



Sermon Title: Micah week 3
Sermon Title: *The Choice is Ours*
Date: 8/28/2022

Micah 6:1-8

America was founded at a time when faith in Christ, God's word, and Christian values were much more acceptable and influential than they are today. Over the last several decades, we as a nation are increasingly moving away from those Christian values and embracing our own prideful worldviews.

As we look at America's future, we can be confident that God's blessing upon us as a nation depends on how faithful we are in following God. In **Micah 6:1-5** we can learn from Israel's history what to expect when nations honor the Lord and what to expect when they rebel against His commands.

Big Idea: Take seriously the conditions that invite God's blessings

So let's first take a look at the EXCHANGE between God and Israel, and then we'll find out how God responds with his EXPECTATIONS.

EXCHANGE

God recounts how faithful he was to Israel by protecting and providing for them and how He blessed them as a nation. God was faithful to Israel, yet, over time God's blessings became familiar and unappreciated. The Israelites forgot God was the cause of those blessings, and they followed their own desires by assimilating into the surrounding nation's pagan cultures. Many people today forget the source of our blessings. Our blessings have largely become familiar and unappreciated as people forget God and follow their own desires.

God lays out His case, and the people called Israel answer. **Micah 6:6-7.** Their offer of these sacrifices is driven - not by a heart of repentance but by their association and familiarity with the false foreign gods. The sacrifices here increase in cost and volume. They are looking to build a ladder of sacrifices to appease God. This is not a heart change - this is them trying to earn God's favor through actions just like they did with the false gods. **God is not interested in heartless gestures; he is interested in hearts that pursue a relationship with him. Proverbs 16:20**

Micah 6:8 shows us God's Expectations about what loving obedience looks like in practical, everyday life.

THE EXPECTATION

Micah 6:8

God doesn't want heartless sacrifices – He wants loving obedience. What God required of Israel, and what He requires from us is stated very simply in these three instructions.

Act justly - this would have been understood by Micah's audience as living with a sense of right and wrong - to be fair in their dealings with others. To act justly is possible when moral and ethical behavior lines up with what is taught in scripture. The Bible is the moral compass that guides our ethics as a nation.

Love mercy means "loyal love" or "loving-kindness." God expected Israel to show loving kindness to others.

Both justice and love are foundational to God's character. **Psalm 89:14**

Walk humbly with God. Walking humbly is a description of the heart's attitude toward God. This flows from God's people being dependent upon Him rather than their own abilities.

Unfortunately, Israel ignored God's instructions and warnings, living off of the blessings from God yet the forgetting that He was the one who provided for them. As a result, God allowed them to be taken captive by their enemies and be scattered for thousands of years around the world.

Several years ago, the evangelist Billy Graham wrote a letter, and in it, he said this about America- "*Self-centered indulgence, pride, and a lack of shame over sin are now emblems of the American lifestyle.*" Are those things badges of the American lifestyle? Even if they are, it doesn't have to continue that way. We are an amazing nation that has clearly been blessed by God over the centuries and has been used by God to spread the gospel to every corner of the world. Leaders come and Go, and they each make their own decisions which steer the country for a little while. Some make decisions that honor God, and some make decisions that oppose God. But historically speaking, God does not judge nations based upon who is in power. He judges nations based on the mindset of the overall population—the average citizens. When the people in a nation follow Him they invite God's blessing, and when they rebel they forfeit God's blessing.

In fact, the apostle Paul wrote about this - what the attitude of people in the end times will be. **2 Timothy 3:2-4**

We still have time to take a lesson from Israel and obey God. **Psalm 33:12b** says **Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.**

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- Why do you think society is increasingly moving away from honoring God?
- Do we need to use a different approach toward evangelism than was used in the past? Explain
- How does the world's definition of acting justly differ from the biblical definition?
- Do you know someone who is a walking example of acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God? Explain