

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



Weekly Sermon Series

Love

Times are tough all around God's world today. It is not much different than the time of Micah, the prophet we read today. Micah lived about 700 years before Jesus was born. He was a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah, who lived as Micah did in Judah, and Hosea, who lived in the northern kingdom of Israel. They lived with the threat of bigger powers taking over the world. Worshipping God lost importance with the surge of other religions taking over the temple and the street corners. Yet, in this setting, Micah spoke about a better future. He reminded his people of God's promise of the Messiah, who would come with strength, majesty, security and peace.

It reminds me of when we were raising our children, several decades ago. They would sometimes come home with stories of friends who were abused or unloved or ignored. They wondered why, and asked if that friend could come over for dinner at our house sometime. We hosted some gentle, but unusual, guests many evenings. With brokenness all around us, we felt that it was essential to hold the bar high in love and relationships.

Though tough times existed in our community, we knew that, within our walls, the promise could be present. We clung to God's Word, prayer, and hope as we wrestled with daily life. My husband and I still live much the same as we have through all our married years. Our adult children continue to be support for

their families and friends, including those who are struggling with confusion about the future.

In Luke 1, Mary and Elizabeth are that kind of support for each other. They remind each other of the mighty God who blesses us and brings mercy from generation to generation. God can bring down the rulers and the rich, and lift up the humble and hungry. Such women as these were chosen to bear the babies Jesus and John the Baptist, and restore hope to the world.

Where have you received hope? Have you been a vessel of hope for someone else? Name some charities that bring promise and love to the poor, hungry, downtrodden, and sick. Will you be able to budget in the months ahead to add a gift to those in great need? Do you know of someone who might need your emotional support and prayers?

Dear Jesus, our precious gift of Christmas, make us open to love and share with a world that is hungry for all you offer. Bring faces to our attention and help us to make a difference in your name. Amen.

-- Week of December 20, 2009