

Micah 6:1-8—What Does God Require?

- **Intro:**
 - Stats:
 - 400k in U.S. foster care
 - 293k children at risk of sex trafficking
 - 46.2 million Americans in poverty
 - v.8 = a summary of the godly life, “walk humbly with your God” = the thrust of the text
 - How—by doing justice and loving mercy
 - Merciful love motivates sacrificial justice
- **God Calls Witnesses (v.1-2)**
 - God calls the cosmos to witness as he indicts Israel for sin
 - **God’s authority is universal**
 - Luke 19:40—even the stones would cry out in testimony to Christ if necessary!
 - **God’s judgement is PUBLIC**—he wants everyone and all creation to witness this!
 - All creation will see His unending covenant faithfulness and Israel’s unending unfaithfulness.
 - God is not hiding his judgment on sin NOR his plan for salvation
 - Even in the Christmas story we see God demonstrating both of these!
- **God Pronounces Judgment (v.3-5)**
 - Rather than living in light of their deliverance and responding as a light to the nations, Israel had forgotten the grace and mercy they had received.
 - **v.3 and v.5—“O my people”**
 - God’s plea to these people is not a heavy-handed thrashing as he lists out all the particular sins they have done.
 - **It is a PLEA, much like a father to a son or a husband to a wife**
 - **Why? Because God is concerned with the RELATIONSHIP, not the RECORD!**
 - **APP**—in the gospel we see a God who at the same time is ferociously dealing with our sin, yet providing his Son as a means of relationship. Colossians 2 = in Christ, God crucified our **RECORD, RECONCILED US** and brought us into a family **RELATIONSHIP** with himself!
 - **v.3—What have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me!**
 - God is heaping grace on them—like a humble lover, he is not berating them but asking them to list his faults.
 - **Somewhere along the way, Israel became bored and unenchanted by their God!**
 - **v.4—For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you...**
 - Word play with “wearied you” and “brought you up”
 - **Isaiah 43:24—Indeed, it is Israel who has wearied God with sin**
- **God’s People Search for Atonement (v.6-7)**
 - When it comes to pleasing God, **it matters less about what is in your HANDS and more about what is in your HEART**
 - When you hear that God has a standard and you haven’t met it and that God is making demands of you, it is normal to begin considering what it is that will make him happy! So often, it involves modifying our behavior so that we can become something better and more acceptable!
 - **Legalistic Remorse v Gospel Repentance:**
 - Legalistic Remorse = “I broke God’s rules”

- Gospel Repentance = “I broke God’s heart”
- Religion had BORED them of God yet they ran back to it.
- Rather than SURRENDER and WORSHIP they wanted to “bring a better gift” or “be a better person” in order to make God happy.
- Israel Does this—like all the rest of us!
 - They come with religious effort (v.6b)—shall I come with burnt offerings
 - They come with spiritual excess (v.7)
 - Thousands of rams
 - Sacrifice firstborn
 - Meant to communicate ULTIMATE SACRIFICE
 - The gospel is that, indeed, God does require human sacrifice...he just hasn’t required us to sacrifice our own sons but has given up his own for us.
- Engaging God this way will lead to either heartless burdened participation or bored rebellion.
- God Instructs His People (v.8)
 - God’s response = I am after the MOST costly sacrifice—YOURSELF!
 - Romans 12:1—it is in light of God’s MERCY that we lay our lives down sacrificially (v.5)
 - Walk Humbly
 - This is the STARTING POINT! (4:5—we will WALK in the name of the Lord forever)
 - Mark 12:30-31—You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: you shall love your neighbor as yourself.
 - It is ONLY as we WALK in relationship to God that the heart of mercy and the actions of justice are made possible!
 - Israel is worried about right RULES and God is worried about right RELATIONSHIP!
 - God’s Heart to Us = You need to walk humbly with God, doing justice out of merciful love for others in every way possible.
 - Love Mercy
 - Mercy = hesed = God’s unconditional grace, love and compassion
 - We are to love this grace and to display this grace!
 - Are our lives and relationships colored by COVENANT or CONTRACT?
 - The emphasis here is the MOTIVE behind the actions of justice
 - Do Justice:
 - Justice = an action word
 - Gospel driven WORKS substantiate our gospel-centered WORD.
 - Our generosity provides opportunity for proclamation!
 - Justice = our means of imaging God
 - So often God is introduced as just = one of the main things God does is JUSTICE for the marginalized and weak and oppressed!
 - Revolutionary = in no other ancient culture did people have a God concerned with the weak and marginalized. They always funneled their power and work through the elite!
 - Can you hear the voices of the oppressed—“SPEAK UP FOR ME!”
 - Our indulgence and apathy to the products and problems of oppression is our contribution to those very plights!
 - Zechariah 7:9-11—show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.
 - Proverbs 3:27—do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

- **Some ideas:**
 - Buy groceries for a struggling single mother
 - Visit a hospital and pray with the sick and the dying.
 - Spend time with the elderly living at a local care center
 - Volunteer at a homeless shelter.
 - Teach ESL classes for refugees in your community.
 - Sponsor a child.
 - Donate money to aid victims of disaster.
 - Tutor underprivileged youth.
 - Give restaurant or grocery store gift cards to people living on the street.
 - Write a letter to a prisoner.
- Jeremiah 22:3—do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.
- **Conclusion:**
 - Israel was charged with creating a culture of justice because, in so doing, they would put their God on display who cares and comes to the rescue of the weak, needy and marginalized!
 - **Micah 2:12—a NOISY multitude**
 - We are called to make a glorious gospel noise with our words and our lives!
 - If you look at the world and ache for justice, realize that ache is really an ache for Jesus!
 - A grasp of coming glory sustains us as we enter into the mess. Without the hope of future glory, this life is as good as it gets!
 - Are you laboring for the good of others in this world?
 - Are you laboring with the hope of the gospel?
 - Unlike the wicked leaders of Micah's day, Jesus would not crush and oppress the weak but would stoop and serve them.