



**DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS**

**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**

*January 24, 2024*



Photo: Our Daily Bread

## SCRAPS TO BEAUTY

*They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.*

Micah 4:3

**READ Micah 4:1-5**

My wife, Miska, has a necklace and hoop earrings from Ethiopia. Their elegant simplicity reveals genuine artistry. What's most astounding about these pieces, however, is their story. Due to decades of fierce conflict and a civil war that rages on, Ethiopia's geography is littered with spent artillery shells and cartridges. As an act of hope, Ethiopians scour the torched earth, cleaning up the scraps. And artisans craft jewelry out of what remains of the shells and cartridges.

When I heard this story, I heard echoes of Micah boldly declaring God's promise. One day, the prophet announced, the people would "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (4:3). Tools meant to kill and maim would, because of God's powerful action, be transformed into tools meant to nurture life. In God's coming day, the prophet insisted, "nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (v. 3).

Micah's pronouncement was no harder to imagine in his day than ours. Like Israel of old, we face violence and war, and it seems impossible that the world could ever change. But God promises us that by His mercy and healing, this astounding day is coming. The thing for us, then, is to begin to live this truth now. God helps us to take on His work even now, turning scraps into beautiful things.

By **Winn Collier**

### **PRAY & REFLECT**

**Dear God, please change our world. Work through me to bring beauty here. Amen**

Where have you seen evil transformed by God's love? How can you turn scraps into beauty?

### **SCRIPTURE INSIGHT**

The name *Micah* means "who is like God?" That phrase is a Hebrew expression used throughout the Old Testament to provide the opportunity to describe some unique aspect of God's character. The prophet himself used that device in Micah 7:18: "Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy." God's primary characteristic is His forgiving love and mercy, fueled by His patient care for His own. This device is found particularly in the Psalms (see Psalm 71:19). The point is that Israel's God is unique and distinct from the so-called gods of the nations who were capricious and unpredictable, sometimes even demanding human sacrifice (see 2 Kings 23:10). – By **Bill Crowder**

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