The Promise of Ancient Peace December 20, 2020

*Micah 5:1-5 Series: Christmas Promises*

That is what Christmas means--to find in a place where you would least expect to find anything you want, everything you could ever want. – Michael Card

Intro: What will you hear in the Christmas silence?

1. Your suffering has purpose and ends in new life.
2. Israel felt helpless in lockdown.

v. 1 *muster your troops, O daughter of troops*

v. 1 *siege is laid against us*

v. 1 *with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek*

1. They hoped it would get better when it was going to get worse.

2 Kings 19:35 *And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians.*

v. 3 *he shall give them up*

Micah 4:10 *now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon*

1. God promised that their suffering would be like labour.

v. 3 *until the time when she who is in labor has given birth*

Micah 4:9 *Has your counselor perished, that pain seized you like a woman in labor?*

Micah 4:10 *groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor*

v. 3 *the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel*

* How is a siege similar to a lockdown? How is it worse?
* Why do we need a better hope than the end of lockdown?
* In what sense is a believer’s suffering like labour?
1. Your Saviour will succeed where others have failed.
2. A son of David from Bethlehem signals a new start.

v. 2 *O Bethlehem Ephrathah … from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler …*

1. Bethlehem shows that salvation doesn’t rest on human power or achievement.

v. 2 *O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah …*

2 Corinthians 12:10 *For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

1. The Messiah is God’s original plan finally come to fulfillment.

v. 2 *one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days*

Matthew 2:4-6 *and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”*

* What’s strange about a descendant of David coming from Bethlehem?
* Why would God bring the world’s greatest Saviour from such an insignificant little town like Bethlehem?
* What are some other times when God has used the youngest or the weakest or the smallest in order to accomplish His purposes? Why does He keep doing that?
* What did Paul mean when he said that he was strong when he was weak?
1. Your Shepherd will be your security and peace.
2. Jesus can be your Shepherd.

v. 4 *he shall stand and shepherd his flock*

v. 4 *in the strength of the LORD*

v. 4 *in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God*

John 10:11 *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

1. Jesus can be your security.

v. 4 *they shall dwell secure*

v. 4 *he shall be great to the ends of the earth*

John 10:27-28 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.*

1. Jesus can be your peace.

v. 5 *And he shall be their peace.*

John 10:9 *I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.*

John 10:10 *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*

* How is Jesus like a shepherd in our lives?
* What is Jesus promising in John 10:28?
* What is the pasture and abundance that Jesus promises in John 10:9-10?
* Which one of the Christmas promises do you most need to cling to and reflect on this Christmas?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Matthew 6:25-34.

Notes