

## 012923 Sermon "What Does God Require of you?" Micah 6:1-8

The French have a proverb, which states, "A good meal ought to begin with hunger." It is hard to enjoy a meal when you are not yet hungry. But, when you are hungry, anything tastes good.

If we approach the Word of God with a hunger to be satisfied, we will be satisfied every time. There is a saying like this. Effective worship begins with a hunger for God.

The book of Micah is a relatively short book in the Bible comprised of seven chapters. The name "Micah" means "Who is like God?" The book consists of three sermons by the prophet Micah. The first sermon is chapters 1 and 2, the second sermon is chapters 3 to 5, and the third sermon is chapters 6 and 7. All three sermons use similar expressions that tie in the central theme of the book of Micah, which is "to listen:" "Hear, O peoples, all of you" (Micah 1:2). "Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel" (Micah 3:1). "Listen to what the Lord says" (Micah 6:1).

When you come upon the expression, "Listen...," while reading the book of Micah, you can assume a new sermon is beginning. The structure of all three sermons is the same as well. The first half of the sermon is about God's judgment of sin, and the latter half is about restoration and salvation.

8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. was the time period in which the prophet Micah was active. At that time, there were four famous prophets who were active. In the northern kingdom of Israel, Hosea and Amos were active. In the southern kingdom, Isaiah and Micah were active. What does it mean to have a lot of prophets at the time? It could have been a good thing that there were a lot of famous prophets. But it also means that God's judgment was imminent.

During that time in the kingdom of Judah, God was not pleased with how the country was being run. There were many problems that faced its society. One of which is the corruption in the kingdom of Judah. To list a few events that are recorded in the book of Micah: people stole others inheritance, hated the work of good and loved the work of evil, accepted bribery, abused religious authority to gain profit, involved in unfair trade, committed violence and deceit, and killed their own people. Because of all this corruption, God declared judgment on all those involved in the corruption and false prophecy throughout all of Samaria and Jerusalem.

The passage that we read together today in Micah 6 tells us what the meaning of the phrase "What does the Lord require of you?"

"Should I bring a year-old calf as a burnt offering?" A year-old calf was a valuable

thing back then, so they thought that it would please God. Eventually, they would start to think only materialistically, while the true meaning gradually disappears. "If I bring thousands of sheep as burnt offering, would that please God?" "If I bring rivers of oil as burnt offering, would that make God happy?" Would it please God to offer my firstborn as a sacrifice for my transgressions? Should I give the fruit of my body for the sins of my soul? How many people can do this?

However, the message that we read today is telling us that those things are not enough. God does not care whether we bring one sheep or thousands of sheep as an offering to God. It is not a matter of quantity, but the importance lies in where our heart is. Inevitably, we live in a materialistic world, so our heart lies in the materialistic things. God is asking whether our hearts are world-centered or God-centered.

Verse 8 is especially important here, "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?" Here, what is good is not what is good to your eyes, but rather what is good to God's eyes and He has already told us what that is. To put it another way, it is not that we don't know what God considers good, but it is that despite knowing what God wants, we continue to compromise with the world and we miss God's first priority.

"...To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

The first thing that God requires of us is to do good. The second thing is to love mercy. The society we live in is full of merciless events. It is very hard to love mercy amid all this.

The last thing that God requires of us is that we walk with the Lord in our lives. When we worship in the sanctuary, we are conscious of God and think of God relatively easily. However, the problem is revealed in our daily lives. Why is it so hard to walk with God even when our lives are going well? Or in contrast, why is it so hard to walk with the Lord when our lives aren't going well?

Proverbs 30 shows us the prayers of Agur who sought after God foremost. "Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the

Lord?’ or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.”

I pray that everyone may walk with the Lord in the best days and even in the worst days. I pray that you would walk with the Lord during the times of uncertainty for the future as young adults or during the times of uncertainty for a healthy life as seniors.

Today’s message tells us what the right spirit of sacrifice or offering is. The spirit of offering leads to the spirit of worship. Through worship, we learn 1) God’s righteousness, 2) God’s mercy, 3) To walk humbly with God in our lives. It is important that we learn these three things since we came here to worship today.

Everyone knows of the famous French novel *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo. It was made into a musical and remained popular in Broadway for a long time. The main character, Jean Valjean, was a man who served in prison for 19 years for stealing a loaf of bread because he was starving. In the 19 years in prison, he became full of revenge and turned into a cruel man. No one was able to stand against him in fights. After serving the full 19-year term in prison, he comes out to seek revenge against the police officer who put him in prison. However, he had nowhere to go and seek shelter because he was a criminal. A priest takes him in and lets him sleep in a room. Jean Valjean notices silverware in the room and runs away with it.

Eventually, he gets caught and is brought in front of the priest. The priest then tells the police officers, “I gave him the silverware as a gift. He did not steal from me. Why didn’t you take the silver candlesticks as well when I gave you the silverware? You could have sold them all and received at least 200 francs.” The love that the priest showed Jean Valjean changes his heart that was full of evil and revenge.

He then is determined to live for those who are in need and are trying to do good by working hard. However, it is difficult because the police officer who arrested him before continues to follow him around. Despite this, Jean Valjean tries to live a life of good and kindness. Do you believe that there truly is a way to change one’s heart?

To change someone's heart full of heaviness, revenge, jealousy, and evil can only be done through love. C.S. Lewis has a famous quote "we are born in Eros(romantic love), raised in Storge(natural affection), mature in Philia(friendship), and complete in Agape(selfless love)." John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, do you have a hunger for God? I hope and pray that you will be satisfied every time you worship God. What God wants from us is to do good, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, your family, your business, your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.