



e - Votion

Dear Friends,

Today I am reading Micah 6:1-8:

Hear what the Lord says:

*Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.*

*Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth;
for the Lord has a controversy with his people,
and he will contend with Israel.*

'O my people, what have I done to you?

In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

*For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of
slavery;*

and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

*O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of
Beor answered him,*

*and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the
Lord.'*

'With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old?

*Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of
oil?*

*Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my
soul?'*

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to
do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*



I love this familiar passage from Micah. "What does the Lord require but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" In today's world we hear a lot about the bottom line. How much will it cost--what is the bottom line? But what is the bottom line with regard to our faith? What is the very basic, non-negotiable, fundamental that we can say with confidence, "This is it. This is what matters--the bottom line?" That's what Micah was asking, "What is it that the Lord wants from me?" He wondered if burnt offerings were what God most wanted. Maybe God would be happier if he gave up a child. God doesn't want either one of those things, what God wants, Micah

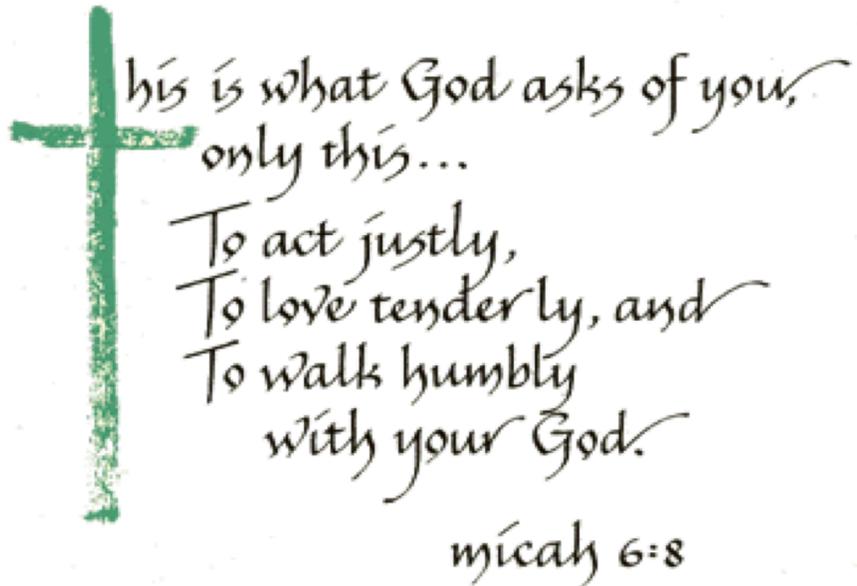
discovered, is me! For me to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with GOD." Micah (and the ancient people of Israel) thought God wanted "something" from them. But through the eyes of faith they saw that what God most wants us a commitment from ourselves, a commitment of our hearts. And these three things provide the framework for the rest of our faith, for how to live as Christians. I want to define these three things a little bit today:

To do Justice means that we work for the equity for all people, most especially those who are voiceless and powerless in our world. One person put it like this: "Going to church on Sunday is no good unless your religion makes you honest on Monday. The money in your offering plate is money I don't want if it comes from ill-gotten gain. The anthems you sing make me sick, unless you are living in harmony with the Lord. If the person who raises the tune at Sunday school also raises the roof at home, if the person who offers long prayers in worship is also the person who makes the lives of employees miserable

the rest of the week, then I despise your covered dish suppers and I take no delight in your dignified services of worship. Let civil rights roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Sometimes its easier for us to say that what happens in the world, in society, business, politics, or even at home has nothing to do with the church. The church's job is to save souls and help needy people. Jesus makes it very clear that it is part of our service to help provide food and clothing to those in need, but even more to work to prevent the conditions that cause the needy circumstances. The Prince of Peace calls us to partner with him to work for a just and lasting peace in the world. It is our task to comfort those who are victims of violence, but also to eliminate the underlying causes of senseless violence in our homes and on our streets. Justice involves us as individuals and as corporate bodies bearing witness to the love of Jesus Christ for ALL people.

Love Kindness --the Hebrew word translated here as kindness- means love with a strong element of loyalty. The kind of love/kindness between friends. This love is a love that never quits. It is not the love of television soap operas or Harlequin romances. This love calls us to love others the very same way that God loves us in Jesus Christ. This is not possible to do by ourselves, but occurs when we allow the Spirit of God to live in our hearts, and we are then able to love even those who hurt us deeply. With this kind of loving kindness, incredible things happen! A love that never quits.

Walk humbly with God- this kind of walk means that our whole lives are centered around a daily walk of faith. Jesus invited the disciples to follow, and Jesus asks us to follow, to come after him, to walk with him. We are not exempt from the dark places of life, but we live daily with the assurance that we never walk alone! When we take this walk with Jesus, we are able to grasp a bit of the greatness of God we know in Jesus Christ. Martin Luther King Jr. puts it like this: " The greatness of God lies in the fact that God is both tough-minded and tender-hearted. God has qualities of austerity and of gentleness. The Bible expresses God's tough mindedness in his justice, and God's tenderness in his love and grace. God has two outstretched arms. One is strong enough to surround us with justice, and one is gentle enough to embrace us with grace. I am thankful we worship a God who is both tough-minded and tender-hearted. If God were only tough-minded, God would be a cold, passionless despot sitting in some far-off heaven. But if God were only tender-hearted, he would be too soft and



sentimental to function when things go wrong. Thank the Lord for a God who is tough-minded enough to transcend the world and yet tenderhearted enough to live in it!"

All that to explain the bottom line!

Please pray:

- Please pray for those who are cold, stranded, hungry, homeless, in this treacherous weather. I have a friend who is a high-school teacher in Atlanta. She and some other teachers along with 175 students spent the night at their school last night! Many, many others we don't know are in dangerous situations!
- Please pray for Helen Billings, at JCMC. She fell and broke her hip, and is recuperating.
- Please pray for Nellie Gover, our oldest member at 102.
- Please pray for Calvin Garland who is recuperating at home.
- Please pray for Peggy Jones, Sharon Cradic's mother.

Calendar:

- This Sunday starts our church-wide mission focus for February. Everyone is invited to participate during the Sunday school hour to meet visiting missionaries from our area who have served in various mission efforts. This will begin at 9:15 each Sunday in the fellowship hall. A light breakfast of muffins and doughnuts and coffee will be served.
- Wednesday February 5: Grace Team following Wed niter.
- Thursday Feb 6, Leadership Pillar, Finance, and Spiritual Development Pillar.
- Sunday Feb 9, SPR 5:30.

"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

-- St Francis of Assisi

Blessings,

Jane Taylor
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