

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, Wash.
December 4, 2011**

Micah 4:1-5

***Mighty Messages from Micah:
MOUNTAIN!***

- 1. God has established it***
- 2. Wisdom proceeds from it***
- 3. Its followers are changed by it***

**Hymns: “Come, Lord Jesus” –
703 – Distribution: 23, 3 – 6**

All Scripture quotations from the NIV

Micah 4:1-5 –

¹ In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. ² Many nations will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ³ He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. ⁴ Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken. ⁵ All the nations may walk in the name of their gods; we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

How many mountains have you visited? Many mountains are favorite tourist spots in our own west coast area of the country:

- Mt. Rainier

- Mt. St. Helens
- Mt. Hood
- Mt. Baker
- Mt. Adams
- Mt. Shasta

If you’d like to travel out of our area, you could see some other mountains and mountain ranges in our country:

- The Appalachians
- The Rockies
- The Smoky Mountains
- The Black Hills
- Mt. McKinley

If you like world geography, you’re probably familiar with even more famous mountains and ranges:

- Mt. Everest
- The Alps of Switzerland
- The Matterhorn
- Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa
- Mt. Fuji in Japan

We are indeed mesmerized by mountains, aren’t we? When I walk around the corner in our neighborhood on my way to church, I think I look to the southeast just about every single time to see if the mountain is out.

Today, we’re going to travel to see a mountain. It’s more majestic than Mt. Rainier, Mt. Fuji, or the Matterhorn. As we continue our look at ***“Mighty Messages from Micah”*** in our Sunday Advent series, the key word from this prophecy is **“MOUNTAIN.”** **Let’s look at Micah’s picture of the Mountain of the Lord. We will see:**

- 1. God has established it**
- 2. Wisdom proceeds from it**
- 3. Followers are changed by it**

1 – We read in Micah 4:1: ***“In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it.”***

Hadn't God already established his holy Mountain and put his Temple on it? He had made a holy place for himself in the capital city of Jerusalem on Mount Zion. This is where God's Temple was built. This was where he had prescribed worship rituals: Daily prayers, animal sacrifices, etc. This was the place where people came from all over the country. Pilgrimages to Mount Zion were common. In fact, every male Jew was required by law to show his face at the Temple on Mount Zion every year!

However, God says some changes are going to take place with his Mountain. It is going to be prominent. It will be popular in the world.

Some questions come to mind. First of all, when will this take place? Micah says it will happen "*in the last days*." When is that? For Micah and the other OT prophets, that phrase was very meaningful. The last days referred to the time when God was going to fulfill promises that had been made to his people long before Micah, which would usher in a new age and even the end of the world. By "*the last days*" Micah meant:

- When the Messiah would come
- The age of history after the Messiah
- The end of the world and life in heaven forever

From Micah's perspective, both Advents of Christ, at Bethlehem and on Judgment Day, would be in this time when the Mountain would be established and prominent.

Where is the Mountain located? As we said, the OT mountain of the Temple was very clear – on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. When Jesus came, he mentioned how worship would be different after his time in the world. He

said in John 4, "*Believe me... a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.*" Jesus says that worshiping the Lord in spirit is more important than location. He also told his disciples about worship, "*Where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them*" (Matthew 18:20). Where is the Mountain? **Where the gospel is prominent and proclaimed, there God's Mountain is! His Mountain is where his Church resides and works.**

Isaiah makes it clear that God's Mountain is going to be the CHIEF of all the mountains. This prophecy has truly been fulfilled.

- The era of Jesus Christ was the most important epoch in history! God worked the salvation of the world the when Messiah came.
- People indeed are flocking to the Mountain from all nations. We have a great example of this at Holy Trinity as we are privileged to see many different peoples in our church and school that are hearing about Jesus. We have connections here with Korean people, African-American people, Hispanic people, middle Eastern people, Ukrainian people, and others. Other pastors and missionaries in our synod could tell you of many peoples from the nations of the world that have come to the Mountain!
- It's interesting that world religions that man has

thought up even incorporate Jesus into them:

- The New Age Movement calls Jesus an enlightened prophet
- Islam also declares him a prophet
- Cults today like Mormonism or Jehovah's Witnesses, who do not believe that Jesus is God from eternity, hold him in high regard
- Even people who profess to be atheists use the name "Jesus Christ." They choose to swear by that name, rather than other religious leaders' names. **God's Mountain has indeed been established as chief Mountain by him!**

2 — There's more. Our reading goes on to tell us about a message that comes from the Mountain, a message of wisdom: "*Many nations will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths. The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*"

The message from the Mountain is compelling. What is it about? Our psalm today, Psalm 24, says, "*Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.*" We see a sad fact as we look at this mountain in the distance. The sad fact is that we cannot draw near it.

People love having a home with a mountain view. In fact, some of you here today might live with a breathtaking view of Mt. Rainier. You may have even paid extra money for the location

of your property so you could see it. But we hear from Scripture that you do not deserve to be near the Mountain of the Lord on your own merits. By nature we are barred from going to the Mountain of the Lord and seeing the wonderful sights there. We have sinned against the Lord. We are not worthy to come to him. We are lost and condemned on our own and cannot make things right between us and the God of the Mountain.

The message, however, becomes thrilling when we hear that God loved us enough to send a solution to our problem that knocked down the barriers blocking the road to the Mountain of the Lord. He loved us enough to send the Messiah to die for our sins in our place, and he now even invites us to live on his holy Mountain! Unbelievable!

How important is it to hear the wisdom that proceeds from this mountain? The book of Proverbs tells us, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*" This is where knowledge starts. This is where a life is gauged as being successful or not. It is vitally important to make this trip to the Mountain of the Lord. If you finish your life and haven't taken a trip to Mt. Fuji in Japan, it's not the end of the world. It would be sad that you didn't see a nice sight, but that's about all the tragedy there is. If you don't travel to the Mountain of the Lord before your life comes to an end, an eternity of tragedy and regret will result!

What would challenge your desire to listen to the Mountain's message and follow it? What "other mountains" might you be tempted to listen to? It may not be a mountain of a separate world religion, but there are other mountains we can chase:

- The mountain of philosophy
- The mountain of achievement, saying that the measure of

your life is your job and your accomplishments

- The mountain that says the political world is the only important thing in life
- The mountain that says you need to get as many toys as you can
- The mountain of pleasure, excess, or addiction
- The mountain of money
- The mountain of sports playoffs and statistics
- Is there another mountain this Christmas that will get more of your attention than the manger? Maybe the sale-to-end-all-sales seems more desirable to chase than spending time in prayer this Advent.

Dear friends, God has placed things in our world for our enjoyment, but don't let a smaller mountain become your chief mountain. Some people will not come to the Mountain of the Lord. Others may take a gander at Christmastime, but will leave and not come back to God's mountain in the new year. Don't you be fooled! **Realize the wisdom that proceeds from it!**

3 – Micah gives us one more thought today about God's Mountain. He writes, "*(God) will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD*

Almighty has spoken." These verses tell us how followers of the Mountain of the Lord are changed.

They're changed in two ways. First, what settles their disputes? God's judgments settle them! They are governed by the Word of God that they have come to know. They have submitted their thinking to it. They have absorbed it and let it be their guide.

Secondly, this has an effect on them because they desire to live by the Word of God. When many people hear these words about beating swords into plowshares, they think of political peace. In fact, these words from Scripture are inscribed near the United Nations building in New York. But these words aren't talking about a political peace that will result. In fact, Jesus tells us in Matthew 24 that there will be "*wars and rumors of wars*" and that "*nation will rise against nation*" until the end of time.

What exactly does this mean? The gospel message of the Lord changes individuals' minds and their behavior. Where there are people who are followers of the Mountain, there are:

- Apologies offered when fitting
- Confession given to those around them
- Forgiveness proclaimed for the sake of Christ
- Acts of love happening, even random ones!
- People who share
- People who can be characterized as "peacemakers"

It reminds us of the description of the early Church after Jesus left the world. Acts 2 says, "*All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and*

goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.”

This is the effect the Mountain has on people!

- Spouses do these things for each other.
- Brothers and sisters live in harmony, forgiveness, and understanding.
- Employees treat each other with respect and work hard.
- And church members in a congregation act this way toward their fellow church members and to those who visit.

Followers of the Mountain are changed forever!

So the next time you see a mountain, you have some food for thought. Think about the Mountain of the Lord that we have learned about today:

- 1. God has established it**
- 2. Wisdom proceeds from it**
- 3. Followers are changed by it**

This Christmas season point out the Mountain to someone you know. Bring someone this December to God’s Mountain here at Holy Trinity as the Advent and Christmas message is proclaimed. For here we have the most comforting message imaginable, the message of forgiveness and salvation. Amen.