

WHAT GOD WANTS / Sunday, July 19, 2015

Unifying Topic: **JUSTICE, LOVE, AND HUMILITY**

Lesson Text

I. **The Lord Makes His Case** (Micah 6:3-5)

II. **Walk Humbly With Your Lord** (Micah 6:6-8)

The Main Thought: He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6:8, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People sometimes forget what a benefactor has done for them, or they make insincere efforts to show gratitude. How will benefactors react to such forgetfulness or ingratitude? God instructs the unjust to be just, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with Him.

Lesson Aim: To understand why Micah called the people to live a life of justice and kindness.

Life Aim: To lead the community into making God's requirements a reality.

HISTORY:

Chapters 4 and 5 are full of hope. Having focused upon the glory that will be Israel's in the future (chapter 5), the prophet now turns to look at the sins that infect Israel in the present (chapter 6). Chapters 6 and 7 proclaim judgment and appeal to the people to repent.

6:1 Hear ye now what the Lord saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.

Micah is God's prophet and he exhorts Israel to now listen to what the Lord says. "*Arise, stand up and state your case against me; let it begin in the hearing of the mountains and let the hills hear what you say.*" The mountains and hills are called to be witness to their complaint. The mountains were there before Israel was in the land and they will be there when Israel is removed.

6:2 Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. Micah exhorts the mountains to listen to the Lord's complaints. He advises the mountains of God's controversy with His people and will prosecute Israel to the full.

LESSON:

Micah 6:3-5 The Lord Makes His Case

6:3 O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. God addresses His people directly. In spite of their grievous sins, God still calls them "my" people. Though they had disowned Him, He is still faithful and had not disowned them. God asks what has He done to them and where has He wearied them; then He invites them to testify against Him. The people would never be able to answer these questions because God had done nothing wrong. He had given them every opportunity to return to Him.

6:4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. God recites the historical record to demonstrate that He has done only good to Israel. He brought them up out of the slavery of Egypt and gave them Moses (the law giver who told them what God wanted), Aaron (the high priest who interceded in behalf of the people when they failed to do what God wanted), and Miriam (the prophetess who led Israel in the dance of victory after Israel had crossed the Red Sea to be their national leaders).

6:5 O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord. God continues to relay the history of what He has done. "*Remember what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.*" These leaders were manifestations of God's grace to them. And God had provided deliverance. He delivered them from Balak, the king of Moab, who hired Balaam the son of Beor (Num.22-24) to curse Israel. God overruled, and the curses were turned into blessings. God cares for His people, even when they are in the enemy territory. Shittim was the location of the first campsite where Israel paused after her <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

encounter with Balaam. Gilgal was the first place where they stopped in the land of Canaan. It was there that they were totally disabled in the presence of their enemies, for God required Joshua to have all the males circumcised as a testimony of the father's belief of God's promises to Abraham. God showed them all of this that they might know the righteousness of the Lord.

Micah 6:6-8 Walk Humbly With Your God

6:6 *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?*— The Lord continues to speak to Israel, in effect, telling Israel what they have done. The people have tried all kinds of ways to please God. Apparently convicted by Jehovah's contention (vv.1-5), they addressed their questions to the prophet. They asked what is necessary to obtain the favor of Jehovah. With burnt offerings? With calves of a year old? Their questions indicate that they think that God will be content with external formalities. If "*quality*" will influence Jehovah, then they will offer the best of burnt offerings; of their calves, etc.

6:7 *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or 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?*— If "*quantity*" will impress Jehovah, then they will offer thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil. If "*human sacrifice*" will secure Jehovah's favor, then they will offer their first-born children to atone for their sins. The fact is that none of these will secure Jehovah's favor, for all are external and stem from a wrong motive and a false understanding of Jehovah. They actually thought God would trade forgiveness for sacrifice.

6:8 *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*— Israel is addressed as "*O man*" to remind them that these instructions are universally applicable. Jehovah's requirements move in three dimensions: one- outwardly, two- inwardly, and three- upwardly.

1. Outwardly— to do justly. It is necessary to deal righteously with one's fellow man. Justice means "treating people right because you know God."
2. Inwardly— to love mercy. It's necessary to have an inward commitment to God and the revelation that will manifest itself in a right relationship towards man and God. This speaks of the way we treat others; loving the unlovely even when they don't love you back.
3. Upwardly— to walk humbly with thy God. It is necessary to have a right attitude towards God and a determination to walk in continuous fellowship with Him. Humility is also how one walks in relation to his fellow man

This verse sums up what God really wants. indicative of his inward resolve and relationship to God.

SUMMARY:

¹When God asked the question, "*O my people, what have I done to you?*" (v.3) the people could not answer because He had done no wrong. In fact God had been exceedingly patient with them and had given them every opportunity to return to Him. God continued to be kind to His forgetful people but their short memory and lack of thankfulness condemned them (v.5). When people refuse to see how fortunate they are and begin to take God's gifts for granted they become self-centered. We need to remember God's goodness and thank Him. Remembering God's past protection will help us see his present provision.

Israel responded to God's request by trying to appease him with sacrifice hoping He would leave them alone (vv.6-8). But sacrifice and other religious rituals are not enough; God wants changed lives. He wants us to become living sacrifices (Rom.12:1-2), not just doing religious deeds. It is impossible for us to follow God consistently without his transforming love in our hearts. People have tried all kinds of ways to please God (6:6 7), but God has made His wishes clear; He wants His people to be just, merciful and to walk humbly with Him (v.8).

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/the-lords-challenge-to-his-people/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>