

*Justice, Mercy, Humility,
God, and Grace*

Micah 6:8

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*

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**Gracious God,
Creator of heaven and earth
and of all things, seen and unseen,
we praise Your name,
we thank You for this place and for this time
so that we can join together to worship You.
Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord,
My Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.**

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- I thank the Lord for His witness through you
- I considered themes for a message
 - Beatitudes
 - The First Commandment
 - For God so loved the world
- This scripture passage from Micah has been especially meaningful to me
 - God of the OT vs God of the NT; judgment vs grace? It is not so! The Lord our God is one Lord (Deut 6:4 and repeated by Christ in Mark re "the first commandment," Mark 12:29-30)

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*Let's read our scripture verse again,
this time with a running start:*

LISTEN TO WHAT THE LORD SAYS:

*"Stand up, plead my case before the mountains;
let the hills hear what you have to say.
Hear, you mountains, the Lord's accusation;
listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth.
For the Lord has a case against his people;
he is lodging a charge against Israel.*

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*"My people, what have I done to you?
How have I burdened you? Answer me.
I brought you up out of Egypt
and redeemed you from the land of slavery.
I sent Moses to lead you,
also Aaron and Miriam.
My people, remember
what Balak the king of Moab plotted
and what Balaam son of Beor answered.
Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord."*

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*With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?*

*Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

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He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly
and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

**May the Lord add His blessing
to the reading and the sharing of His Word.**

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Who was this "Micah?"

- He is one of the "minor prophets"
- His name means "who is like God?"
- He lived after the Jewish kingdom had split into "Israel" to the north and "Judah" to the south
- He prophesied in both the northern and southern kingdoms
- He saw the northern kingdom fall (Hoshea)
- He saw the southern kingdom go from good (Jorath) to bad (Ahaz) and back to good again (Hezekiah)
- A prophet in a nation in the midst of disarray, and God was "lodging a charge against Israel"

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What was God's charge against Israel? (read v. 9...)

- They were complainers and cheaters (bad scales)
- They were violent and deceitful
- They were forgetful and ungrateful

What did God want from Israel?

- Burnt offerings? nope
- Rams and olive oil? nope
- First born children? (What a powerful phrase: the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul). NOPE!

Just three things: Justice, Mercy, Humility. Let's talk.

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"To act justly"

- Notice that the Lord did not say "impose justice"
- The Lord did not say "go judge those people"
- The Lord said **ACT JUSTLY**.
 - That is how ***I*** am supposed to act
 - That is how ***you*** are supposed to act
 - That is what other people around us should see
 - It is focused ***on*** us and limited ***to*** us
 - God wants us to live in a just world (creation!)
 - We should not have to ***fix*** we did wrong
 - We ***should not do stuff that is wrong*** in the first place!!

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Let's consider a couple of examples:

- Justice according to Cain
 - Account of Able's offering and Cain's offering
 - God tried to help, but Cain ignored him
 - Cain imposed his "justice" and complained about God's
- Justice according to Christ
 - "Kangaroo court" in the dark of night
 - Prosecutor demands death for blasphemy
 - Christ offers life for eternity

If we are Christlike, how are we called to act justly?

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"To love mercy"

- How many of us love to receive mercy?
- Is that what God requires of us, to love *receiving* mercy?
- This is much broader. Unlike "act justly," mercy is not focused on ourselves. We have to love mercy for everyone.

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Let's consider a couple of examples:

- Mercy according to Jonah in Nineveh
 - Short sermon: 40 days and you're all doomed
 - Complaint against God: "I knew that you are a gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in love."
- Mercy according to Christ
 - Woman caught "in the very act" of adultery
 - Obvious and insincere trick--where was the man?
 - "Where are your accusers?"
 - Go, and sin no more.

If we are Christlike, how are we called to love mercy?

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"To walk humbly with your God"

- This is a theme over and over in the Word
 - If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves ... I will forgive ... 2 Chron 7:14
 - He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna ... to teach you that man does not live on bread alone ... Deut 8:3
- Micah's version of "humble" appears only one other place:
 - When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. Proverbs 11:2

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- **Humility in the New Testament**

- As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col. 3:12
- But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:6-7, 10

If we are Christlike, how do we show humility before God?

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So I left you with three questions:

- If we are Christlike, how are we called to act justly?
- If we are Christlike, how are we called to love mercy?
- If we are Christlike, how do we show humility before God?

We cannot do it ourselves. Prophets knew this before the time of Christ. "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6

We do this day by day and step by step. It is a journey. We follow it together. Through the example of our blessed Lord.

Let us pray.

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**Most gracious heavenly Father,
We praise your holy name.**

**Thank you for your justice. Let us follow your example to
be just.**

**Thank you for your mercy. Let us celebrate your mercy
everywhere it is seen, and may we share your mercies
generously.**

**Thank you for your humility, being born in human form so
that we might know eternal life. Let us follow your
example and live as your humble servants, too.**

**Most of all, thank you for your grace, which was and is and
ever shall be. For your love which is the same from age to
age. For your peace which can be known only in you.**

**Send us forth as your just, merciful, and humble servants.
In the holy name of Jesus our Lord, amen.**