

Sermon: Micah 4:1-8. “The Attractive Church”

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Sermon text and audio available for download at www.waitara.anglican.asn.au

What attracts us to God? And what attracts us to God’s church? What is it that draws us into this place each week? Why did you come to church here? Is this an attractive place?

Think about the world we live in for a moment – What is it that draws us into a shopping centre? Do you have a favourite type of shop that you can’t walk past? Maybe a bookstore? Or a toy shop? A pet shop? A lolly shop? Or a coffee shop? Or maybe a place like a beach or a park or a club? I can never walk past a car yard. For some of us, some shops just lure us in – What is it that draws you in? What’s the attraction?

Let’s think about that question for a church – What attracts people into a church? Why does someone walk through those doors? I found an interesting article online this week – 5 tips for making your church more attractive... And before I say this first one, let me just say how much I don’t like articles like this...!

- **Tip 1:** People are attracted to a church with an attractive or appealing Pastor or **leader**... Hahaha!
- **Tip 2:** People are attracted to churches with a **purpose**.
- **Tip 3:** People are attracted to a church that is **motivating**.
- **Tip 4:** People are attracted to a church that is **comfortable** – people are attracted to a group of people who are the same as them because it makes them more comfortable.
- **Tip 5:** People are attracted to a good worship **experience** – a church that celebrates is more attractive!

Five tips. **All distractions from the main attraction!** There are churches that centre their life ONLY around these things. That spend all their energies on getting **these things** right. Leadership, purpose, motivation, comfort, experience. **Some** of these may even be useful, or good, or helpful, others are unhelpful. But should any of these things EVER be our focus? Should they be the centre of our attention? Some churches will **focus** on the music, or the “worship”. Others will focus on the welcoming. Or the food, or the facilities, or the kids program, or the ministry team, or the comfortable seats, or the parking, or the purpose statement, or the experience of the whole service.

But what amazes me in all of this, is that none of this thinking comes from God! Micah 4 is a great picture of God building an attractive church. And when God builds an attractive church, how does **he** do it?

You might remember in Micah 3 that God promises to destroy what the leaders of Jerusalem have built. Because they’ve built their own attractive city of Jerusalem. They’ve built their **own** temple, their **own** church. They’ve built something for their own glory and God says “I’m going to tear it down!” That’s God’s first step – tear down the man made church. Tear down the church with comfortable seats, good musicians to lead the worship, great facilities, and motivational speakers. Tear down the church with wonderful purpose statements and charismatic leaders. Because, God says, those things aren’t attractive to me, and it won’t attract people TO me.

Then in Micah 4, **God** builds. **God** builds his city. **God** builds his temple. **God** builds his church. And it’s an attractive church. The one verse I really want us to look at today is verse 2 – have a look at it again with me –

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.*

God builds a church that is attractive. A church, a temple, that people WANT to go to. And **why** is it attractive? What is it that attracts streams of people to it? Let’s read on...

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.

I am attracted to **God's place** because I will hear from him. Not because I will hear a great preacher, or a great band, or have a great experience, or find a good children's program, or have a comfortable seat. These are not our centre. These are not our main attraction. I am **attracted** to that place **because I will hear from God**. I will be taught his ways. I will listen his word.

God's place, God's city, God's temple, God's mountain, is a place people will **stream** to, because they will hear him.

It is **God's Word** that attracts people. What makes a church attractive is when the Word of God is going out from it. Not just in the preaching, but in the reading of God's word, the singing of his word, the praying through his word, and the living of his word. What makes a church attractive is when God's word is coming out of every part of that church's life.

For Israel in Micah's time, this wasn't going to happen straight away. This "*stream of people*" was something that would happen in the future. 700 years in the future when Jesus arrives. Micah points us forward to the arrival of Jesus at the main attraction for the church of God. Let me show you 3 New Testament verses about this:

1. (John 1:14) ¹⁴ "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." **Jesus is the Word of God.**
2. (John 2:19-21) ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." ²⁰ The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" ²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body." **Jesus is the temple of God.**
3. (Matthew 5:17) Jesus says: ¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them." **Jesus is the fulfilment of the law of God.**

If a church wants to attract people with the temple of God, the word of God and the law of God, Jesus must be the main attraction. Because Jesus IS God's temple, Jesus IS God's word, and Jesus IS the fulfilment of God's law. **Jesus** is what attracts people. If the church is showing Jesus, and living out Jesus' teaching, then the church will be attractive. And yes, the music can be good, the seats can be comfortable, the leaders can be engaging, the vision can be exciting, but those things will only be ATTRACTIVE if they reflect Jesus.

The rest of Micah 4 is a vision of God building his church and drawing people in, attracting people by his word and teaching. Micah 4 is a vision of what the church of God can look like, and eventually what we WILL look like when everything is perfected in heaven.

- Verse 3: disputes are settled. No more training for war.
- Verse 4: people not afraid of each other.
- Verse 6: the lame gathered and made strong.
- Verse 8: God's King in Jerusalem again.

This is a picture of God building his people up again and gathering in more people from every nation. How? Back to verse 2: By his word. By his teaching. And as God's church, we really need to **believe this** and **live by it**. We need to believe that God's word **IS** attractive. When we speak it and live it, God's Holy Spirit will work through those words to attract people to him.

But we also need to believe it in our own lives. It's certainly attractive to come to church to see our friends. It's attractive to have a nice building and a great children's program. It's attractive to have inspiring music and to have an engaging sermon. It's attractive to be moved by the prayers and experience great worship. But the real attraction that makes all those other things attractive must be God's Word. Our attraction must come from the desire to hear from God. NOT just in the sermon! But in the songs, in the prayers, in each others' lives, in the fellowship we share. An attractive Church is a place where we can say: I heard, I saw, I experienced, I was part of, God's teaching today.