

Too Polite to Talk

Micah 2:1-11

Too Polite to Talk

- Micah brought warnings to Israel from God
 - Micah 2:1-5 - “Woe to those who devise iniquity, And work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, Because it is in the power of their hand. 2 They covet fields and take them by violence, Also houses, and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, A man and his inheritance. 3 Therefore thus says the LORD: Behold, against this family I am devising disaster, From which you cannot remove your necks; Nor shall you walk haughtily, For this is an evil time. 4 In that day one shall take up a proverb against you, And lament with a bitter lamentation, saying: 'We are utterly destroyed! He has changed the heritage of my people; How He has removed it from me! To a turncoat He has divided our fields.' 5 Therefore you will have no one to determine boundaries by lot In the assembly of the LORD.”

Too Polite to Talk

- The result was outrage against the messenger. They spoke out against Micah, telling him not to prophecy to them
 - Micah 2:6 - “Do not prattle, you say to those who prophesy. So they shall not prophesy to you; They shall not return insult for insult.”

Too Polite to Talk

- But God pointed out that if the prophets don't speak out, there would be no change in their self-destructive behavior
 - Micah 2:7-10 - "You who are named the house of Jacob: Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good To him who walks uprightly? 8 Lately My people have risen up as an enemy-You pull off the robe with the garment From those who trust you, as they pass by, Like men returned from war. 9 The women of My people you cast out From their pleasant houses; From their children You have taken away My glory forever. 10 Arise and depart, For this is not your rest; Because it is defiled, it shall destroy, Yes, with utter destruction."

Too Polite to Talk

- They were not just becoming enemies of God, they were becoming enemies of each other.
- If they didn't change, the entire land would be destroyed and they would be carried away
- The only prophets they were willing to hear were the ones telling them to eat, drink, and be merry; everything will be fine. Advocating drinking would be a popular, though useless doctrine
 - Micah 2:11 - “If a man should walk in a false spirit and speak a lie, saying, I will prophesy to you of wine and drink, Even he would be the prattler of this people.”

Too Polite to Talk

- Things haven't changed.
 - People don't want to hear about their sins and the inevitable consequences of them.
 - They charge the speaker with being negative and judgmental. They are offended that he thinks they need instruction or correction.
 - They want to hear that they are okay as they are, and that everything will be just fine
 - They campaign to get other weak, vulnerable Christians to join in their cry against strong, sound teaching.

Too Polite to Talk

- What happens to faithful brethren, who like Lot in Sodom, have their righteous souls vexed by a constant barrage of this form of liberal judgmentalism?
- They weary of being the few voices still proclaiming truth and become too polite to talk

Instruction Involves Distress

- The wise learn when instructed, but fools hate to be corrected
 - Prov. 9:8 - “Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.”
 - Prov. 13:1, 18 - “A wise son heeds his father's instruction, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke... 18 Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, But he who regards a rebuke will be honored.”
 - Prov. 15:32 - “He who disdains instruction despises his own soul, But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.”
 - Prov. 17:10 - “Rebuke is more effective for a wise man Than a hundred blows on a fool.”

Instruction Involves Distress

- It is the Divinely ordained duty of a preacher to strongly declare the truth, but there are people who will demand comforting lies instead
 - 2Tim. 4:1-4 - “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

Instruction Involves Distress

- Isa. 30:9-11 - "...Children who will not hear the law of the LORD; 10 Who say to the seers, Do not see, And to the prophets, Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. 11 Get out of the way, Turn aside from the path, Cause the Holy One of Israel To cease from before us."
- Jer. 5:30-31 - "An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: 31 The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?"

Instruction Involves Distress

- With no love for the truth, they prefer to be deceived
 - 2Thes. 2:10-11 - “And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie”

Instruction Involves Distress

- How far people will go
 - Jer. 26:20-23 - “Now there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah. 21 And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt. 22 Then Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor, and other men who went with him to Egypt. 23 And they brought Urijah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.”

Instruction Involves Distress

- Some want no conflict - the “can’t we just get along” folks
 - Unity is important - Eph. 4:1-3
 - Peace is needed - 2Cor. 13:11
 - But true unity, genuine peace, and authentic fellowship only comes in faithful love and obedience toward God

Instruction Involves Distress

- Jer. 6:14 - “They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, Peace, peace! When there is no peace.”
- Jer. 8:11-12 - “For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, Saying, Peace, peace! When there is no peace. 12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed, Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; In the time of their punishment They shall be cast down, says the LORD.”
- Jer. 23:17 - “They continually say to those who despise Me, The LORD has said, You shall have peace; And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, No evil shall come upon you.”

Instruction Involves Distress

- Woe upon blurring the difference between truth and lies
 - Isa. 5:20-21 - “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!”

Instruction Involves Duplication

- Some people take offense when reminded of things they ought to know: implying an insult, pointing out an oversight, hurting pride, caught in a moment of weakness, boring.

Instruction Involves Duplication

- Peter was inspired to remind the brethren, even after his passing
 - 2Peter 1:12-15 - “For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.”
 - 2Peter 3:1 - “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder”

Instruction Involves Duplication

- Even the knowledgeable need reminders
 - Rom. 15:14-15 - “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God”
- Reminders help keep us safe
 - Phil. 3:1 - “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.”

Instruction Involves Disagreement

- Christians may disagree freely on matters in which God has granted liberty
 - Rom. 14:1-8
- But are Christians permitted to hold diverse views on revealed matters?
 - Acts 20:20, 26-27 - “How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house... 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”

Instruction Involves Disagreement

- The preaching of gospel is not subject to our approval
 - 1Thes. 2:4 - “But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts”

Instruction Involves Disagreement

- The gospel is not to be preached through the filter of political correctness
 - 2Cor. 4:2-6 - “But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Instruction Involves Disagreement

- When someone is living in sin before God and men, we cannot remain silent
- Israel fell because those on watch didn't sound an alarm
 - Isa. 56:10 - "His watchmen are blind, They are all ignorant; They are all dumb dogs, They cannot bark; Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber."
- For the sake of the people's health, safety, and lives, the watchman must not be silent
 - Isa. 62:1 - "For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns."

Instruction Involves Disagreement

- God requires the watchmen to cry out
 - Isa. 62:6 - “I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent”
- Even though many will not listen
 - Jer. 6:17 - “Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, Listen to the sound of the trumpet! But they said, We will not listen.”

Instruction Involves Disagreement

- When Peter isolated himself under pressure from Jewish Christians, Paul stood against him
 - Gal. 2:11-14 - “Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?”

Instruction Involves Determination

- Strive for unity and peace, by first seeking to live acceptably and teach faithfully before the Lord, before trying to make others happy
 - Jer. 23:26-29 - “How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, 27 who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal. 28 The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? says the LORD. 29 Is not My word like a fire? says the LORD, And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”

Instruction Involves Determination

- God's word is the wheat - it nourishes those who accept it. Error is like the chaff - it nourishes no one.
- God's word is fire - it destroys the bad and purifies the good
- God's word is a hammer - it breaks those who refuse to accept it and builds up those who do
- 1Cor. 1:10 - "Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."