

What Keeps You Awake at Night? Micah 2:1-11

Scriptures for Today:

Micah 2:1-11 *Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. 2 And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. 3 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time is evil. 4 In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields. 5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD. 6 Prophecy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame. 7 O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? 8 Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war. 9 The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever. 10 Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction. 11 If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.*

Introduction

When you evaluate a person, what do you usually look at? You look at their appearance, you judge their actions, their words, you look at everything that you can see outwardly.

But God sees much deeper than that. God sees a person's motives, their desires, the intentions of their heart.

Long before an action is ever committed, God already knows what is taking place within us. Nothing is hidden from him.

As we come to Micah chapter 2 this morning, God is going to take us beneath the outward actions of His people and show us what was already taking place within them.

Micah was a prophet that preached during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. His message concerned both Samaria and Jerusalem. These were the capital cities of the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel.

In chapter 1, God announced that judgment was coming because of the transgression and idolatry of His people. The nation had turned away from God, and the consequences of that rebellion were beginning to come upon them.

All of that rebellion started somewhere. It started in the mind and in the heart.

As we study this passage this morning, I want you to think about what is in your heart?

What do you spend your time thinking about? Where does your mind go when there is nothing else demanding your attention? What keeps you awake at night?

Our thoughts are not meaningless. The things we allow ourselves to dwell upon will eventually influence our decisions, our actions and the direction of our lives.

People will only see what we eventually do outwardly, but God sees what is taking place within us long before anyone else does.

As Micah begins to expose the sins of the people by the Word of God, he starts with that God saw taking place in their hearts. Let's study these verses carefully.

1. They Planned Sin (v.1)

Micah 2:1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.

The chapter begins with the word **“woe.”** This is one of the most powerful expressions in God's Word that describes extreme misery, distress, and heavy trouble.

Isaiah 3:11 Woe unto the wicked! *it shall be ill with him*: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

Isaiah 5:21 Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Jeremiah 10:19 Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous: but I said, Truly this *is* a grief, and I must bear it.

Jeremiah 23:1 Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.

This is not merely an expression of sadness. It is a warning that judgment is coming. God had seen what these people were doing, and He was announcing the consequences of their sin.

But I want you to notice that God does not begin with what they did publicly. He begins with what they were planning privately.

The Bible says that they **“devise iniquity.”**

To devise something means to think it through, to plan it, and to determine how it will be accomplished. These people were not simply overtaken by temptation in a weak moment. They were deliberately planning to do wrong.

They were lying upon their beds, but instead of resting, they were using that time to imagine, organize, and prepare their sin.

Psalm 36:4 He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is not good*; he abhorreth not evil.

We cannot always control every thought that enters our minds, but we can control whether we entertain it, feed it, and begin making plans around it.

For example, if you have a lustful thought, you should immediately cut it off at the source? Don't dwell on it. Don't entertain it. Don't allow it to grow in your mind. How do you do that? Remove yourself from temptation and replace thoughts of evil with the things of God.

Listen to psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Read God's Word. Occupy your mind with things that have eternal value. Spend your time thinking about how to become a better soul winner, how to be a better parent, a better husband, father, mother, son, daughter.

Do not allow your mind to become idle. You might have heard the saying, "The idle mind is the devil's workshop". That statement can be very true. When you are idle, you are susceptible to attacks and temptation. Your guard is down. You're not occupying your mind with important things so you'll find your mind wandering towards places where it shouldn't go.

That's why you need to eliminate as much idle time in your life as possible. That doesn't mean you can't rest. But when you're not doing physical work, you need to keep your mind occupied with good.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

What we continually allow into our hearts and minds will eventually manifest itself and produce action.

So the people in Micah 2:1 were devising sinful things in their idle time. Their minds were dwelling on evil while they laid on their beds at night. And when the morning came, they didn't forget about those things. They didn't change their mind or feel bad about the wickedness that they had planned.

They decided to take action...

Micah 2:1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.

What started in the mind came to fruition. They did what they devised because they had the power to do it.

How wicked of an imagination to think, “I’m stronger than this child so I will do whatever I want to this child.”

How wicked to think, “I’m stronger than this woman so I will beat this woman into submission.”

“I will control her with drugs and take whatever I want from her”

How wicked to think, “I have more money than this person so I will take even more from them.”

How wicked it is to perform evil and destroy people’s lives because you have the power in your hand to do it. The people that use their physical strength and wealth to hurt other people are the weakest people on the entire planet.

And Micah does not leave us wondering what these men did with the power in their hands.

Verse 1 shows us the plan. Verse 2 shows us the execution.

2. They Practiced Sin (v. 2)

Micah 2:2 And they covet fields, and take *them* by violence; and houses, and take *them* away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

The first thing mentioned is covetousness: Before they took anything with their hands, they desired it in their hearts.

To covet means that you are not satisfied with what God has given you. You begin longing for something that belongs to someone else. That is why the tenth commandment says...

Exodus 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

Covetousness might seem like a private sin because it begins within the heart. Nobody else knows what you want. Nobody else hears the thoughts running through your mind.

But covetousness rarely remains in the heart. When you continually desire something that belongs to someone else, you eventually begin thinking about how you can get it.

That is exactly what happened here. It says... “They covet fields, and take them by violence.” They saw land that belonged to another person, desired it, and then used their power to take it.

They did the same thing with houses. They were taking away the places where people lived. They were removing families from their homes and taking possession of what did not belong to them.

This shows us how dangerous covetousness can become. Covetousness causes you to stop seeing people as people. You begin seeing them as obstacles standing between you and something you want. Or maybe they become the object that you are trying to obtain.

Their needs no longer matter. Their families no longer matter. Their suffering is not a concern to you. All that matters is satisfying your own desire. That is very wicked.

It says **they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.**

Imagine someone working hard for many years to rightfully earn what belongs to him. Only for someone to come and take it by force in a single day.

The people who were doing this oppression believed their power gave them the right to take whatever they wanted. But God saw the people they were hurting. **“Even a man and his heritage.”**

A heritage was not merely a piece of property that could easily be replaced. The land had been passed down through families. It was connected to their inheritance and their place among God’s people.

Leviticus 25:23 The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land *is* mine; for ye *are* strangers and sojourners with me.

The land ultimately belonged to God. The people were only stewards of what He had given them. But these wicked people were taking what God had entrusted to other families. They were not satisfied with their own possessions.

The covetousness and desire that started out in their beds at night turned into real violence and oppression that caused suffering for real families.

That is something you always have to remember about sin. It never only affects the one committing it. When you covet and lust in your mind, that’s not something that you are just keeping to yourself. It’s guaranteed to hurt other people in your life. All of those things that you devise upon your bed will eventually manifest and become a reality in one way or another.

When you practice sin in your mind and when you finally act upon it, you’re forcing other people to live with the consequences of your actions. That’s an extremely selfish thing to do. We have to stop thinking only about ourselves and think about other people.

These people in the book of Micah did not care for others. That is why they devised evil. But they weren’t going to get away with it.

3. God Promised Judgment (vv. 3–5)

Micah 2:3-5 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time *is* evil. **4** In that day shall *one* take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, *and* say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed *it* from me! turning away he hath divided our fields. **5** Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD.

Notice how verse 3 answers the sins of verses 1 and 2. The people devised iniquity against others, but now God says: **“Against this family do I devise an evil.”**

They planned how they would take another man’s field, another man’s house, and another man’s heritage. Now God announces that judgment is coming upon them.

The word **“evil”** here is not saying that God planned wickedness. It refers to the calamity, trouble, and judgment that He would bring upon them because of their sin.

God was not committing evil against them. He was judging the evil they had committed. That is an important distinction. God never tempts anyone with sin, and there is no wickedness in Him. But God does bring punishment upon the wicked.

They had devised evil against innocent families. God devised judgment against the guilty. And once God’s judgment came, they would not be able to escape it. The rest of that verse says... **“From which ye shall not remove your necks...”** The picture is of a yoke being placed upon the neck.

These men had placed heavy burdens upon others. They had used their power to oppress people who could not defend themselves. But now a burden was coming upon them that they would not be able to remove.

He continues to say, **“Neither shall ye go haughtily...”** To go haughtily is to walk proudly, with your head lifted up as though you are better than everyone around you.

These people had become proud because of their power and possessions. They believed they could take whatever they wanted because no one was strong enough to stop them. But God was going to bring them low.

4 In that day shall *one* take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, *and* say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed *it* from me! turning away he hath divided our fields.

The people who had caused others to mourn would soon be mourning themselves. It’s very similar to what we learned in Obidiah recently. What comes around goes around.

They will say “We be utterly spoiled” They oppressed and spoiled other people’s possessions. Now God is declaring the same things will be done unto them. That should make people think twice before they go and do evil to others. God promises you will receive back what you put out. And it’s probably going to be worse.

Micah 2:5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD.

A cord was used to measure and divide land. When Israel originally received the land, inheritances were divided among the tribes and families. But these people were going to lose their place and their portion among the congregation of the Lord.

These people planned sin and practiced sin. God responded by promising judgment. But instead of receiving God’s warning and repenting, they tried to silence the preaching.

4. They Rejected God’s Word (vv. 6–7)

Micah 2:6-7 *Prophesy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame. 7 O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?*

In these verses we see that instead of changing their ways, instead of listening to the warnings of God’s judgment, they tried to stop the preaching. They said to the prophets: “Prophesy ye not.”

They believed that if the prophets stopped talking about their sin, they would no longer have to feel the shame of it. Refusing to hear the warning does not prevent the judgment.

You can close your Bible, you can leave a church that preaches against sin, but that doesn’t make your sin acceptable to God. Don’t run away from the truth. Grab the truth and hold on to it. Don’t let go. Hold on to it with everything to have and let it change you.

But in this situation God’s people refused to do that.

Micah 2:7 *O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?*

Notice God says “*thou that art named the house of Jacob*” ... You bear the name of Jacob, but you’re not acting like God’s covenant people. A name alone does not make someone right with God.

You can call yourself a Christian. You can go to church. You can know the right words to say. But are you willing to hear and obey what God has said?—He was asking them “Is the spirit of the LORD straitened?” Straitened means to be restricted, confined, or hindered.

The people wanted to silence Micah and the other prophets because they didn't like what God was saying. But God reminded them that His Spirit could not be restrained and His Word was not the problem. God's words do good to those who walk uprightly. If His Word continually offends, condemns, or troubles us, the answer is not to silence the preacher or change the message. We are the ones that must change.

5. They Oppressed God's People (vv. 8–9)

Micah 2:8-9 Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war. **9** The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.

These were not strangers invading the land. These were members of the same nation, living among the same people and claiming the same God. Yet God says: "My people is risen up as an enemy."

They were supposed to treat one another as brethren, but they were doing the complete opposite.

...ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war.

This is a picture of robbery and humiliation. The **robe** was the outer garment, while the **garment** underneath refers to the inner clothing. Together they represent stripping someone of nearly everything they possessed. These were people just passing by. They weren't looking for trouble. They weren't trying to fight anyone. They wanted to live peacefully, but the wicked saw their peacefulness as an opportunity to exploit them.

Those same things happen today. Innocent people are shot and killed over foolishness. Like Josh mentioned before, the value of human life is diminishing every day.

9 The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.

How evil do you have to be to cast out a mother and her children into the streets because of greed?

Most people don't grow up imagining that they will become someone who does things like this. A child does not normally think, "One day I want to destroy families, take their homes, and oppress people who cannot defend themselves."

But this kind of wickedness doesn't appear from nowhere. It begins when sinful desires are welcomed into the heart. A person entertains the thought, feeds the desire, ignores his conscience, and refuses to cut the sin off at its source.

That is exactly what we have seen throughout this chapter. They coveted what belonged to others. They devised a plan to take it. They carried out that plan because it was within their power. Then, when the Word of God confronted them, they refused to listen.

6. They Chose False Preaching (vv. 10–11)

Micah 2:10-11 Arise ye, and depart; for this *is* not *your* rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy *you*, even with a sore destruction. **11** If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, *saying*, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.

These people had driven women and children out of their homes. They had taken away the rest and security of other families, so God was going to drive them out and take away their own rest.

Arise ye, and depart; for this *is* not *your* rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy *you*, even with a sore destruction.

Think about someone living in a hoarder house.

It usually doesn't become unlivable overnight. It starts with one pile in the corner. Then another pile. A little garbage is left behind. More filth begins to accumulate. One room becomes unusable, and then another.

As everything slowly builds up, the person living there becomes accustomed to it. They learn to step over the garbage. They ignore the smell. They stop noticing conditions that would immediately alarm anyone who entered the house.

Eventually, the home that was supposed to provide rest and safety becomes dangerous. The filth attracts pests, creates health hazards, and makes the house unfit to live in. The person has polluted his own habitation until the habitation begins to destroy him.

That is similar to what Israel had done spiritually. God had given them the land as a place of rest, but they continually filled it with idolatry, covetousness, violence, and oppression. One sin was added to another until the land was polluted by their wickedness.

11 If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, *saying*, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.

In this verse we see that the people were not opposed to all preaching. They only were opposed to preaching that exposed their sin.

Micah told them the truth, and they told him to stop. But if a man came claiming spiritual authority while speaking lies, they would gladly receive him.

The false prophet would say: "I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink..."

Instead of warning them about judgment, he would promise them pleasure and prosperity. He would tell them about the good times that were coming. He would give them a message that appealed to their appetites and allowed them to continue living exactly as they pleased. Sounds like a lot of churches today.

Imagine someone walking into that hoarder house and saying, "There's nothing wrong here. Keep doing what you're doing. You're perfectly safe."

That person may make the owner feel better, but he is not helping him. He is allowing him to remain comfortable in conditions that are slowly destroying him.

That is what false preaching does.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; **4** And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

That's exactly the kind of prophet Israel wanted, someone that would tickle their ears with lies and fables.

Closing Thoughts

These verses in Micah 2 shows us how seriously God takes the condition of the heart.

These people did not begin by casting women and children out of their homes. They began by allowing covetousness and evil desires to occupy their minds.

They devised sin. Then they practiced it. They rejected the preaching that exposed their sin. They continued to oppress the innocent. And they chose false prophets who would make them comfortable while their nation was being destroyed around them.

Everything that started in their minds eventually came to pass. That brings us back to the question we began with: What keeps you awake at night? What occupies your thoughts when no one else is around? What are you allowing to build up in your heart?

Maybe it is covetousness. Maybe it is lust. Maybe it is bitterness. Pride, anger, envy, revenge. We all deal with those things. But you have to make a choice. Will you entertain those thoughts? Or will you cut them off at the source.

2 Corinthians 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Do not allow sinful thoughts to pile up in your heart like garbage in a hoarder house. Do not become so accustomed to bitterness, lust, greed, or anger that you stop noticing the pollution.

Deal with it now. Fill your mind with the Word of God. Allow the truth to shape you and mold you.

Remember the only way you will have power to overcome is through faith in Jesus Christ. Let's Pray