

Sunday School Lesson

By Bessie Wilbon

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today catches Micah in a moment of depression. When he left his village home to begin his ministry, it is supposed that he had visions of converting the whole kingdom, with the aim of bringing the nation to righteousness through faithfulness to the Lord. He probably began his prophetic activities with exuberance and enthusiasm. He would unmask the dishonesty of public officials, call attention to the appalling immorality in the land, and point out that corruption had so weakened the moral fiber of Judah that she was in imminent danger for her very life. A corrupt nation is a doomed nation, he would warn. Hopefully, men would hear his impassioned cry, turn from their wickedness back to God and His ways, and thus bring to Judah once again the blessings of peace, righteousness, and integrity.

Micah had performed his mission faithfully, but the nation had not turned to God. He found himself in the position of the disciples who had toiled all night at fishing but had caught nothing. Apparently, all his labor was for naught. Thus we find Micah in a period of depression.

THE LESSON

"It is hopeless! I am like a hungry man who finds no fruit left on the trees and no grapes on the vines. All the grapes and all the tasty figs have been picked. There is not an honest person left in the land; no one loyal to God. Everyone is waiting for a chance to commit murder. Everyone hunts down his fellow countryman. They are all experts at doing evil. Officials and judges ask for bribes. The influential man tells them what he wants, and so they scheme together. Even the best and most honest of them are as worthless as weeds. The day has come when God will punish the people, and he warned them through their watchmen, the prophets. Now they are in confusion. Don't believe your neighbor or trust your friend. Be careful what you say even to your wife. In these times sons treat fathers like fools, daughters oppose their mothers, and young women quarrel with their mothers-in-law; a man's enemies are the members of his own family. But I will watch for the Lord; I will wait confidently for God, who will save me. My God will hear me." (Amos 7:1-7).

Justice and order are largely dependent upon the integrity of public officials. But in Judah these individuals were corrupt, guilty of conspiracy to set forth their own ends by whatever means, fair or foul.

We may be thankful that there are persons of integrity in our own land who are in places of leadership and there are many on both local and national levels. We have seen what influence for good they can be; but let us never forget that when the influence of godliness is lost among any people, that society falls to pieces.

In the mind of Micah, morality in Judah was so eroded that no one was to be trusted anymore. How despondent the prophet must have been. It is not abnormal to feel depressed under dire circumstances. It is only when one gives way completely to depression that he abandons all hope and despairs of anything better. Micah did not come to this state. In the very nature of the case, the child of God cannot help but be an ultimate optimist.

Micah did not close his eyes to the causes of his pessimism. He would gain nothing by refusing to face up to reality, and neither do we. In the prophet's case, the reality was anything but encouraging. The people of Judah, by their wickedness, were denying faith in God and in His ways. And without the moral fiber and personal relationship with God gives, the social structure of the nation had disintegrated. This disintegration was so wide spread that it had even affected the home.

"Therefore," The Hebrew has, "As for me." What shall I do in view of the present evil circumstance? Shall I abandon myself to despair? No indeed! Instead, I will look unto the Lord. With this statement, Micah changes his mood from general pessimism to personal optimism. There is a source of hope for his people. God can draw people from their unbelief and its destructive consequences. He can deliver them. Where there has been doubt, there can be faith and repentance again. These will lead to God's forgiveness. Fellowship with God will be restored, and as people are drawn to God they will be drawn into fellowship with one another.

Micah's confidence was not founded upon his own wisdom or abilities. Nor was it based on some inner feeling that society would just naturally get better. It was grounded upon Deity, upon who God is and what He has promised.

Today, if one should focus attention upon only the negative factors of our society, he could easily give way to despair. Conditions are bad and seem to be getting worse. We dare not ignore the forces that threaten to destroy us. Yet, there are factors to indicate that God has not abandoned our nation entirely.

Surveys indicate that 94 percent of Americans profess a belief in God. This should be encouraging. However, in the days of Micah the figure was near 100 percent. So people many profess a belief in God and live for the devil. It seems that, in the minds of many God is only the Man upstairs who looks after us and is altogether unconcerned about our sins.

Many have been brought into fellowship with God through the obedience of the gospel of Christ. If we are one of these then our aim should be to live as people of God are expected to live. To confess Christ as Savior and to commit ourselves to the lordship of Christ are two different matters. The test of one's relationship to God through Christ lies in ethical action and righteous behavior. "Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Jesus asks, (Luke 6:46).

Those who love God and who are concerned for humankind can take hope, renew their zeal in training workers and sending forth the message of Christ, and demonstrate their faith through compassionate action.

Father, may our minds and our lives profess Your love so that we may be compassionate in a sin-sick world. Amen.



Mrs. James McCatharine
....She was Miss Samesta Hill

Hill-McCatharine Vows Spoken

Solemn wedding vows were recently spoken between Samesta Elaine Hill and James Caldwell McCatharine.

The double ring ceremony, which was officiated by Dr. James B. Humphrey, took place at First Baptist Church-West.

Given in marriage by her father, the bride wore an elegant gown of candlelight satin, featuring a bateau neck and fitted bodice of French Alencon lace. Her long satin sleeves were enhanced with lace inserts and a gentle puff at the shoulder, circled with French Alencon lace flowerettes and pearl strands. The back bodice was designed with a plunging back and fastened with self-covered buttons. The flowing skirt fell gracefully from the fitted waist into a chapel-length train accented with a French Alencon lace border encircling the entire skirt and train. The train was designed with four petite satin buttons and loops to form a bustle in the back.

The bride's headpiece was a Juliet cap accented by the candlelight French Alencon lace.

For the matron of honor the bride chose Ms. Lynn Rhue Smith of Parris Island. The remaining bridesmaids were: Jill Roberts of Philadelphia, Pa., Monica Morrison, Pam Jordan and Yvonne Weathers.

Little Miss Chez Murphy of Atlanta, Ga., was the flower girl.

As best man the groom chose his brother, Fred McCatharine. Other groomsmen were: Gerald Wynne of Columbus, Md., Rev. Ricky Helton of Durham, N.C., James Orr and Edward Waddell. The ushers were Harry Ross, Eric Wood, Marvin Long, Wayne Ross, Robert Woods and Pete Brown. Master Fred McCatharine II was the ring bearer.

Music for the ceremony was rendered by the father of the bride, Samuel W. Hill, and Viverica Sellars. Other musicians and vocalists included Joanne Harrison, organist and soloists Grant Harrison, tenor, Gail London, soprano, and Samuel Stevenson, baritone.

Immediately following the wedding a reception was held in the fellowship hall of the church.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Hill, the bride is a graduate of George High School in Pennsylvania and attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Presently employed with the North Carolina Air National Guard, the groom is the son of Mrs. Ruby and the late Fred McCatharine. He attended Independence High School, Tennessee State University and Johnson C. Smith University.

Help "Spike" Out Kidney Disease

Mark Saturday, July 13, off your calendar today!

That is the date of the First Annual Charlotte Volleyball Marathon, an exciting festival of big prizes, celebrity games, and, of course, lots of volleyball! Now is the time to get your team together and start practicing for this summertime athletic event.

The National Kidney Foundation of North Carolina along with The Charlotte Volleyball Club, WROQ Radio Station, and Budweiser Beer will hold the marathon at Freedom Park on Saturday, July 13, from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m.

Everyone is invited to participate whether they are a USVBA amateur or a novice on the courts. Teams will be matched so that all skill levels will enjoy an afternoon of lively competition. Plus, many prizes will be awarded to the individuals and teams who raise the most money to benefit the Kidney Foundation.

The National Kidney Foundation of North Carolina is organizing this athletic event to help raise the funds needed to assist the men, women,

and children living in North Carolina who are suffering from kidney disease. The money raised from the Marathon will be used for the Foundation's many programs including patient services, research, the organ donor program, and public and professional education.

For entry information, call Donna Hayden at 704-333-0178 in Charlotte, or Katie Matishak at 919-929-7181, Chapel Hill. Or you may write to the Kidney Foundation office: P. O. Box 2383 Chapel Hill, N.C. 27515.



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Robert and Flora Pegues celebrated 25 years of marital bliss recently at Von's Specialties. With family and friends gathered for a warm toast to the love and happiness of a 25th anniversary, the couple reflected the day they were joined together as man and wife. That was June 5, 1960 in York, S.C. Pegues works for the City of Charlotte. Mrs. Pegues works for Presbyterian Hospital. They have three daughters, Ivey Massey, Nona Pegues and Myra Pegues, and two sons, Adrian Pegues and Sonnie Steele. They also have six grandchildren. The couple attributes their long marriage to happiness they have shared and to the love God gave them.

Security Chief

Audrey L. Smith, a 1973 graduate of Livingstone has been appointed Chief of Security at the college, according to an announcement by vice president of Fiscal Affairs, Mr. Robert Kelley.

Ms. Smith has wide and varied experience in law enforcement, having served five years as a member of the Salisbury Police Department and most recently as a Rowan County Magistrate.

A native of Hamlet, N.C., she is a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, president of the Soldiers Memorial AME Zion Church Stewardess Board No. 1 and a member of the Senior Usher Board.

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