

## Drifting in the Current of Time

### Sermon on the third Sunday after Trinity Sunday

#### Micah 7:18-20



*18 Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in steadfast love. 19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. 20 You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old."*

A small town in the Saxon countryside is now what Amir calls home. But this place is never really home for him. Even if the idyllic place is beautiful with its green meadows, horses and sheep, this place can never replace what is stuck in Amir's mind. What had settled in his mind was a suburb in the big city of Tehran in Iran. Amir's thoughts always revolve around this place. Because that's his story. That is the place where Amir grew up and lived until he was 26 years old. In his memories, Amir can call to mind everything that happened there: the smell of the pita baker; his inner eye can remember the laughing children on the street; his ears can remember the nagging Fatima who insulted her husband, saying he had changed from the entrepreneur that she married to a sleepyhead. All these are memories that Amir carries vividly and realistically in his head. The traumatic experiences are also always with him. At first, his father was ecstatic when the Ayatolla came and ushered in a new and just state. But what came was a war that lasted over 8 years and a dictatorship that made the Shah's look like kindergarten. Amir himself, with his friends, became a great opponent of the Mullah regime. Then they protested. The place where the children laughed and Fatima scolded, turned into a bloodbath. Police violence and screaming people, bullets and smoke shaped everyday life. Then came the Sepas (Iranian police). Many were arrested. Amir too. In his head he remembers the long and lonely nights in detention and the torture, even now when he is in Saxony. He could never separate all of this from his here and now. Everything stays with him. Forever.

Amir once observed a beetle in the stream near his home in Saxony. The beetle had saved itself from the flood on a leaf and now was drifting abroad by the stream. Below the beetle was

deep, threatening water, above him, the sky that towered to infinity. Before him, the unknown path of the water. “You are like a beetle!” thought Amir. Your old story is like the deep water beneath you. In your story and in the story of your family, so much has happened! You have only a pale glimmer and some voices in your head that testify to a much deeper story. And now, you are being driven through the floods of time on your little lifeboat. You have absolutely no influence over where the path leads and where the end of your story is!

What Amir thought at the stream in the small Saxon village, the Israelites have also thought repeatedly. So often they had to experience how their lives led nowhere. So often they thought God had forgotten them. So often they were convinced that their sins were so great that God could never again forgive them. The guilt was too big.... they were lost. That was the case back then and it seems to me that nothing has changed. Regardless of whether we follow the current political events or the environmental policy or the corona crisis... We keep hearing this critical reproach. The guilt of the parents afflicts the children. We know that the past weighs heavily on our lives. In addition to the many good experiences, there is suffering and guilt. It is the same in our interpersonal relationships, in our marriages and families, and wherever people meet. How we'd simply like to start over! But it doesn't work like that. Our story keeps haunting us and follows us to the present day. Another punishment came to the Israelites in Babylon – and that was that God Himself would punish. And if that is the case, the individual really cannot change his fate at all. He simply must surrender his fate like the beetle in the stream and drift through the floods of time. Neither belief nor unbelief. Neither turning away from God nor turning back to Him; neither good works or bad words have any influence or meaning. Because, so the Israelites say, God will punish anyway.

Through the prophet Micah, God speaks against such an acceptance and against such cynicism! No! God doesn't like to punish. God enjoys grace! Although everyone has many old stories with entanglements, burdens, and guilt, God says something completely new here. God will have mercy and crush guilt under His feet! Throw them into the deep sea!

Amir also knew that as he sat by the stream in Saxony. The hopelessness of the beetle went to his heart first. It was easy for him. With a wave of his hand, he fished the beetle with his boat onto the land. The beetle quickly found solid ground under its feet and could stretch its wings in the sun to dry. Then he just flew away! “We need a hand from above. We need God's hand to save us from everything!” Amir thought. Amir actually experienced something like this. In one day, God simply fished him from the current of time and placed him on firm ground. He was given a second chance. The second chance Amir got was reading the Bible and getting to know Christ. After that, he could give everything to God in his prayers. He could also be baptized and could lay his entire story in God's hand. Now Amir could also go on a completely new path. This

way is far beyond time and history. Unlike Amir, who casually fished the beetle out of the water, God has given everything so that we would not die. He Himself endured death through Jesus Christ so that we might live. He Himself carried away our sins through Jesus. If we are in Jesus and have been baptized, we will be brought out of all bad things. Because God has determined it, I now know that I can stand on solid ground. Of course, I still have my story. Of course, I still have my guilt and my hurt that burden me in my life. But I can always return to the living God. He carries me and saves me from the depths. He gives me a second chance! Amen