

HE HATH SHEWED THEE, O MAN, WHAT IS GOOD—AND WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THEE!

Please take your Bibles and turn again to the book of Micah, chapter 6. Follow along as I read Micah 6:1-8. We will be focusing on vs 8 this morning, but before doing that I want to review what we looked at last week.

In the way of background, the year is 735 B.C. The nation of Israel has been a divided nation for roughly 200 years. Although Micah lived in the *southern* kingdom, his words were directed to both the *northern and southern* kingdoms. He was a contemporary of the prophets Hosea, Amos, Jonah, and Isaiah.

The spiritual state of both kingdoms was characterized *by idolatry*. God, through the prophets, was warning them that judgment was coming.

1. In verses 1-2, we see an *invitation from God* to His people. He has a controversy against them and is “taking them to court,” so to speak. God is going to present to them the evidence showing they are guilty, then give them an opportunity to defend themselves.

In vs 3, the invitation is even more specific. He tenderly calls them “*His people*,” then challenges them to show Him what *He has done wrong*—and what He has *required of them* that is so unreasonable that it has “wearied them.” Amazing thought, isn’t it? God asking His people to *file complaints* against Him!

In vs 4-5, God reminds them of the care He has demonstrated toward them as a nation. What was their response? How did they defend themselves? *They didn’t!*

2. Instead—in verses 6-7—we see an *inquiry by the people*. They ask 4 questions—2 in vs 6; 2 in vs 7. At first glance, it seems they are willing to *offer anything* to be forgiven for their sins. But as we exam the questions more closely, the questions they ask actually lead to more questions.

--Do they *really intend* to offer thousands of rams—or ten thousands of *rivers* of oil?

--Do they *really believe* God would ask for the literal sacrifice of their firstborn?

--And are they *really confused* as to what God requires—and how to please Him?

Their questions—I believe—demonstrate two attitudes.

1) First, them pretending that they didn’t *know how* to worship God—and what pleased Him—*wasn’t confusion or doubt!* Instead, I believe it was a cover for their *disobedience!* Vs 8 says, “He *hath shewed thee*”—past tense—meaning they already knew. They *knew* what God required—they just *didn’t want to do* what God required!

2) A second, closely-related attitude is this—they believed God was more concerned with *the external* than He was about *the internal!* They were willing—or so it seemed—to give any thing and every thing to God—*except themselves!* They wanted to give *God things*—but He wanted *their hearts!* They knew that is what God wanted from the teaching of Moses in Deut 10:12—and from the teaching of David in the Ps 51.

Psalm 51:16-17 “For thou *desirest not sacrifice*; else would I give it: thou *delightest not in burnt offering*.
¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a *broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart*, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

God hasn’t changed since this was written 2700-plus years ago—and *neither have people!* We *still pretend* we don’t know what God wants—and we *still try* to give God everything but our hearts!

Let’s consider first...**1. The revelation from God**

Notice again vs 8 “*He hath shewed thee, O man...*”

Who is the “He?” *God*, right? How do we know? Because vs 6 is talking *about coming before the LORD*—and bowing before the “high God”—and because vs 7 is talking about *pleasing the LORD*, it is pretty safe to say that the “He” in the beginning of vs 8 is God!

What did *God do*? “He [God] *hath shewed...*” God has *shown* something; He has *revealed* something. Like I mentioned just a few minutes ago, it is past tense—it is something that had previously been revealed.

To whom has God revealed? “He hath shewed thee, **O man...**” Does that **leave out ladies**? Obviously not!

--“O man” refers to us—**all of us**—mankind in general, **not men** (males) in particular.

What did God reveal? In v 8, we see **two things** God has shown us: what is good—and what the Lord requires.

First...**A. God has shown us what is good**

Does God **know** what is good? **Of course!** **How** does God know what is good?

--God knows what is good because **He is** good.

--God knows what is good **for us** because **He created us**—and knows us better than we know ourselves!

--And God knows what is good **for us** because **He is All-knowing**—and we are not!

Mentally...logically...very few of us would say out-loud that **God makes mistakes**.

--We would not say that **God is wrong** about things.

--We would not say that **God doesn't know** what He is talking about.

--And we would not say that **we know better** than God.

Yet in practice, we **act like** we believe **the exact opposite**—just like Eve did!

--Eve doubted **God's love**—and believed God was **keeping good things from her**—just like we sometimes do!

--Eve doubted **God's wisdom**—and didn't believe there was a **good reason to obey Him**—just like we sometimes do!

--And Eve doubted **God's Word** and did not think God would **punish her for disobedience**—just like we sometimes do!

God knows what is good...and God **shows** us what is good—yet it is so hard for us **to do** what He says is good!

God not only shows us **what is good**, **B. God has shown us what is required**

Can God require things of us? Of course, He can! **Why?**

Because He is our Creator...and our Judge...and our Redeemer...and the Sovereign Ruler over every thing and every person. And because of that, God has the right to **demand** certain things from us.

Does that thought **make you bristle**? It shouldn't—but often times it does! Our sin nature shouts from within us: “I will not have this man reign over me!”

But our **new nature** within us—which we have if we are born again—says, “We love Him because He first loved us” (I John 4:9). Our new nature says, “I am bought with a price—therefore I'm going to glorify God” (I Cor 6:20). And our new nature says, “...they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them, and rose again” (II Cor 5:15).

What are some of the requirements God has shown us?

An obvious one—and I would argue the **most important one**—is that God has shown us **His requirements** to get into **His heaven!**

--It is **His** heaven, isn't it? How often puny, sinful man forgets that!

--And God does **have the right** to set the requirements, doesn't He? To deny that—to think or say, ‘I have **the right** to tell God how I should get into **His** heaven’—is the epitome of pride! And yet, many do that!

--Thankfully, God has **revealed to us what His requirements are**.

What is **God's requirement** for us to gain entrance into heaven? There is really only **one**. What is it?

--We have to be **perfect**...we have to be **sin-free**...we have to be **sinless!**

That means if **we sin only once**, we are **disqualified!** And since “there is none righteous; no, not one” (Rom 3:10) and “...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23) ...and “there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not (Eccl 7:20), **all of us are disqualified!**

--But God has provided a way for the **condemned** to be cleared!

--He has provided a way for the **guilty** to be declared guilt-free!

--He has provided a way for the **sinful** to be declared sinless!

--He has provided a way for the **unqualified** to become qualified!

What is that way? It's not a “**what**,” is it? It is a “**who**”—and His name is Jesus!

John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: **no man cometh** unto the Father, but by me.”

--We can't get to the Father—meaning heaven—without Jesus.

Acts 4:12 “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is **none other name** under heaven given among men, whereby **we must be saved.**”

--Again, Jesus is the **only One** through which salvation—meaning heaven—can be obtained!

I John 5:12 “He that **hath the Son hath life**; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

--There it is again—we **must have Jesus** in order to have forgiveness and eternal life!

Before we move on, I must ask—how have you responded to God showing you that Jesus is **the only requirement** for heaven? Have you **received** Christ? Is He **yours**? If not, you **do not—and will not**—have **eternal life** in heaven after you die! Your name **will not be** in the book of life and **Rev 20:15** reminds us that “...whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

God has shown us **much more** than the requirement for heaven, though. He has also shown us **how to live** once we become His child. The Bible has much to say about that, but we are going to focus on the 3 in vs 8.

2. The requirements of God

What is the first requirement of God as seen in vs 8? A. To do justly

What does that mean? It means to do that which is just...and proper...and right. I found it interesting that the same Hebrew word that “justly” comes from is used in Gen 18:25 where Abraham—in his conversation with the Lord about Sodom—says, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do **right**?”

A man named Scoggin calls it “justice practicing,” then defines it like this: “The practicing of justice is doing what is right and fair between persons. It means simply treating people like God Himself treats them.” (Faith and Missions, B. Elmo Scoggin; Volume 02:2; Spring 1985).

Others suggest it carries the idea of treating people the way **you want to be treated**—the Golden Rule.

Luke 6:31 “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”

Some of the sins listed in this book—like stealing each other’s land and houses and using deceitful weights in their buying and selling—wouldn’t have been done if they treated people the way they want to be treated!

What about you? Do you do right? Are you fair in how you deal with people? Do you treat people the way you want to be treated?

There’s a second thing that God requires, and it is this: B. To love mercy

What is mercy? Mercy—in regard to our relationship to God—is God **withholding judgment** that we deserve.

Why should we love mercy? Because God’s mercy and love is **what moved Him to come to earth** in the person of Christ—and **provide Himself** as the sacrifice and payment for our sins! If you are a child of God, you are saved because of the **mercy of God!** **Titus 3:5** “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but **according to His mercy He saved us...**”

What will loving mercy **look like**? Three things: 1) We will be grateful for—and humbled by—God’s mercy to us. 2) We will want others to know how they can be a receiver of God’s mercy. 3) We will be merciful to others. Eph 4:32 reminds us that we should be “tender-hearted, forgiving one another.” Why? Because God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us! Since the **perfect, sin-hating God has forgiven us**, we certainly ought to be willing to forgive a fellow, fallen sinner like us!

There’s a third thing that is good—and that God requires of us—and that is... C. To walk humbly with thy God

First, let’s consider... **i. What does it mean to walk humbly with God?**

“To walk” with God is **not** referring to the activity of moving from point “a” to point “b”—one step at a time—at a pace that is slower than a run! Probably the easiest way to think of it is “**live**”—to “live humbly” with thy God. It is a way of life—a manner of living—that encompasses **all of our daily activities**: waking/sleeping; walking/sitting; working/resting; eating/drinking, and so on. It means being aware of God’s presence every day of the week—regardless of **what we are doing** and **where we are**.

Much more could be said, but I believe we struggle more with **cultivating humility** than we do **understanding** humility. So how do we do it? How do we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God?

ii. How do we cultivate humility?

First off, please understand that I am not **claiming to be** a “humility expert”—or **an example** of someone who walks humbly with God. **I want** to walk humbly with God, but by no means have I “arrived.” God consistently, insistently, and persistently keeps working on me about it, though, for which I am extremely thankful! **Second**—because there are fellow believers who have traveled down this road farther than I—there is undoubtedly some better “how to’s” than what I am about to give you. If you know of some, please let me know. Also, please know I am not putting these in the order of step 1, 2, 3. They are all equally important.

1) You **must commune** with your **own heart**—and you must **commune with God** about your heart!

Ps 4:4 “Stand in awe, and sin not: **commune with your own heart upon your bed**, and be still. Selah.”

What does it mean to “commune with your own heart”? It means to **talk to yourself about yourself!** It means to **examine** yourself; to meditate upon your actions and attitudes. It requires time—and being still!

But as mentioned a couple of weeks ago, we dare not **rely on** just **our self-examination**—we need **God** to search us! Remember what David said in **Psalm 139:23-24** “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴ And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

2) You must **compare yourself** to God’s Word. Our standard—how we measure ourselves—has to be **what God says** in His Word. God through Paul reminds us that “...they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (II Cor 10:12).

We can always find someone that—in our opinion—is less “spiritual” than we are! We can compare ourselves to them and feel pretty good about ourselves. But **they** are **not the standard**—God’s Word is! God’s Word is what we are measured by—not other people!

Here’s an example of what I mean by comparing yourself to God’s Word.

I Tim 2:1-2 says that I am to pray for those that are in authority—meaning our government leaders. I don’t do that nearly often enough.

I Tim 4:12 says I am to be an example of the believers—but a lot of times I’m not! I’m not as patient with my wife as I should be sometimes—as Art and Don can attest to from our Ark trip!

I Tim 4:16 says I am to “Take heed unto thyself.” Sadly, pastors—including yours—can neglect their own heart and spiritual health just as easily as a non-pastor can!

3) We must **confess our sin** to God when He brings it to our attention. Pretty safe to say that if we are **unwilling to confess our sin**, we are not walking humbly with God. **I John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Another confession we need to make to God is that **we can’t do what God asks us to do**—in our own strength! We can “go through the motions” of doing what He wants but notice Jesus’ words in **John 15:5** “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” **Just as a branch can do nothing** if it is severed from the main stem and roots, we can do nothing apart from Christ!

God is “okay” with us recognizing our need for Him. In fact, He delights in it!

I Cor 15:10 “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but **I laboured more abundantly** than they all: **yet not I, but the grace of God** which was with me.”

II Cor 3:5 “Not that we are **sufficient** of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our **sufficiency is of God;**” **Phil 4:13** “I can do all things **through Christ** which strengtheneth me.”

4) **Consider** what happens in your life as being orchestrated by God. How do you react **when trials come** into your life? Pride often leads to anger—and complaining against God. Listen to God’s response when we question what He is doing. **Romans 9:20** “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?”

Humility, on the other hand, recognizes that God is always working to make us holy—not necessarily happy.

Notice the 2nd half of **Psalm 55:19** “Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.”

Interesting verse, isn't it? I take it to mean that people **often don't fear God** the way they should because life just keeps “rolling along.”

So God **brings changes**—I call them “attention-getters”—into our life so that we will properly fear Him. Don't mistake the motive behind what God is doing! **Hebrews 12:6** “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

Lastly... 5) **Commit** to living a humble, God-fearing life. **Why** does it take commitment? Because it won't happen by accident! It won't happen without us wanting it to happen.

What happens if we **don't commit** to a life of humility? We will live a life of pride—and “God resisteth the proud!”

What happens if we **do commit** to living a life of humility? Will it be worth it? God says it is **good** so yes, it will be worth it! It is not only good, though—it is required; it is demanded.

So will you choose to obey—and have God's **assistance**; or disobey—and have God's **resistance**?

We can choose to disobey—but we can't choose the consequences for doing so!

So what does God want us to do with what we've heard this morning?

1. First, God has revealed to us what is required for entrance into heaven—His Son, Jesus Christ. Do you have the Son? We must possess Him; He must be ours! Has there been a time in your life when you transferred your trust Jesus and Jesus alone for the forgiveness of your sins? If not, you need to do that!

2. Besides becoming a child of God, what else does God want us to do?

--Walk humbly with Him, right! Are you doing that?

I've given you a few thoughts **on how** to do that, but God Himself will show you if you commit to walking humbly with Him.

Will you do that? What a wonderful way to start out the year—making a commitment to God to walk humbly with Him!