

God's Justice Includes Mercy - Micah 6:1-7:20

Introduction

- Our life is filled with questions: Questions we ask and questions we answer. As I was raising my kids the one question that drove me crazy was “*Are we there yet?*” Have you ever have that experience? You would think that when we were somewhere it would be obvious and since we weren’t there yet that is also obvious.
- Some of you have asked me how my grandson is doing? Well his picture was on national TV this last week, April 1, when his mom held up his picture during **Let's Make a Deal**. Why was his picture held up? Well, that is obvious because his parents were on the show. This was pretty exciting for them, for Rachel, our daughter in law won a trip to Australia. Then she was selected for the Big Deal of the Day. She had to give up the trip, but she had the opportunity to gain more and Aaron our son said it was okay. She picked door #3, because there were now three people in her family. They opened one door and there was an entertainment center. Then they opened the other door and there was a motorcycle and she started jumping up and down. Why? She had won the Big Deal – a trip to Singapore and a new car!

Lesson

- Life is full of questions. Our passage before us today is Micah 6-7 and there are two important questions it asks: (1) **Who is a God like You?** in 7:18 and (2) **What does the Lord require of you?** in 6:8. That is our outline for today.
- **Point #1:** Who is a God like You?
 - Fourteen times the name “**LORD**” or “**YAWEH**” is used, six times “**God**” or “**Elohim**” is used, and 31 times He is referenced by the a **pronoun**. God is central to this passage. It is important that we should focus on Him and what He is like.
 - J. I. Packer in his book **Knowing God** states, *The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place, and life in it a disappointing and unpleasant business, for those who do not know about God. Disregard the study of God, and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul.* □-□ Packer
 - Knowing God is one of the key things we should focus on in our lives. **Jer. 9:23-24** states *Thus says the Lord, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the Lord.*
 - If we want to understand the purpose of life and to understand God we have to study God and be aware of who He is and what He wants from us. So, “Who is a God like Me?” There is no other God out there and there is no other being out there that can claim to be God. So, What is our God like? The passage before us has many different examples of God’s character and actions. Let’s look at these...
 - (a) God provides for the needs of His people
 - **Micah 6:3-4** *My people, what have I done to you, and how have I wearied you? Answer Me. Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt and ransomed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam. My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled and what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and from Shittim to Gilgal, so that you might know the righteous acts of the Lord.*
 - God had rescued His people from slavery in Egypt, helped them conquer the nations in and around the Promised Land. He had taken care of His people. He was there for them every step of the way. How did they thank Him? They questioned His provision and grew tired of Him.
 - As has been mentioned again and again this year the people of Judah and Israel were a morally corrupt people. Dr. Charles Feinberg in his commentary on Micah states, *Micah pleads with the people of God*

regarding their moral condition; he appeals both to their heart and their conscience as to why they are against the Lord...God asks the people of Israel to accuse Him if they have any complaint. □-□- Feinberg

- God had provided for Israel every step along the way. He led them, guided them, taught them, fought their battles, and chastised them, and still they sinned and rejected Him. **God's provision should lead us to be thankful, bringing forth praise from our mouths!**
- (b) God pardons the iniquity of His people
- **Micah 7:18** *Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession?*
- Our God has provided the means whereby our sin is removed. We cannot do it on our own. We cannot pay the penalty on our own. He does it. He pardons. He removes our iniquity and our sin. The solution to the problem is only found in Jesus. We have to rely on God to remove our sin; we cannot do it on our own.
- **Rom. 5:8-9** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*
- **There is only one way to have the guilt of our sin removed and that is by the blood of Jesus.**
- (c) God shows loves toward His people
- **Micah 7:18, 20** *...because He delights in unchanging love...You will give truth to Jacob and unchanging love to Abraham*
- God loves us so much and was willing to do anything necessary to bring us to Him. He loves us and has our best interests at heart. We know that this love has also spread to all mankind.
- **John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*
- **1 John 4:7,8** *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*
- **LOVE OF GOD:** A certain medieval monk announced he would be preaching next Sunday evening on "The Love of God." As the shadows fell and the light ceased to come in through the cathedral windows, the congregation gathered. In the darkness of the altar, the monk lighted a candle and carried it to the crucifix. First of all, he illumined the crown of thorns, next, the two wounded hands, then the marks of the spear wound. In the hush that fell, he blew out the candle and left the chancel. There was nothing else to say.
- **God's love is so large that even though we are unloving and sinful, He still loves us!**
- (d) God is righteous and holy and cannot tolerate sin
- **Micah 6:10-13** *Is there yet a man in the wicked house, along with treasures of wickedness and a short measure that is cursed? Can I justify wicked scales and a bag of deceptive weights? For the rich men of the city are full of violence, her residents speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. So also I will make you sick, striking you down, desolating you because of your sins.*
- This section continues listing other sins and their consequences for the nations of Judah and Israel. Sin leads to separation from God. Sin that is not dealt with leads to God's judgment. God is holy and cannot tolerate any sin. For the nations of Judah and Israel it led to their captivity.
- **Lev. 19:44-45** *For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.*
- God brings judgment and discipline in our lives to turn us back to Him. For He is loving and He desires all mankind to be saved. But if we tolerate sin in our lives God brings what He needs to into our lives to turn us fully back to Him.
- *The corruption is, indeed, so widespread and out broken that judgment must follow.* □-□- Feinberg

- **God desires that we set ourselves apart from the world and be holy!**
- (e) God is trustworthy and fulfills His word
- **Micah 7:20** *You will give truth to Jacob and unchanging love to Abraham, which You swore to our forefathers from the days of old.*
- God has made promises and He fulfills His words. He can be trusted for He does as He says. If God has made a promise He will keep His promise. Why do we put our faith in God? Because He says to trust Him with our life and for our salvation. He is faithful and He has proved Himself faithful over and over again.
- **Micah 7:15-16** *“As in the days when you came out from the land of Egypt, I will show you miracles.” Nations will see and be ashamed of all their might. They will put their hand on their mouth; their ears will be deaf.*
- *In the days of general moral and spiritual declension when all others are faithless, God alone can be counted upon to remain faithful. The confidence of the godly must be in the Lord. As for the prophet, speaking representatively for the godly remnant, he would turn his eyes to God and wait for the hour of His deliverance and saving grace. Such confidence the Lord will never disappoint; He will hear the cry and hope of the godly. The restoration of the Lord’s favor is assured His people. □-□ Feinberg*
- **Deu. 7:8-9** *...but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.*
- **God alone is faithful and we can trust Him to fulfill His promises to us.**
- So what have we learned about God? This passage tells us many things, but there are many more things we can learn about God for God is the Creator and Savior. He is the **provider, forgiver, lover, perfect in all ways**, and the **promise keeper**.
- **We need to study who God is and get to know Him. We need to spend time with God, to understand Him, to know what He likes and dislikes, for He has made us for a reason.**
- **Point #2:** What does the Lord require of you?
 - God wants us to know Him. Knowledge of God is not enough and we need to understand that our lives have meaning and a purpose and we have obligations to do what He says based upon who He is. He wants us to be like Him.
 - **2 Cor. 3:17-18** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*
 - (a) God wants a heart sold out to Him
 - **Micah 6:6-7** *With what shall I come to the Lord and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*
 - So what is the problem that Micah is stating? Is what they were doing wrong? No. The problem is not what they were doing but why they were doing it. These verses are very similar to a passage we looked in **Hosea 6:6** *For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.*
 - The prophet Samuel speaking to a rebellious King Saul, **1 Sam. 15:22** *Samuel said, “Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.*

- Earlier Samuel had also said to King Saul, **1 Sam. 13:13-14** *Samuel said to Saul, “You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, for now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.”*
- What do these verses tell us? They tell us that the state of our heart and our commitment to do things God's way is more important than doing things in our ways or desires. God wants us to be completely sold out to Him, 100%.
- *God desires the giving up of the spirit in surrender and not the flesh. God could not be seeking such gifts, for He wants above all else inward conformity to His blessed will.* □-□ **Feinberg**
- **God want us to be 100% sold out to Him in every phase and area of our lives.**
- (b) Gods wants us to be just
- **Micah 6:8** *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice...*
- God has made His will clear to us. He has also told us what brings pleasure to Him. We are called to deal justly with our fellow man. Part of the problem of the sin that Micah references are the totally unjust character of the judges and rulers in dispensing justice to the people. That is not what God desires.
- **Micah 7:3** *The prince asks, also the judge, for a bribe, and a great man speaks the desire of his soul; so they weave it together.*
- In Micah they didn't care about justice, but they did care about getting paid by bribery. Their focus was upon themselves and not the people that they were dispensing justice for.
- **Prov. 17:23** *The wicked accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the ways of justice.*
- **Prov. 21:2-3** *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart. To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.*
- Once again we see that God sees our heart and our inner motivation more than our outward behavior.
- **God wants us to deal with each other in an appropriate just manner.**
- (c) God wants us to love kindness
- **Micah 6:8** *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but...to love kindness*
- We are to show our love towards others by being kind to them. We need to show our care for others, to think about them instead always about ourselves. We need to help them when they are in need. We don't need to judge or criticize them but accept them as they are and help them where they are at.
- **Prov. 21:21** *Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor.*
- God models kindness for us. Though we deserved judgment God showed kindness instead:
- **Tit. 3:4,5** *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.*
- **Eph. 4:32** *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*
- **God wants us to be kind to those around us.**
- (d) God wants us to walk humbly
- **Micah 6:8** *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you...to walk humbly with your God.*
- We have to realize that there is no room for pride in our lives. We can't think better of ourselves than we are. God knows our strengths and weaknesses and it is only by His grace that we are saved. We can do nothing on our own to merit favor with God. We can't earn our way into salvation or God's favor. We have to humble ourselves before God for without Him we are destined for judgment.

- Hezekiah humbled himself, **2 Chr. 35:26** *But Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.*
- There is no good in pride; **Prov. 16:18** *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*
- Our life should be characterized by a life devoid of pride and a life full of humility.
- *The piety that God approves consists of three elements: a strict adherence to that which is equitable in all dealings with our fellowmen; a heart determined to do them good; and diligent care to live in close and intimate fellowship with God...God requires not some outward things, but certain qualities of the heart: righteousness, love, and humility (humble piety).* □-□ **Feinberg**
- **PRIDE:** During the Battle of the Wilderness in the Civil War, Union general John Sedgwick was inspecting his troops. At one point he came to a parapet, over which he gazed out in the direction of the enemy. His officers suggested that this was unwise and perhaps he ought to duck while passing the parapet. "Nonsense," snapped the general. "They couldn't hit an elephant at this dist--." A moment later Sedgwick fell to the ground, fatally wounded.
- **God wants us to be humble, for pride leads to death**
- (e) God wants us to be patient
- **Micah 7:9** *But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me...I will bear the indignation of the Lord Because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me out to the light, and I will see His righteousness.*
- We must wait for God to act. God has called us to wait for God. We don't understand why but we are to be patient. We are to wait expectantly for the Lord to act. We have to wait for God to answer our prayers. Sometimes we have to be patient as God works in us to remove sin from our lives.
- Pastor Graydon Jessup used to say, "*God is seldom early, but He is never late*". God's timing is perfect and we don't understand Him fully. His ways are higher than our ways. His purposes and plans are not always revealed to us.
- **Psalm 37:7** *Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!*
- **Col. 3:12** *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience*
- *Micah 7 Verse 9 moves in a beautiful way into the realm of confession and submission. Here we find submissive endurance of the Lord's chastening hand because of conviction of sin committed. Humility and submission to the will of God are evident.* □-□ **Feinberg**
- **God wants us to be patient and wait for Him to act.**
- How do summarize this section?
- **We need to be the person that God wants us to be, with a heart fully committed to Him, sensitive to His leading and guidance.**
- **Application: Question:** What are we to do with the passage before us today? As we approach God's Word we have to ask ourselves three questions: (1) What does it say? (2) What does it mean? (3) How can I apply it to my life? We have looked briefly at what it says and means. What does it mean to me in my life?
 - **We must study God's Word to understand who He is, how He acts, and how He expects us to act.** This is not mere intellectual knowledge but knowledge that we gain as we have a relationship with Him as we get to know Him for who He truly is. We must be the people who know our God.
 - **Jer. 9:23-24** *Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he*

understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord.

- Make these verses a part of your life verses. Make it a goal to read God's Word - to dig into God's Word to know and understand who God is and how He acts.
- **We must understand the requirements God has for our lives.** We must study God's Word to see who we are called to be and what we are to do. The Bible is not just a great piece of literature it is the very Word of God, Spirit-breathed and when we read it God's Spirit works within our lives to help us and change us.
- **2 Tim. 3:16, 17** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
- **Know God, understand His Word, act upon what you learn, and be conformed to the image of God.**