

Why Did We Choose Micah 6:8?

Micah 6:8 is a verse commonly cited to compel people to act in times of injustice: “Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.” This is why Westmont chose this verse as the name of our site that references our work of justice, reconciliation and diversity. Our objective? Ongoing growth as we seek to become a more reconciling community.

Who is Micah?

Micah is a prophet from a small agricultural town south west of Jerusalem. His ministry overlaps that of Isaiah. But whereas Isaiah spoke primarily to the urban elite, Micah spoke to the "regular folk" in the "suburbs." Micah's message calls the people to listen to the word of God. Repeatedly Micah says “Listen, you leaders,” “Listen to what the Lord says,” and “Listen, you peoples,” stressing that *now* is the time to pay attention. Much of Micah's prophecy is judgment addressed to the capital cities of Judah and Israel, Jerusalem, and Samaria respectively. Their leaders practiced and tolerated false doctrine that has led to a false understanding of the character of God, and, as a result, injustice towards the lowly, mistreatment of women and children, unjust business practices, and exploitation of the poor, many of whom were rural dwellers, like Micah. The rich were living in luxury while the marginalized suffered to pay for extravagances for those in power. Even as it declares judgement, Micah's prophecy offers hope of the coming Prince of Peace. Through Micah's prophecy, God also promised the future kingdom where nations live in peace and security and where God's people are fully restored, reconciled with each other and with God. Micah's reference to Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) is one of the most significant forecasts of Jesus in the Old Testament.

Micah asks God a Question

Micah genuinely wants to know what God requires. What is humankind to offer between God's judgment and its associated lament and the new restored and reconciled kingdom? To make right with you God, should I bring offerings? Sacrifices? My first born? (Micah 6:7) God responds: “No, not your gifts, your words or even your most prized possession. I want you to do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with me.”

For Us

God continues to speak to His people about what we are to do in the face of injustice, exploitation, racism and mistreatment of certain populations. The response of God to Micah is His response to us when we ask what is required of us.

Do justice. Justice is defined as the quality of *being* just. It is righteousness, equitableness, and moral rightness. To be *just* is a call to action—not to be silent or complacent when others, especially the most vulnerable, are abused, mistreated, in need, scorned or exploited. *Mishpat* is the Hebrew word used for rendering a just decision in court. In other words, holding our community to God's standard. Another Hebrew word sometimes translated as “just” is *tsedaqah*, which expresses the idea of honesty, justness, and community loyalty. To be biblically righteous is to be biblically just and vice versa. These two ideas cannot be separated.

As it relates to our commitment to justice, reconciliation, and diversity, this means examining how we treat the people of God. Those who have been excluded, those whose voices have not

been heard, those who have been left behind or left out. Our actions of justice flow from our inward transformation to become more like Christ. We call ourselves again to justice in how we practice the way of Jesus personally, how we live together as a community and how we educate to make a difference in the world.

To love mercy is to show “*hesed*,” covenant faithfulness to one another. Micah 7:18 says God delights to show covenant faithfulness. It’s who He is. Only because He has shown us great mercy can we do the same for others. As Saint Thomas Aquinas said, “Justice and mercy are so united that the one ought to be mingled with the other; justice without mercy is cruelty; mercy without justice is profusion.” We should practice justice mercifully. We should practice mercy justly. When we see need, pain, loss, discrimination, bias, fear, or wrongdoing we should respond with mercy, as God has shown us mercy.

Walk humbly. Jesus is the ultimate example of humility. The extravagant mercy and grace of God meets justice at the cross in the humility of Christ, who gave His very life for our salvation. We have the model in Jesus as well as the call and command to walk humbly with God. However, to do justice and love mercy as God does is not within our own power. We humbly ask the Lord to help us, empower us, lead us, equip us. It will never be easy, especially on the road to reconciliation but it is the road God calls us to walk.

Therefore, Micah 6:8 is a call to listen to God, to do justice from hearts of mercy and compassion, marked by the humility of Christ. These aspirations rightly fit with Westmont’s Community Life Statement which specifically states that “as students, staff and professors learn to live together we recognize the dual manifestations of love in justice and mercy.” The Community Life Statement calls us to truth-centered attitudes and other-centered practices. It affirms graciousness, civility, respect, submission to biblical instructions among other traits—all of which are manifestations of lives shaped by walking with humility before God.

These pages on Westmont’s Micah 6:8 site describe our work around justice, reconciliation, and diversity. Each section carries information that is important to us as an institution. Yet our work is unfinished. We continue to strive to be a more reconciling community, to better understand how we could do better, to listen to each other and the Lord, and to be responsive in our thoughts, words, and actions. May He give us strength to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him.

Bible Verses about Justice:

- “Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.” Isaiah 1:17
- “Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times!” Psalm 106:3
- “Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another,” Zechariah 7:9
- “To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.” Proverbs 21:3
- “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.” Deuteronomy 32:4

Bible Verses about Mercy:

- “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” Luke 6:36
- “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” Matthew 5:7
- “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23
- “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Psalm 23:6
- “For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.” James 2:13

Bible Verses about Humility:

- “But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” James 4:6
- “The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.” Proverbs 15:33
- “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:3-4
- “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.” James 4:10
- “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14