



**What's Required?
Micah 6:8
Westport Christian Church
April 18, 2010**

"What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 2)

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Matt 16:26 "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2) "Lord, is it I?" (Mark 14).

These are just a few of the many great questions in the Bible. Questions that I feel are just as important today as they were many years ago and I feel we must answer today.

Here is a question, what are some of the problems or situations that we are facing today? Now, if we were to take time out and answer that question, even though each person may have a different answer, it all boils down to how man is treating man and how man is treating God. Back a few years ago there was a man named Micah. Now, Micah was a prophet of God for the downtrodden and exploited people of the Judean society. He prophesied during a time of great social injustice and boldly opposed those who imposed their power upon the poor and weak for selfish ends.

Israel was feeling the heat from the powerful Assyrians. In many ways the people were trying to get back to God in hopes of avoiding Assyrian oppression. They were going through all the religious motions and fulfilling their religious duties. The number of

sacrifices was up a great deal but the Assyrian threat was continuing to get closer and closer. It seemed that nothing they did was helping. Micah's message from the Lord was a judicial one. His message to the people was a subpoena (6:1- plead your case) to appear before the Lord. The Lord was the chief witness against them and He was going to tell them what they needed to do.

It is in the book of Micah that we discover our text for today. "He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8 NASU

"What does the Lord require of us?" That question is one which we should ask ourselves. In fact, it can help us in our walk with the Lord. "What does the Lord require of me?" Am I living according to the way would desire for me to live?

Are you living the way you know you should live? Have you accepted His love and grace? Has sin crept its way back into your life? Are you committed to doing those things God has taught you or have you left off doing them?

According to 1 John 5:7, your freedom from the power and consequence of sin is wholly determined by your commitment to right living. What does the Lord require of me?

I. TO DO JUSTICE

Supreme Court Justice Horace Gray once informed a man who had appeared before him in a lower court and had escaped conviction on a technicality, "I know that you are guilty and you know it, and I wish you to remember that one day you will stand before a better and wiser Judge, and that there you will be dealt with according to justice and not according to law." Surprised while burgling a house in Antwerp, Belgium, the thief fled out the back door, clambered over a nine-foot wall, dropped down the other side, and found himself in the city prison. (Oops: The Book of Blunders, 1980)

Micah had a special concern for justice, primarily because he saw so little of it. Everyone had turned to his own way and was doing what was right in their own eyes. What God requires of us is that we do what is right and fair in our relationships with other people. Justice involves a standard of equality among people. It can be as simple as being honest in even the smallest routine business transaction.

Micah, the prophet complained about the person who uses "dishonest scales, with a bag of false weights." (Micah 6:11) There is an old saying, "honesty is the best policy." But for the Christian, that slogan should be, "honesty is the ONLY policy." Because this is a consistent theme in all of Scripture --we are called to be people of fairness and integrity in all our dealings.

In Proverbs 4:23 we read, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring all the issues of life."

Do what is right and what is good. My habit or lifestyle should be to do justice. Justice is the keeping of God's laws with how we treat one other people, both inside the church and out. God wants us to practice living right and do right things from a right heart. What does the Lord require of me?

II. TO LOVE KINDNESS

Kindness is often translated "loving kindness." It is mercy and compassion. Literally it means to favor another with pity or compassion. The Hebrew word that Micah uses here is a rich one, used variously as mercy, tenders mercies, loving kindness, steadfast love. It is a word that is most often used in a covenant sense, involving the attitude of two parties who are in covenantal relationship with one another.

In relation to God's mercy, it is used most often of His grace, or of UNEXPECTED kindness. Notice also that the requirement here is not that we HAVE mercy, but that we are to LOVE mercy and express it to others. There is a big difference between the two. One way of describing the difference is to say that we don't just do acts of kindness from a sense of obedience or compulsion, but we do them out of love.

Mamie Adams always went to a branch post office in her town because the postal employees there were friendly. She went there to buy stamps just before Christmas one year and the lines were particularly long. Someone pointed out that there was no need to wait in line because there was a stamp machine in the lobby. "I know," said Mamie, 'but the machine won't ask me about my arthritis.' (Bits and Pieces, December, 1989, p. 2)

This concept which we must understand means putting yourself in the other persons' place. Kindness is to be sorry for another and to suffer along side of them. It means to deliberately plan to give yourself in an act of kindness to another. That is exactly what God has done over and over to people and to us.

Kindness gives where no giving is required, it acts when no action is deserved, and it penetrates both our attitudes and our actions. You can be totally right doctrinally, but miss the real need to care for people if you do not have love and kindness. (I Cor. 13)

It is God's will for His children to LOVE mercy

1. We do this by sharing His grace, not judgment.
2. We do this by sharing His forgiveness, not blame.
3. We do this by sharing His patience, not irritations.
4. We do this by sharing His kindness, not our harshness.
5. We do this by showing Him holiness, not our fleshliness.

What does the Lord require of me?

III TO WALK HUMBLY WITH GOD

Did you notice that when Micah tells us what God expects, the first two things He expects has nothing to do with our relationship to Him? They have to do with how we behave toward one another. God expects His children to love and get along with one another. He expects His children to treat one another justly and fairly, and He expects His children to love mercy and to show kindness toward one another. But this third expectation which Micah shares is that God expects us to have a right relationship with Him – with God Himself. Our walk is how we live our daily life in relationship with God. It is a lifestyle. God wants more than just lip service. He wants more than rituals or sacrifices or some outward display of religion. We must be alert to God's authority and aware of what He would have us do. True faith is not in a ritual, but in a relationship. True faith is based upon your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Walking humbly means, we are submissive to God. To be submissive means that we follow the Lord according to His will not ours. We are willing and must surrender all to Him. Not, just on Sunday, not just when we are having a bad day and need something, but constantly seeking His will for our life through submission to His Leadership. It means that we are in a partnership with Him.

“And to walk humbly . . . implies progress in our spiritual growth for Him. Psalm 32:8 (NLT) The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.” God can only guide and direct your pathway if you are walking with Him. Let me ask you some questions. Is God truly active in your life, or is He some sort of abstract influence upon you? Is your relationship with God personal, emotional, and intimately passionate – or is your relationship with God mechanical and business like? Are you true to God's Lordship in every area of your lives?

Unless we are walking humbly with God, doing justice and loving kindness just won't happen. God knows the thoughts and intents of our hearts. The focus is shifted from substance, from acts of worship to the life of the worshiper, from ritual to character.

CONCLUSION: So what does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God! We have a tendency like Israel did to respond to our need for repentance and forgiveness by increasing our religious activities and think that will do the job. But it won't. We can devote 24/7 to doing religious things but we won't be any closer to the Lord. "The kingdom of God is not going to advance by our church becoming filled with people, but by people in our church becoming filled with God."

It seems a very small boy was sent out on the streets of New York City to sell apples. Some other boys with a real streak of meanness ran around a corner and knocked the

boy and his apple cart for a loop. A man came by at that time and helped the boy get up and then picked up his cart and helped set the apples in place. He then bought several of the damaged apples from the boy and gave him a large tip in addition to paying for the apples. As he walked away he was startled to hear the boy call out, "Hey mister, are you Jesus?"

So here we have it. What God requires of us is spelled out plainly. We must do justice or what is right in the Lords sight. We must love kindness and treat people the way we would want to be treated. We must walk humbly with God submitting to His Lordship of our lives. Will you meet these requirements? If you will, there will be a real change in your life and in the life of our church.

AMEN