



At Your Service

BIBLE READING: Micah 3:1–5:15

PREVIEW

Many people regard teaching as an underpaid profession. “Teach because you love it,” they say, “don’t do it for the money. The hours are long and the hassles are plenty.” The same could be said for related professions, such as preaching and social work.

Ironically, this set of prophecies contains a harsh message for some preachers and teachers who have found a way around their profession’s classic compensation problem. But their cure is worse than the disease, and God says it’s not all right.

Micah’s words also contain one promise that is still to be fulfilled, and another that already has been, and is still being, celebrated.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Some of Micah’s sternest words condemned religious leaders who accepted bribes or who ministered only if they were compensated well for their work (Micah 3:11). The priests and prophets of Israel had come to love money more than their jobs—a serious problem of inverted values.

When Christians preach or teach for personal rewards, the point of their ministry evaporates. “Ministering” means “serving.”

Whenever you serve or minister to others, do it cheerfully and willingly—for Christ—even if no one pays or rewards you for it. And encourage other Christian workers to do the same by never using your giving to impose your preferences on them.

How can I apply today’s devotional to my life today?	Is there someone I can encourage today? How will I do this?



No Deals

BIBLE READING: Micah 6:1-7:20

PREVIEW

The only thing worse than giving the sales pitch for a defective piece of merchandise is falling for it. Has that ever happened to you? At first you say no, but the insistent salesperson keeps at you until you cave in. Suddenly you feel like part of the problem. “Never again,” you vow. In this reading of Micah’s prophecies you will see that the people of Israel tried to sell God on a bad idea. They thought that he could be bought or bribed into changing his mind about their sins. But a holy God won’t exchange sacrifices for permission to sin. “No deal,” God says.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Israel had forgotten how kind God had been to them. As a result, they were ungrateful and unresponsive to him and became cheaters, liars, and blackmailers. When Micah explained that they would suffer God’s judgment for their sins, they tried to make a deal with God. “What’s your price?” they asked him. “What do you want us to give you to leave us alone? Do you want more sacrifices?” Basically, the people wanted to continue sinning, appeasing God with some sort of penance or payment. But Micah told the Israelites that God wasn’t interested in their offer and that he wanted them “to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with [their] God” (Micah 6:8).

God cannot be bought, and we should not attempt to purchase the right to sin with confessions, penances, or sacrifices. We cannot “balance out” our bad deeds with good ones. Pleasing God means giving up all our sins, even the ones we love dearly, and living by God’s standards of righteousness, as we depend on his help and presence at every step.

When you give to God, do it out of love and obedience, not out of a desire to buy him off.

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