

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study

"TRUE LOVE OF GOD: ACTING JUSTLY, LOVING MERCY, AND WALKING HUMBLY WITH HIM"

For individual study or discussion

Chapter 23 in the book of Matthew is often titled, "The Seven Woes" because seven times, Jesus begins a teaching with the words "Woe to you." One of the woes that Jesus pronounces on the teachers of the laws and Pharisees echoes the passage that we are studying in Micah.

"You hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former." (Matt. 23:23)

"Woe" is not a word that we use all that often in everyday speech. It's probably helpful, therefore, to remind ourselves that "woe" is not a word implying a small amount of trouble. Woe is trouble so terrible it can ruin you. What do we need to understand about this kind of ruinous tribulation when it comes to matters of justice, mercy, humility, and faithfulness?

- 1) In the beginning of this passage in Micah, the Lord reminds his people of what he has done for them and asks, "How have I burdened you?" (To read the accounts of what happened at Shittim and Gilgal, see Joshua 2-5.)
 - How did God's chosen people respond to his covenant faithfulness over and over again? Why did they respond this way, and do Christians today similarly respond to God?
 - What will keep us from acting unjustly? What will prevent us from failing to love God and others the way God loves us?
- 2) The suggestions made in verse 7 are over-the-top extreme—"What do you want, God? Should we sacrifice a child? Pour out ten thousand rivers of oil before you?"
 - What do these outrageous suggestions reveal about the hearts of the questioners?
 - We sometimes complain about just "going through the motions" whether we are talking about others ("His heart's not really in it—he's just going through the motions.") or talking to ourselves ("I know this doesn't mean much—I'm just going through the motions."). But what do humans tend to *like* about going through the motions?
 - What is the danger of being a rule follower? How do we tend to view ourselves and God if we are going through the motions or even rigidly keeping a set of rules? (See Hosea 6:6)
- 3) What does it mean to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God"? Would you agree, for example, with John Perkins, who has said, "If sin can exist at every level of government, and in every human institution, then also the call to biblical justice in every corner of society must be sounded by those who claim a God of Justice as their Lord."¹
 - If those who truly love God are to live out what he loves, what do you think Christians should be in doing in their homes, their businesses, their neighborhoods, and their cities?

¹John Perkins, *Let Justice Roll Down*, p. 185.



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

DATE: April 8, 2021

SPEAKER: Chad/Frank

SERIES: Missions Emphasis

PASSAGE: Micah 6:1-8

Family Dinner Table

The poet Evangeline Paterson once explained that she was brought up in a Christian environment where because God was given first place, "nothing else was allowed to be important." She went on to say that she had now come to see that "because God exists, everything has significance." If that doesn't quite make sense to you, keep reading! We're going to think about what is supposed to come first AND what is supposed to be important.

Has anyone ever said to you, "First things first!" What does that mean? For Christians, what should be first in our lives? What is our most important relationship and why?

If you said that our relationship with God is the most important relationship, what does that mean for all of our other relationships? Are they less important? Or is there actually a way in which they are more important than they would be if there wasn't a God or if you didn't know him?

What does knowing and loving God make us want to do for others? What are some ways that you can love God by acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly every day with God?

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

PCA Administrative Committee

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Annette and Tim Gulick, supported missionary partners