

October 18, 2026

“Transformed Instruments”

Micah 4:1-5

Intro:

The End of the World is near.

Perhaps you have seen cartoons of people holding signs that express as much, or you have seen them as part of the background in a movie scene, or maybe even encountered people proclaiming this news in person as you walked down some busy street.

It's not a positive thought. Aside from the cartoon depictions, which use the image to bring home the punchline to a joke, the people holding those signs proclaiming the end of the world have a look of hopelessness about them. And that hopelessness is easy to catch yourself because there is no solution offered. No encouragement of preparation. No offer that there is hope in a better world to come. It is just “the end of the world is upon us and there is no avoiding that dismal end.”

Moving away from the person with the placard, it isn't that big of a stretch to see their point for ourselves. If you have spent any time listening to or watching or reading the news, you will encounter countless examples of hopelessness and despair. Violent attacks are carried out domestically and all over the world. Politicians shuffle people and resources around a global board vying for position and power, like some massive chess game that only the powerful get to play. We could move away from the violence in the world and see world-ending visions as people are forced to live in the streets because housing is too expensive or jobs are being downsized. More and more people find themselves needing to rely upon services such as food banks because the rising cost of groceries has outpaced the income that those people can earn. Even the things that could be seen as necessary for living or obtaining jobs – such as cell phones, computers, or cars, have become so expensive that in order for a person to have them, they may

have to go into massive debt or not be able to afford the gas to run them, or regular meals.

Again, at the heart of all of it seems to be this contest for power and control among a small percentage of people in the world.

Where is there hope in the face of all that?

Micah's hope:

For many in the world, there is no word of hope. Life is just a slow decline into nothingness with no path to a better future. In the face of this, many people turn to spiritualism to try and give themselves a sense of purpose. The problem with most of that movement is that at the center of this spiritualization is still humanity. Just yesterday Cindy and I passed a gentleman downtown who was delivering an energetic sermon about how we are all just celestial beings – who were created by humanity.

However, there is hope for those who are willing to look for it. It is a hope that does not rely on what humanity can do (although as we will see, humans do have a role to play). It is a hope that comes from acknowledging that God exists, that He is present, and that He is good. It is a hope that the prophet Micah spoke of thousands of years ago, and remains true for us to hang onto today.

In the passage from Micah 4, the people of Israel were looking at a world around them that seemed just as hopeless as ours today – everybody was fighting each other, kings and rulers were vying for power, and the average persons, the commoners, were the ones who faced the brunt of that conflict and suffered for it. In this particular moment in history, the Assyrians were attacking Jerusalem, and king Hezekiah was struggling to see how there could be a good end to things. Into that bleak moment, Micah strode forward and gave an image of hope. It is an image that calls his listeners to look to the future, when God will finally and fully fulfill His promise of a good and perfect creation. It was a word from Micah that promised the present conflict and suffering would come to an end. It is a future

that promises provision. It is a future that promises that the goodness of God *will* rule that day and that people will follow Him.

Three things that will happen on that day:

The first is that God will mediate between warring nations – and really, everyone who is in active conflict with others. You might wonder how that works, but think for a moment about who is mediating between warring factions right now. It is other politicians and people with a self-centered agenda. It is not much wonder that those talks break down, because there is no way for everyone at the table to get 100% of what they want. With God sitting in the mediator's chair, the agenda is different. His is not an agenda that simply raises up one power to replace another one. His agenda is one that opens the eyes, hearts, and minds of people to understand how to love one another.

The second thing that will happen on God's day is that instruments of war will be made into instruments of agriculture. Often when this passage is preached on, the idea is presented that tools of war are made into tools of peace, but that isn't quite the perspective we should draw from this. Yes, the tools of war will be undone – and alongside of that will be a cessation of even the training for war, but the instruments they are made into are not specifically for peace. In the wrong hands, plowshares and pruning hooks can still be violent and deadly weapons. No, it is not just about peace, but about a movement toward caring and providing for one another in equal measures. This past Friday Oct. 16 was World Food Day. Later we will be praying about some of the issues brought forward from the Canadian Food Grains Bank in light of that. One of the things they note is that when people and nations are focused on providing food equality for everyone, then peace trumps war. It is an action of giving and not of taking – which is the action of war.

The third thing, and this goes hand in hand with the previous point, is that people will be able to know and enjoy self-reliance. Micah gives the image of people sitting at peace under their own fig tree. That image might not make much sense to us today, but the idea that each person under God's new order will be able to

enjoy peace and the full fruits of their own labours does sound attractive. This isn't a vision of working to amass more than the next person; it is an image of having enough. It is an image that gives room for people to share, and not to fear that someone stronger will take away their livelihood by force.

Conclusion:

So, there is a word of hope. Micah's vision gave hope to a beleaguered Hezekiah and the Israelites that were facing being defeated and occupied by the Assyrians. It is a vision that can give us hope in the face of world politics that seem to be driving our world beyond anything that we could even hope to influence.

But we can influence some things. You see it isn't just the instruments – the tools of war, that need to be repurposed into tools of blessing. We as people need to also be transformed. As I said, the hoe can be used just as effectively to cave someone skull in as it can be to carve a furrow in a garden so that seeds can be planted. It is the person using that hoe that makes the decision. So, we need to be transformed into instruments that work to peace and the prosperity of others and not for our own power or gain.

Micah says that the teaching of God's ways, taught by God, will flow out from Zion – from Jerusalem. This is just a fancy way of saying that God will be the one who teaches people a better way, how to be transformed instruments. Our job, again following what Micah says, is to follow the Lord our God – even in the face of a world around us that chooses to follow their own gods and selfish desires. It is in the faithful following of God's people that the future of hope that Micah gives will begin to be seen and experienced today.

Let's pray.