

WHAT DOTHTHE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE?

***Micah 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?*

“He has sheweth thee.” God will never hide from us what is good. There are many mysteries which are not easily accessible but what is good is not a mystery. It is God’s duty to show us what is good, and our blessing to follow the good. We should not think that the good was revealed for the first time to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Jews never had a monopoly on knowing what is good – God created all people in his image and equal. Remember that Adam, Abel, Seth, Noah, Job – all knew what was good, and demonstrated the good in their conduct. How did they know what is good? Simply because the scripture in Micah 6:8 states that God has shown it to us. Balaam was not a Jew, but God showed him it was not good to curse Israel. God has given every human being a judge or arbiter of good and bad. It is called conscience. In order to be morally healthy, a person must learn to live in harmony with his or her conscience. It has become an obsession for people to stay physically fit in our generation. The question is: how fit is our conscience before God? We need to train our consciences to be spiritually fit. To go against the conscience is never good – it leads to destruction.

***Rom 2:14** For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:*

***Rom 2:15** Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.*

God wants us to do justly. Biblically speaking, to do justly is to make decisions which align with the will of God. “I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17:10). In order to do justly, one must know the law of the land. In the same way, in order to do justly in the sight of God, one must know the word of God. While God is merciful, sinning through ignorance is still sin and must be atoned for. “And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him” (Numbers 15:28). There is a distinction between ethics and morality. Ethics is about what we believe is right or wrong – the theory of justice, but morality is action based on one’s ethics. So, when we see a person act, we can deduce the ethics guiding that behavior. The great people of the Bible, acted in a holy and just manner because they had knowledge of the word of God, believed it to be true and acted

accordingly. One such person was Ezra of whom the Bible states, “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:10).

Micah 6:8 also speaks about loving mercy. Mercy is not only to have compassion and forgive someone: mercy can only be called mercy if you have been offended, have the power to seek justice and wave this right aside. Joseph showed mercy to his brothers who were guilty of serious crimes in the sight of God: bullying, jealousy, selling a human being who was their brother and then lying to their father causing him irreparable grief. Five grievous sins which should justice be demanded, would lead to the gallows and death. Note the mercy of Joseph: “Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life” (Genesis 45:5).

There are individuals who seem to never do anything wrong and hence are quick to demand justice when they are wronged. Joseph was genuinely an innocent man. He was what you might call naïve or just happy-go-lucky in colloquial terms. Make no mistake, however. Joseph was keen to obey the word of God by doing good. “There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). At the same time, he was determined to forgive his brothers even though he appears to have never done anything wrong. We never read that Joseph accused Potiphar’s wife of lying ever. Joseph knew that no one is innocent in the sight of God; we all need his forgiveness.

***Mark 11: 26** But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.*

Finally, Micah 6:8 commands us to walk humbly with our God. What does it mean to be humble? Simply put, it means to understand who we truly are outside of the salvation and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It means to look into the mirror of the Bible to know who we truly are in Adam. To be humble is to know what David knew about his true origin. “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). People who make a claim to being special because of their lineage do not understand that they are invoking the names of a long list of sinners going back to Adam. May God give us the revelation he gave the apostle Paul! “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24). Humility requires not only knowing about our true miserable origin but also knowing that the God we serve is the embodiment of humility. “But

made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil 2:7).

Let us in conclusion see Jesus Christ as the perfect example of Micha 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?” Goodness is Jesus himself. Only God is good Jesus told the rich young man. Jesus was challenging the young man to seek goodness and then he would find out that Jesus is God. God has indeed shown us what is good – it is Jesus Christ. God has shown us that he is one in the person of Jesus Christ. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deut 6:4). To believe this is the greatest good a person can do. No matter how much evil we encounter – in our lives or in the world – we cannot lose faith in goodness because Jesus is good. Look to Jesus in an evil world. Next, Jesus is just. Watch all his actions in the Bible and even in our lives. Never did Jesus condone injustice. He rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees, he corrected and rebuked his own apostles, he never flattered Herod or Pilate and even praised a Samaritan, the enemy of the Jews. There is no fear of perversion of justice in Jesus; no one needs to fear this judge of all the earth if you follow his justice. “And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John 5:27).

If one loves mercy, you cannot ignore Jesus. He is God’s mercy revealed in flesh. If ever we need proof there is a God who loves and forgives us our sins, look to Jesus. Remember that mercy means one has been offended and does not demand justice but forgives. We offended and sinned against God. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). If someone were to cry to the Lord “Lord, have mercy!”, he would answer “I already have by revealing myself in flesh”. “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). Once one understands and accepts this, goodness, mercy and humility will push us into the waters of baptism in Jesus name for the remission of sins. When we were baptized in Jesus name, it was not indoctrination or fear that pushed us to baptism but the goodness, mercy, justice and humility of Jesus Christ our God. A genuinely humble person is one who accepts that God is one, that he is manifested in Jesus Christ, repents, is baptized in Jesus name and lives his or her life in doing the will of Jesus. Indeed, God has shown us what is good!