**Playing the Hand You’re Dealt**

Micah 6:1-8, 7:18-20

**Small Group Guide**

**Opening Icebreaker Question**:

* Let’s begin by thinking of the metaphor in Josh’s sermon title: “Playing the Hand You’re Dealt.” Think about your own “hand.” What are some unique advantages that you were given, by no choice of your own? What is a unique challenge that you have had to overcome?

**OPTIONAL BACKGROUND:** We’ve been walking through the Big Story of the Bible, with the understanding that the Bible is not just a series of moral lessons or heroes to imitate, but a Big Story of how God is rescuing humanity and even the earth from the mess that our sin has made. For the last few weeks we’ve been looking at the role of prophets in this story. Prophets were men and women who received messages from God and delivered them to his people. Today we’re looking at the prophet Micah, who was from the Southern Kingdom, or Judah. He prophesied in the second half of the 8th-Century BC (leading up to 700 BC), during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. And he raises our awareness of a problem we haven’t hit on much so far. Micah is a classic example of a covenant lawyer, and he brings Judah up on some specific charges. **Read Micah 3:1-5.**

1. What is the problem in Judah and who is being called to account for it?
	1. What have you learned so far from The Big Story about how biblical leaders (kings, prophets, etc.) are supposed to act?
	2. What do their actions say about their relationships with God and the “motivational structures of their hearts?”

**Read Micah 6:10-14. 1-7.**

1. Now God includes more than just kings, rulers, and prophets in the charges. What sorts of injustice do you see at work here?
	1. Do you see any parallels in our world?
	2. What would God say if he were to look into our world, our state, our community? What would he say about injustice, and our part in it?
	3. Is it possible that to the degree our hearts our deadened to social injustice our hearts are deadened to God? Discuss.
2. In 6:6-7, Micah realizes how bad the problem is and speaks as if he’s one of the people. What is his question of God?

**Read the famous answer, in Micah 6:8**

1. This verse seems to promote a way to “merit” God’s love: do these three actions of showing justice, mercy, and humility.
	1. What have we learned in our study of The Big Story of the Bible that will get us in right standing before God? How does that broader context help us to understand this particular verse?

**The immediate context is also helpful. Read Micah 6:1-5.**

* 1. Specifically, in vv. 4-5, of what is God reminding his people? (Note that God makes this same statement about redeeming his people from Egypt at least 125 times in the Old Testament.)
	2. How does this re-telling of the “Big Story” give us context for the actions in v.8? (Leaders: V4 shows that we do these 3 actions *because* God has loved and redeemed us, not to *earn* his love. Big difference.)
	3. God, via Micah, could have chosen any three actions that reflect his love and personality. Why these three of justice, mercy (“Hesed,” unfailing love), and humility?

**Read Micah 7:18-20.**

1. What sets God apart as unique, according to v. 18?
	1. Why is it significant that after a book of such “legal charges,” the last word is about God’s forgiveness, mercy, and compassion?
	2. What does v. 20 show us about the reason that we can trust God to forgive and restore us?

Pastor Josh comments: “The solution to the problem of injustice is to see the radical way that God has redeemed you. To let it soak down into your core. Because when this gets into your core, here’s what you’ll realize: if you have received what Jesus did for you, you have been dealt a great hand!”

1. Per Josh, Radically loved people show radical love! However, if you don’t feel like you’ve been dealt a great hand or have some block in experiencing God’s love, what might be getting in the way?
2. Before the next question, let’s define our terms:
	1. Now, after studying this passage, how would you define “justice”?
	2. How would you define “showing mercy”? (Leaders, remember that the Hebrew word for “mercy” in these passages is the same used to describe God’s unfailing love, such as in Exodus 34:5-7). What does it mean to love mercy?
	3. How would you define “walking humbly with God”?
3. So, if you are radically loved by God, how might he be moving you to work against injustice, show mercy to those without a voice, or to walk more humbly with God?
4. Josh mentioned three obstacles that might keep us from acting on justice, mercy, and humility:
some of us are: a) just too busy, b) afraid of the risks of pursuing justice, and/or c) afraid that we don’t know what to do. How can we overcome these or other obstacles?
5. Josh gave the challenge Sunday to pray an open prayer, asking God how he might want you to meet needs and address injustice, out of the overflow of his radical love for you. If you’ve been praying in this way, what answers have come to mind? Are you seeing any themes or needs popping up frequently in your experience?
6. **Share and Pray:**  Among our prayer requests, let’s pray that God will reveal his love to us and then reveal how he wants us to show justice and mercy and walk humbly with Him.