

“He Has Shown You, O Man”

Micah 6:1-8

Introduction – The third and final cycle begins with the same call to ‘hear’, which is a good reminder to us always to ‘listen up’ to the Word. It is our light out of darkness and He is our salvation. There is a way to salvation, but as this passage will show us, it is not through outward, external, religious works.

The Lord Has a Complaint (vv1-2) – The Lord is bringing His ‘case’ against His people. He is the plaintiff, witnesses are called, the evidence is presented, and a judgment rendered. The charge is breaking and betraying the covenant with God.

Mountains – The mountains and hills are called as witnesses because they were the original witnesses of the covenant God made with Israel as they entered the Promised Land (Deut 27:12-13, Josh 8:30-35). They heard the words of blessing and cursing contained in the covenant. The mountains are also the unchanging foundations, unlike the finicky Israelites, and they are enduring foundations that outlast a thousand generations.

God’s Defense and Countercharges (vv3-5) – They had revolted against God and rebelled against Him. But had they any cause to do so? Because of present ‘hard providences’ we are often tempted to think we have a case to make against God.

A Gentle Taunt (v3) – God still addresses these rebels as ‘My people’, but nonetheless asks these rhetorical questions about His own faithfulness.

From Egypt to Gilgal (v4-5) – Look at the track record of God’s faithfulness and mercy. He has kept His promise to be their God; He delivered them from Egypt, protected them through the wilderness journey in spite of their unbelief and led them into the Promised Land. These verses are a representation, a synecdoche of the whole of God’s dealings.

Gaining God’s Favor the Wrong Way (vv6-7) – Those who are blinded to God’s goodness and character begin to reason within this framework and treat the covenant like a legalistic set of rules to obtain (earn) salvation. This hard-hearted response to verses 3-5 reveals obliviousness to God’s mercy and our need to repent. Instead, “God must change,” they mutter. How much will it cost me to get Him to change? It cost them nothing to come out of Egypt and nothing to knock down the walls of Jericho. They don’t get it.

Covenant Keeping from the Heart (v8) – In verse 5 we were told to remember the Lord “that you may know the righteousness of the Lord”. This is knowledge that saves. This is knowledge that justifies. This is the foundation by which we live faithfully in the Lord.

He Has Shown You – Over and over again, the Lord has displayed His justice, His merciful kindness, and His condescension to our lowliness.

What is Good – This is equal to the next phrase, “*and what does the Lord require of you*”. Goodness is defined by the Law of God, not by the Dalai Lama, not by the social engineers, not by focus groups and not by your own heart. God is good and God defines goodness.

Justly – People are to be treated lawfully from the heart. You cannot say that you love God while you hate your brother. Such hypocrisy will condemn you.

Love Mercy – ‘hesed’ in the Hebrew. This is lovingkindness, tender mercies (Col 3:12), not only in word, but in deed as well. This is the compassion of Christ (Matt 15:32) upon the multitudes. It must be shown to brothers in need (Lev 25:35). We must so *love mercy* that we are always prepared (Deut 14:28-29), and the rich are particularly warned (1 Tim 6:17-18).

Walk Humbly With Your God – Justice and Mercy are not extended with any sense of arrogance (Matt 6:2), but rather out of a life full of mercy that has been bestowed upon it. We are humble before God because we cannot keep up with all the mercy He gives to us. We are humble because we have received so much more than we deserve. And we only believe that *if* God has granted us true repentance and faith.

Conclusions – This is the stark contrast between a religion of works (what do I have to do to buy off God?) and a religion of grace (what can I do because of all He has done in, for, and on behalf of, me?)

Witnesses All Around – God will still judge the thoughts and intents of our hearts (Heb 4:11-13) as well as our actions, seen and unseen (2 Tim 4:1, Rom 2:16). The mountains can see, the angels can see, and God sees. If God is kind to you, He will use this truth to grant you repentance. Does God have a complaint against you?

We Must Remember – There are often times where ‘hard providences’ tempt us to believe that God has left us. We must keep the history of God’s faithfulness upon the front of our minds – or we will fall. And so God has given us His written Word. He has

instructed us to sing of His mercies (example – Psalm 136). We gather each Lord’s Day for another resurrection remembrance. And we partake of the Lord’s Table in order to remember and participate, to relive and reclaim all of God’s mercy to us.

Reformed Temptations – How often the reformed community is known for its commitment to the truth and yet lack of the true religion of hospitality, mercy, and warm affection for one another (Matt 23:23-24). But He has shown you, men and women, what is good and what the Lord requires of you.

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