



## Sermon, Sunday January 29, 2023

### “How to Live the Life God Wants You to Live?”

**SCRIPTURE: Micah 6:1-8** <sup>1</sup> Hear what the LORD says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. <sup>2</sup> Hear, you mountains, the case of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the LORD has a case against his people, and he will contend with Israel. <sup>3</sup> “O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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.” <sup>6</sup> “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? <sup>7</sup> Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” <sup>8</sup> 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?

#### **Introduction: Do we want to live the life the Lord wants us to live?**

Human beings who live away from the Lord live by relying on what they own rather than relying on the Lord. People who have learned a lot rely on knowledge, while people who have a lot of money depend on money, and people who have a lot of talent depend on their talent. However, the Lord wants us to absolutely rely on Him rather than knowledge, money, or talent. Yet we do not know this and turn away from the Lord's heart.

There are times when I think of my parents in the process of raising my children. In fact, as a son, I am very ashamed I was not able to take good care of my parents' hearts. Because, in many cases, I treated my parents solely from my point of view rather than from their point of view.

In today's text, the Israelites, who did not take good care of the Lord's position, acted according to their own position and thoughts. Today's text, Micah chapter 6, tells us what the Lord truly wants from us. To live a happy life, we must live a life that the Lord wants, not a life that follows our own perspective and thoughts.

Prophet Micah prophesied the word of the Lord to all the people in Samaria, the capital of northern Israel, and Jerusalem, the capital of southern Judah, from the 8th to the 7th century BC. In the era when the prophet Micah was active, the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by Assyria, and the southern kingdom of Judah was also facing many difficulties. Like the prophets Hosea and Amos, who were active at the same time, Micah rebuked the Israelites for their great sins before the Lord.

The Israelites listened to the prophet Micah and asked what they could do to be forgiven. Further, the Israelites asked if they were to offer a burnt offering of calves, rams, or even their firstborn for forgiveness of their sins.

By the way, the prophet Micah said 'No' to these questions of the Israelites, and he shows the Israelites a completely different way.

**The prophet Micah says three things the Lord wants from us in today's text 6:8: “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?”**



Like this verse, what the Lord wants from us is not a burnt offering, but a righteous life in our daily life. Let's look at the three lives the Lord asks of us.

Body: Three lives the Lord wants for us

**First, the Lord calls us to practice justice in our lives.** What the Lord requires of us above all else is to do **justice (mishpat)**. Justice here is not abstract, but it is the fulfilling of our responsibilities within the community. In this way justice guarantees each person's rights in the community. After all, doing justice means that we actively work for the well-being and peace of the community.

Last week our country experienced two very tragic events. There was a mass shooting in California. Two students were killed, and a teacher injured in a shooting in downtown Des Moines. In the face of these tragic events, we must seriously think about what we can do for the well-being and peace of the community and fulfill our responsibilities.

In fact, the Bible makes it clear how thoroughly the Old Testament prophets considered matters of justice. **Amos 5:24 of the Old Testament says, “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”** And the prophet Micah describes the Israelites who do not do justice in Micah chapters 2 and 3 as saying, **“The strong oppress the weak (2:1-2,8-9, 3:1-3,9-10), and the laborers exploited (3:10), and the courts are stained with corruption and depravity (3:11)”**. So to do justice in our lives is to try to establish fairness for all people, especially the weak.

In fact, the fact that the Old Testament prophets spoke of justice toward the Israelites shows that Israel was not righteous. If the well-being and peace of our society are broken, then our society is not just.

The Lord we believe in is the one who clearly judges right and wrong. We must not forget that the Lord is watching our lives closely, not only within the church but also within the world. Then, what is the second life the Lord requires of us?

**Second, the Lord tells us to “to love mercy”.** Mercy is the Hebrew '**Chesed**', the central word in the Old Testament book of Hosea. This '**Chesed**' is used in various meanings, but when this word is applied to human relationships with the Lord, it refers to love accompanied by strong loyalty.

The mercy means the solidarity between God and human beings as well as the bond between human beings. There are two aspects to this mercy.

First, a merciful person forgives the sins of others. A merciful person always remembers that the Lord has forgiven their sins, so they can forgive others when they sin against them. Also, a benevolent person is a person who takes pity on the less fortunate and helps them. In other words, since I also received the Lord's help in difficult times, I live with the mindset of helping the unfortunate.

I hope that you and I have such a benevolent life. Then, what is the third form of life that the Lord requires of us?

**Third, to walk humbly with the Lord.** The Lord requires us to live and walk carefully with Him in our daily lives. A passage that shows this kind of life more clearly is Micah 4:5, where **it says, “For all people will walk everyone in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.”** This verse makes it clear that all people act in the name of their own gods (idols), but the actions of the Israelites depend on the Lord.

Furthermore, the phrase **“to walk humbly with your God”** in Micah 6:8 is also evident in Enoch's walk with God in Genesis 5:24. **Genesis 5:24 says, “Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.”**



After all, the words “**to walk humbly with your God**” mean that we should live consciously; that our entire lives are related to the Lord. When we live with this mindset, we become responsible for the power of the Lord over us, and we humbly and voluntarily obey this power.

**Conclusion: May we be those who respond to the Lord's request.**

Now let's summarize today's message. The Lord calls us to speak for justice, to speak up for the helpless, to care for the wounded and those in need. Also, for such a life, He commands us to accompany Him in all areas of our lives.

I'll tell you an interesting story. One day, an old couple went to their daughter's house. The daughter carefully prepared food for her parents as a special treat since they had not visited for so long. Afterwards, the daughter's parents returned to their homes.

A very close friend from the neighborhood visited and asked the couple if they had a good time at their daughter's house. The couple said to their friend that among the food dishes carefully prepared by their daughter, they did not find their favorite food, and they could not eat properly because of their bad teeth.

The daughter who treated her parents with sincerity did not know what her parents really wanted. Our lives are like this. What does the Lord really want and rejoice in our lives? The prophet Micah speaks today. What the Lord wants from us is to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with the Lord. I hope we all respond well to the Lord's request for us.

