

## MICAH: How can we please God?

### The eternally important question

#### Focus on Micah 6:8

Yvon Prehn, teacher

#### Knowing history isn't enough

- Last lessons on how Israel ceased as a nation because of their sin
- But Judah continued as a nation for about 150 years
- They SAW what was happening
- As if in CA, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties were destroyed and Ventura and LA were left
- But knowing and seeing all they did, did that change them?

#### God didn't give up on them—more prophets sent

- **Hosea's preaching ends**
- **Isaiah begins, at the same time**
- **Micah—Approx. 737-690 BC**
- **Lived in Judah, prophesied there, message to both Israel & Judah**
- **Back to a more historical overview next lesson**
- **But let's drill down to application today**
- **Because that is what matters most to the Lord**
- **History useful, but only as it helps us change our behavior**

#### Narrow focus to Micah 6:8

- Narrow focus to 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.*
- We'll look at each term
- What the words mean
- Additional verses related to the key terms
- Application, be “doers of the Word”
- So we don't deceive ourselves
- And so we know how to act in our current world and always

#### Summary of his overall message

- Similar to other prophets of the time, judgment coming because of sin
- *Micah 2:1 Woe to those who plan iniquity, to those who plot evil on their beds! At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it.*
- Even though a very “religious” time

• *“Do not prophesy,” their prophets say. “Do not prophesy about these things; disgrace will not overtake us.” . . . If a liar and deceiver comes and says, ‘I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,’ that would be just the prophet for this people! Micah 2: 6, 11*

- *What you don't want to hear is what you often most need to hear*
- Finally visions of mercy after judgment

#### Unique in emphasis on Messiah,

- Bethlehem prophecy, and prophecy of future king, some of most specific in OT
- Micah 5: 2,4,5: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” . . . . . He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

#### From Birth to Future rule of the King

- **Micah 4:2-5**
- He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.”
- <sup>3</sup> He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.
- <sup>4</sup> Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.
- <sup>5</sup> All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

#### Prophets often knew the WHAT, not precisely the WHEN

#### Their response

- Micah<sup>6</sup>:6 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?

<sup>7</sup> 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?

- **God's answer**

<sup>8</sup> **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.**

- **Obedience from the heart—much more difficult than outward actions.**

### Overall Pattern in Obedience

- *Little things mean a lot to God*

- Micah 6:8 repeated in N.T. idea of:

- *"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. Luke 16:10 and cref. Matt. 25—not everyone gets a "well done"*

- OT emphasis on all of life,  
OT laws show God's care for the details of life

- Always emphasis on virtues  
of love, kindness, mercy,  
not power or pride

**God is not impressed with big things if not done in His will and His way**

- *Contrast with Matt. 7<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*

- **Little habits of life and work show what is truly in our hearts**

- Navigator's emphasis on life disciples  
foundation of spiritual discipline

- Habits can be changed for good—never  
easy, but possible

- \*\*\*SOMETIMES hardest to be kind in little  
areas

**Good behavior is not the way to salvation,  
but God's people should show they  
are His**

- Israel was God's chosen people, covenant  
people

- This is how they were supposed to live

- Or he would cast them out

- A Christian is God's child

- He expects us to live according to his  
standards

- Always a tension and challenge—

- **Phil 2:12: Continue to work out your  
salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God  
who works in you to will and to act in order to  
fulfill his good purpose.**

- Let's look at God's expectations in Micah  
6:8

### To act justly

- *'asah "act" "to do" KJV*

- **1)** to do, fashion, accomplish, make

- **1)** to do, work, make, produce

- מִשְׁפָּט "justly" *mishpat*

- **1)** judgment, justice, ordinance

- **b)** justice, right, rectitude (attributes of God  
or man)

- **e)** right, privilege, due (legal)

- **f)** proper, fitting, measure, fitness, custom,  
manner, plan

- **Application**

- Beyond thinking it is a good idea, actually  
**doing something, doing what is right, aligned  
with the attributes of God**—all actions in line with  
God's laws

- \*\*\*ALSO for ALL People

### Acting Justly—a way of life, not a singular action

- **Contrasted with** *tsēdaqah* usually  
translated "justice" means righteous

- **Mishpat in contrast, has to do with ALL  
God's laws**

- **Leviticus 18:4(KJV)**Ye shall do my  
judgments, (*mishpat*) and keep mine ordinances, to  
walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Ye shall  
therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments:  
which if a man do, **he shall live in them:** I am the  
LORD.

- The idea also is that justice is for ALL  
people, not just the rich and powerful

- Care about that was/is to distinguish God's  
People

## Additional notes on Justice

- **Biblical justice** involves making individuals, communities, and the cosmos whole, by upholding both goodness and impartiality. It stands at the center of true religion, according to James, who says that the kind of "religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" ([James 1:27](#)). Earlier Scripture says, "The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern" ([Prov. 29:7](#)).
- Justice flows from God's heart and character. As true and good, God seeks to make the object of his holy love whole. This is what motivates God throughout the Old and New Testaments in his judgments on sin and injustice. These judgments are both individual and corporate in scope.

## Justice and peace

- One of the clearest and most holistic words for justice is the Hebrew *shalom*, which means both "justice" and "peace." Shalom includes "wholeness," or everything that makes for people's well being, security, and, in particular, the restoration of relationships that have been *broken*.
- Justice, therefore, is about *repairing* broken relationships both with other people and to structures — of courts and punishments, money and economics, land and resources, and kings and rulers.
- <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2010/summer/biblicaljustice.html>

## To love mercy

**"I desire mercy, not sacrifice" Matt. 12:7**

- **1) אהבה love'ahabah**
  - a) human love for human object
- **1) of man toward man**
- **2) of man toward himself**
- **3) between man and woman**
- **4) sexual desire**
- **2) God's love to His people**
- **חֶסֶד mercy checed**
  - **1) goodness, kindness, faithfulness**

## Other places used

- **Genesis 29:20** So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

- **Deuteronomy 7:8** But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

## How we are to love mercy, kindness?

- With the same intensity that Jacob loved Rachel and served 7 years for her.
- With the same passion the Lord loved his people and redeemed them.
- Loving as Hosea loved
- Loving mercy in this way goes far beyond tolerating the sins and irritations of others.
- From passive to active actions for their good.

## Verses on Mercy

- **Characteristic of God: Deuteronomy 7:9** therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant **and mercy** with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;
- **A source of our help: Psalm 59:16** I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of **thy mercy** in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.
- **Required if we want mercy: James 2:13** Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.
- **Part of wise living: Proverbs 3:3** Let not **mercy and truth** forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
- Reminds of us of the description of us, Eph. 4:15 on "speaking the truth in love."
- Without mercy, God's covenant, his power, his laws and his truth can be unbearably harsh

## To walk humbly

- **1) ahabah to go, walk, come**
  - **1) to go, walk, come, depart, proceed, move, go away**
  - **2) live, manner of life b) to lead, bring, lead away, carry, cause to walk**
- **tsana` צַנַּע Humbly**
  - **1) to be humble, be modest, be lowly**
  - **a) to show humility**
    - **2) modest**

**Walking is active, intentional, continual—with consequences**

- **A way of life toward, away from or with God**

- Negative examples
- **Ps 78: 10** They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;
- **Psalm 89:30** <sup>30-33</sup> If his children forsake my law, and **walk** not in my judgments; <sup>31</sup>If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; (results of that walk)Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

**Walk, positive examples**

- **Genesis 5:22** *And Enoch walked with God* after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:
- **Genesis 6:9** These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and *Noah walked with God.*
- **Genesis 17:1** And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, *I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

**We should Walk HUMBLY**

- **What does walking humbly mean? What does humility mean?**
- Often misunderstood
- Contrast with Pride—see C.S. Lewis
- *The vice I am talking of is Pride or Self-Conceit: and the virtue opposite to it, in Christian morals, is called Humility. You may remember, when I was talking about sexual morality, I warned you that the centre of Christian morals did not lie there. Well, now, we have come to the centre. According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind. . . . .*
- *Essentially competitive.....*
- *As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.*
- *That raises a terrible question. How is it that people who are quite obviously eaten up with Pride can say they believe in God and appear to*

*themselves very religious? I am afraid it means they are worshipping an imaginary God.*

- *True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.*

**Active godliness a distinctive of the Christian faith**

- **In contrast: Deepak Chopra (and the teachers who influenced him) believe:** “Saintliness becomes realistic by seeing it as a state of higher consciousness.”
- Micah 6:8
- **KEY on all –not just that we understand the words, but we live them**
- “act justly” act in line with ALL of God’s law for all people
- “love” mercy—as intensely as romantic love, we should care about being kind to others
- “walk” humbly—a way of life, understanding who God is and walking worthy in response to it

**Conclusion—God wants us to live the lessons learned**

- Knowing the history of prophets and Israel is (I trust) interesting and instructive
- But far more important is to get behind the stories to what they show us about what is important to our Lord
- Micah 6:8 such a good summary
- Challenge this week to take time to pray, journal, plan how you can put those commands into practice—you know what you are supposed to do—now do it.