

What Have You Been Told?**Micah 6: 6-8****Don Lincoln**

In preparation for today, I realized I was a confirmand more than a half century ago! YIKES! Unlike youth director Chris Clark and your other leaders, who invited you into a conversation – to reflect on questions, to explore God and the Christian faith, my pastor lectured us every Saturday morning for a year. I know he required us to memorize a host of things, but I'm not sure I could tell you much about any of that.

The one thing I remember in detail about confirmation was when my friend Stewie Jones and I thought we would liven things up in what had been a deadly boring experience. So we lit a fire in the metal trash can in the back of the room. It livened things up quite a bit!! And look where that got me!! You never know what God is going to do with you!

At the risk of totally blowing it today, I **AM** going to ask you to memorize something. It's a very simple phrase – sort of like "look both ways before you cross the street."

It's found in the book of the Old Testament prophet Micah. It's a favorite text of every pastor I know:

**Do justice
Love kindness
Walk humbly with your God**

Say it with me. Do Justice; Love Kindness; Walk humbly with your God.

Here's the setting for these words – these simple phrases. The scene in scripture is a courtroom. God is the plaintiff, bringing a complaint against Israel, the defendant. The hills and mountains serve as judge and jury – which in and of itself is an amazing image, when we know in today's context of climate change, if the hills and mountains were judge and jury, they might speak a word or two to us...

Anyway, listen to the Scripture: **Micah 6: 6-8**

"With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

What does the Lord require of us? What does the Lord want from you and me? Did you hear the suggested possibilities in the text?

Burnt offerings were a standard gift to God in those days – a dove, or maybe a lamb. **Year-old calves** were definitely more serious than newborn lambs. But a sacrifice of **thousands of rams**? **THOUSANDS** of rams? That starts to sound ridiculous, and **ten thousand rivers of oil** belongs to the realm of fantasy – or absurdity. You can see where this is going.....

The initial question assumes God wants some **THING** from you and me. But the step by step, qualitative escalation indicates it is **no thing** at all. It is US – you – me – that God wants. US! Our whole lives.

What does the Lord require of you?

Do justice

Love kindness

Walk humbly with your God. Now say it, without looking

This is not about earning God's favor or God's love. God's love and favor are a given for us. Jesus Christ is the One who promises that to you and to me— God loves us totally, completely, before you and I can do or be anything! That's why you will claim Him as Savior this morning; Jesus has shown you God's love.

The prophet reminds us God wants you and me to live fully in that love. God wants us to be living in God's ways because that will make for better lives – for ours and for others. We who bear the image of God will find our fullest life, our best life, when we cultivate and imitate the capabilities of our maker.....

Seeking ways to do justice, no matter how small; possessing a passion for fairness in all things, for what is right for all.

Loving kindness – having a warm, faithful, loyal heart for all creation and everyone in it.

And having the flexibility of spirit – the humility – to continue to learn, because we know full well we don't know it all. And while none of us will ever know everything, you and I DO KNOW the one, most important thing right now – God is God; and we are NOT – that's some of the best news we can remember, every single day. THANKS be to God!

So in all things walk humbly; and always walk with God.

What does the Lord require: Say it with me: **Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God.**

May it be so. AMEN.