

My name is Micah – your fourth and final guest speaker for Advent! My name, Micah – means “like God”, certainly appropriate for me, because like God – I have a deep and abiding love for everyone – seeing that all are created in the image and likeness of God.

And like God, I have a deep and abiding concern for the poor and the outcast – especially widows, orphans and aliens – foreigners, from foreign lands.

And like God, I have a great disdain for those who disregard the needs of the lowly and the down-trodden --- so could not be silent before the leaders of Israel – who at the time I was writing – were heaping injustice upon injustice upon the poor – and then were distracting everyone else from the plight of the poor with threats and rumors of war.

So like God, I was speaking on behalf of the poor – a prophet of divine justice for the inviolable rights of the poor.

Little wonder, then, I always spoke on behalf of the little ones – the very runts of the litter – and liked to point out that’s where we can so often find God’s actions at work:

When God was looking for someone to be the Father of his great nation – whose descendants would be as numerous as the stars of the sky – God did not turn to some young, mighty king – but chose a nomadic, old, shepherd – Abraham and his wife Sarah for this task.

When God was looking for someone to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt to freedom in the promised land – God did not turn to some eloquent spokesperson ----

but chose the tongue-tied Moses for this task.

When God was looking for someone to become King of Israel – God did not turn to the oldest of the brawniest of Jesse’s sons ---

But turned to the youngest and scrawniest – David --- just as God sent him up against the giant, Goliath – to rise in favor among his people by slaying this mighty foe.

Little wonder, then, that in the fullness of time, when God chose to enter into the world – God chose to come not as a powerful leader of an invading army --- but came quietly, and hardly noticed as a tiny, little baby --- not born into some great palace in a great city --- but in animal’s feed trough – in the little town of Bethlehem:

“Thus says the Lord: you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah – too small to be among the clans of Judah: From you shall come forth from me one who is to be the ruler of Israel.”

And the mother of that child was not to be some wealthy or well-known woman – but the poor and obscure – Mary – from a bump in the road hill-country town of Nazareth – who was not even married at the time she conceived.

Yes, God seems to favor the lowly, the poor, the forgotten and the downtrodden. God often appears in the most unlikely of places at the most inconvenient times – because God is in charge!

What I would ask of you this week is to deal with a common emotion many people have when it comes to encountering and experiencing God ---- the thoughts and feelings of being unworthy:

Yes, the thought that when it comes to opening yourself to the great gift of God’s love --- you should be passed over --- because somehow you don’t deserve such a gift!

Well, you are right – you don’t deserve it – because no one does --- and that’s what makes it pure gift – the fact that no one can earn it or deserve it.

If God only came to the just—and if God only came to the deserving – God would be getting pretty lonely in heaven. . .

No, God rains down his love on the just as well as the unjust – on the saint and most especially on the sinner – because that is just the nature of God. God is love!

So get over those feelings of being unworthy. And join in the long list of God's favor upon the runts of the litter:

Abraham. Moses. David.
Bethlehem. Mary.

God is love – and God's love is to come to you in a special way on the feast of Christmas. But's God's love is already present among you.

*O Come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of humankind.
O bid our sad divisions cease,
And be for us our King of Peace.
Rejoice, rejoice. Emmanuel. Shall come to you o Israel.*