR SPIRIT. I KNOW THAT YOUR SPIRIT LIVING WITHIN ME ENABLES ME TO DO MORE THAN I COULD EVER DO IN MY OWN STRENGTH. HELP ME TO RELY ON YOU FOR COURAGE AND BOLDNESS.

DAY TWO

MICAH 6:8

Do you know someone who has a really unique way of walking? If they were walking in a crowd of other people, you could pick them out because of their mannerisms. Maybe it's the way they swing their arms, or maybe it's because they walk really fast. Maybe they walk with a bounce in their step. Honestly, a lot of us probably have our own quirks when it comes to the way we walk, talk, and act—quirks that make us unique or recognizable to the people who know us.

As a believer, do you ever find yourself wondering how you're supposed to act in certain situations? How you're supposed to live? In other words, how you're supposed to walk? We're surrounded by a lot of opinions, not just from this world, but from our parents, our friends, our teammates. Sometimes, it can feel like everyone has an opinion on how we should live our lives. It's easy to complicate, but Micah put it very simply: Act justly, love faithfulness, and walk humbly. To act justly means that we choose what's fair; we don't show favoritism; we uphold God's commands. Think about what Micah meant when he said to love faithfulness: God is our ultimate example of faithfulness, and we strive to be faithful to Him and to His Word—to honoring Him at all times. No matter where we are and no matter who is around us, we're simply faithful to Jesus. Walking humbly means that we model Christ, who made Himself a servant (Phil. 2:7); we choose to put others first and to seek their good over our own. Is it really this simple? Yes and no. It's difficult to choose fairness, to keep God's commands, to be faithful no matter what and no matter who we're with, to lower ourselves. But we have the help of God's Spirit! When we walk closely with God and draw near to Him, He draws near to us (James 4:8). We can't act justly, love faithfulness, or walk humbly on our own, and we won't do it perfectly. But if we seek to honor God with our lives, He will show us how to live.

- **WHICH ONE OF THESE THREE COMMANDS IS THE TOUGHEST FOR YOU TO LIVE OUT? WHY?**
- **WHEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED WITH KNOWING HOW TO LIVE? HOW COULD THESE THREE COMMANDS GUIDE YOU?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR GUIDING ME AND FOR SHOWING ME HOW TO LIVE. HELP ME TO ACT JUSTLY, TO LOVE FAITHFULNESS, AND TO WALK HUMBLY. HELP ME TO IMITATE JESUS.

DAY THREE

ROMANS 6:1-11

Have you ever have a bad day and wished you could toss it out? Maybe something terrible happened, and you wished to undo it. Maybe you made a horrible decision or did something embarrassing, and you wanted to erase all of it. It would be nice to have the ability to throw out the bad and keep the good, but life doesn't work that way at all.

This week, we studied about what God does with our sin. When Micah prophesied to Israel, he said God will "cast all our sins into the depths of the sea" (7:19). In a sense, God does with our sin what we wish we could do with our bad days and our bad moments: He throws them out. He lets them sink all the way down to the bottom of the ocean floor. How? Through the death of His Son. Christ's death and resurrection defeated sin. When Jesus was buried, sin's power was buried forever. When He was raised, He gave us the ability to rise with Him one day and to live an entirely new life *now*! In this passage, Paul explained that our old self is crucified with Christ, and because we share in His crucifixion, we'll share in His resurrection too. Baptism expresses this on a symbolic level. When we confess Christ and obey Him in baptism, we're showing that our old self is gone. It's buried, and we're being raised up to a new way of life—a life that is freed from sin—a life that is dead to sin and alive to God (v. 11). Does this mean we'll *never* sin? Of course not. As long as we're on earth, we'll fall short and need to repent; we'll need God to refine us and make us new each day. We'll feel the consequences of our sinful choices, but we'll never have to pay the penalty—spiritual death and separation from God—because Jesus paid it fully. Maybe we can't throw out our bad choices; we can't toss our sin into the depths of the sea. But Jesus already has. We now have the freedom to live new lives.

- **WHAT SPECIFIC SIN DO YOU WISH YOU COULD THROW INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA? HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE COMFORT YOU?**
- **DOES YOUR LIFE SHOW YOU'VE BEEN BURIED WITH CHRIST AND RAISED TO WALK A NEW WAY? IF SO, HOW? IF NOT, WHY?**

PRAY

GOD, I PRAISE YOU FOR BURYING SIN AND DEATH FOREVER AND FOR GIVING ME A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST. HELP ME TO LIVE WITH GRATITUDE AND TO HONOR YOU IN ALL I DO.

DAY FOUR

MATTHEW 22:34-38

How can you tell if someone loves you? Really think about it. What proves it? Is it their words? Their actions? The way they take care of you? It's probably all of this and more. Someone who loves you proves it with more than words. If that isn't the case, then you may question if their love is real. And you should. Because if someone loves you, their words and actions line up.

The Old Testament is full of God's commands for His people. God gave Israel laws to teach them how to live as His people. Some scholars have counted 613 laws in the Old Testament. Religious leaders in Jesus's day followed them obsessively—at least on the outside. Inwardly, many of them were far from God. Some of them took part in an inquiry with Jesus; they asked a series of questions to trap Him into saying something blasphemous, or against God's law. When some of them asked Jesus about the most important law, Jesus answered with one of the most important verses (Deut. 6:5) and a daily prayer in Judaism, the *Shema*: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (v. 37). Are you noticing a pattern this week? Both Micah and Jesus gave fairly simple answers. But what did Jesus mean? He explained that we must love God with *everything*, with every part of who we are—our emotions, our motives, our devotion, our will, our knowledge. Any of these without the others leads to issues like legalism—obsessive rule following—and emotionalism—letting feelings matter more than God's commands. Our love for Him isn't just knowledge about Him, and it isn't just feeling a certain way during worship songs. So, how can others tell we love God? Because we love Him with everything—with every part of us. Knowing God leads us to love God and obey God—our love in action.

- **WHAT PARTS OF YOU MAY NOT REFLECT A LOVE OF GOD?**
- **WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO LOVE HIM WITH EVERY PART OF WHO WE ARE? HOW HAS HE LOVED US?**

PRAY

GOD, I WANT MY LIFE AND EVERYTHING I AM TO SHOW THAT I LOVE YOU. HELP ME TO KNOW YOU, TO LOVE YOU, AND TO OBEY YOU.

DAY FIVE

PHILIPPIANS 3:20

Think of an exciting promise someone made you. Maybe your parents promised an awesome trip when you graduate high school. Maybe your friend promised to get concert tickets. Maybe your teachers promised no homework for the last month of school. Promises give us something to hold on to while we wait. They give us something to strive for. Promises are good as long as they're not broken.

God's Word is full of promises to us. Some of His promises have already been fulfilled in Christ, and some are coming. One of the greatest promises God made was that one day, He will make all things new. One day, He will dwell with us in a new heaven and new earth. These promises are coming, but in a way, they're here now. Many of us think about God's kingdom as being something that's coming, something in the future. And it is. But God's kingdom is *now*. How? Through you. Through believers. We're already citizens of God's kingdom, and while we're here on earth, we live as representatives of His kingdom. Here and now. What does this mean for us? It means that we live in a way that shows others what God is like—what our King is like. We live in a way that reflects His heart and His character. Let this sink in: We get to give others a glimpse into who God is. But many of us have rooted ourselves too deeply here. We live as if this is the only place that matters; we live as if we're citizens of earth only—citizens of our culture. But Paul explained that we're citizens of somewhere far greater, of somewhere that lasts. And we eagerly await the day God returns to bring His kingdom with Him fully. Until then, represent it to the world. Show them how beautiful it will be. Root yourself in God's kingdom and live an even fuller life here because you did so!

- **IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU ROOTING YOURSELF HERE MORE THAN IN ETERNITY? HOW CAN YOU MAKE A SHIFT?**
- **WHAT'S AT STAKE IF WE DON'T LIVE AS CITIZENS OF HEAVEN HERE AND NOW?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR MY LIFE HERE. HELP ME TO LIVE FULLY BY LIVING AS A CITIZEN OF YOUR KINGDOM—AS A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN. I WANT TO REPRESENT YOU TO THE WORLD. HELP MY LIFE POINT TO MY REAL HOME WITH YOU.