

What God Desires

During December we are stressing the need for an obedient heart. The previous two weeks we have examined Colossians 1 and 2. While God has made you *holy, faultless, and blameless*, you must choose to remain in that position, being *grounded and established in the faith*. May we all develop the type of hearts that will remain committed to God no matter what comes. One of the key passages for Vision 2023 comes out of the Old Testament book of Micah. On the outside they were religious and upright ... but inwardly they were rebellious and undone. The object of religion took precedence over obedience and genuine worship. How can we avoid the same sin?

I. 6.1-5: God's Lawsuit Against Israel

- A. God sits as the judge & Micah as his counsel.
- B. 6.2-3: Had God mistreated them?
- C. 6.4-5: Did God require too much? The people needed to remember:
 - 1. Their past (6.4a): *Indeed, I **brought you up** from the land of Egypt ...*
 - 2. Their purchase (6.4b): *I ... **redeemed** you from that place of slavery.*
 - 3. Their provision (6.4c): *I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam ahead of you.*
 - 4. Their preservation (6.5): ***acknowledge** the Lord's righteous acts.*

II. 6.6-7: God Does Not Want Things. They ask, *what is it that will make you happy, God?*

- A. Bargaining
 - 1. 6.6a: *What should I bring before the Lord when I come to bow... burnt offerings?*
 - 2. They hope to appease God through sacrifice. Note the progression:
 - a) 6.6b: *with **year-old calves**?*
 - b) 6.7a: *with thousands of rams... or with ten thousand streams of oil?*
 - c) 6.7b: *Should I give my **firstborn** for my transgression, the offspring of my body for my own sin?*
 - 3. Bottom line: they weren't in a position to bargain with God. Neither are we.
- B. Blindness
 - 1. God was not as interested in their sacrifices as He was their hearts.
 - 2. 1 Samuel 15:22: *... to **obey** is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams.*

III. 6.8: God Wants Us

- A. Micah 6:8: *Mankind, he has told each of you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: These requirements involve three areas:*
- B. Their Work - Micah 6:8: *to act **justly**.* This means to see that the rights of others are protected.
 - 1. See Isaiah 1.17: *Learn to do what is good. Pursue justice. Correct the oppressor. Defend the rights of the fatherless. Plead the widow's cause.*
 - 2. See James 1:27: *Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*
- C. Their Love - Micah 6.8: *to love **faithfulness**.* Exhibit loyal brotherly love, constant care/compassion for others.
 - 1. See Matthew 22.39: *The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.*
 - 2. See Romans 12:9: *Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good.*
- D. Their Loyalty - Micah 6.8: *to **walk humbly** with your God.*
 - 1. To walk humbly is simply to live by faith. We give God first place.
 - 2. Colossians 3.15-17 - *Let the peace of Christ **rule** your hearts. Do all you do in His name.*

IV. As We Close...

- A. God wants more than your exterior performance
- B. He wants your heart: you to be practicing righteousness; love; humility; and faith.
- C. How is your relationship with Him? Is it what it should be? Can we help you get started?