**What does the Lord require?**

*Micah 6:8*

**Introduction**

1. The world is filled with mixed ideas about what the Lord desires from man.
2. What is His expectation of us?
3. Micah prophesied to Judah in the Assyrian period as a younger contemporary of Isaiah.
   1. Northern Israel was ripe for judgment by God using Assyria, but Judah had followed a similar path and would see judgment.
   2. Micah convicts of sin, warns of judgment, and also contrasts the present darkness with the light of future hope.
4. In chapter 6, Micah reveals the Lord’s court summons to the people of Judah – God has made His case, and they are to make theirs – of which they have none.
5. Being convicted, they manifest further their warped understanding of God and what He desires, to which Micah gives the true desire of the Lord which they had betrayed (**cf. Micah 6:8)**.
6. The Context of the Requirement
7. The Lord’s Complaint
   1. The Lord’s case against the people **(vv. 1-2):**
      1. **(v. 1)** – God is calling the people to plead their case before the witness of the mountains and hills.
      2. **(v. 2)** – God has a complaint against the people before the mountains and hills which have witnessed His gracious dealings with them.
         1. ***“has a case” (NASB); “has an indictment” (ESV)***
      3. **1:8-2:11; 3** – detailed their unfaithfulness.
      4. Result – **1:8-9, 12-13** – the destruction to be experienced by Israel would come to Jerusalem/Judah – ***“For the transgressions of Israel were found in you” (v. 13)***.
   2. Have I wearied you? **(v. 3)** – they have turned against God, and their actions of unfaithfulness seem to imply God had brought it on by an action on His part – ***“Testify against Me”***
      1. Rhetorical – God knows they have no answer.
      2. He testifies before the mountains and hills which have witnessed His wonderful treatment of His people.
   3. Manifestations of His grace **(vv. 4-5):**
      1. Deliverance **(v. 4a)** – in the Exodus.
         1. Compassion – heard their cry of anguish. (**cf. Exodus 3:7**)
         2. Condescension – stooped to their call. (**cf. Exodus 3:8**)
         3. Redemption – purchased them by His own power to be His special people. (**cf. Exodus 19:4**)
      2. Guidance **(v. 4b)** – Moses (prophet/Law-giver), Aaron (high priest), Miriam (prophetess)
         1. Upon their deliverance they had spiritual guidance/substance – **1 Corinthians 10:1-4**
      3. Protection **(v. 5a)** – God protected them from intended harm by others.
         1. Balak compelled Balaam to curse Israel, and God turned it into blessing – **Deuteronomy 23:3-5**
      4. Blessing **(v. 5b)** – deeds between “Acacia Grove” (Shittim) and “Gilgal” (i.e. in place of Balak and Balaam’s intended curse)
         1. Shittim – resting place before crossing Jordan (**cf. Joshua 3:1)**.
         2. Gilgal – first camp after crossing Jordan (**cf. Joshua 4:19).**
         3. Between:
            1. Defeat of Midianites – Balaam killed (**cf. Numbers 31:7-8)**.
            2. Miraculous crossing of Jordan into Canaan.
   4. God’s point – **Isaiah 5:3-4** – what more could I have done?
8. The People’s Ignorance
   1. The following manifests the conviction of the people – their sin is without excuse, and they know they stand condemned before God, but they are helplessly ignorant.
   2. Their ignorance is not simply of the Law, but of the Lord (**v. 6a).**
      1. Their reply (through Micah)
      2. ***“With what…”*** – is there a “what” to solve this problem with God? (**cf. Acts 17:24-25**)
      3. ***“And bow myself…”*** – empty ritualism wearies God. (**cf. Isaiah 1:10-15**)
   3. Quality – calves a year old **(v. 6b)**
      1. God has always required the best quality…
      2. **Psalm 51:16-17** – You do not desire sacrifice.
   4. Quantity **(v. 7a)** – does more solve the problem without the heart involved?
      1. **Psalm 50:9-11** – cattle on a thousand hills are His.
   5. Subjective value **(v. 7b)** – do you think you know what would be more valuable in God’s eyes?
      1. Shows how terribly deranged they are – seeking fellowship with God by offering an abomination **(cf. Leviticus 18:21).**
      2. NOTE: We can’t impress God. Our wisdom is foolishness to Him. (**cf. Luke 16:15** – highly esteemed of men is abomination to God)
9. The Nature of the Requirement
10. Revelation – ***“He has shown you”***
    1. The necessity of revelation – **1 Corinthians 2:9-12**
    2. What is written? – **Luke 10:25-28** – takes speculation out of the equation and rids us of doubt if we yield to its power (**cf. Romans 10:17**).
    3. He shows us, but we have to listen – **1 Samuel 15:22**
    4. **Deuteronomy 10:12-13** – they knew what God required.
11. Standard – ***“what is good”***
    1. Good is a very relative term (without context).
       1. Situationist – Anything is good given the right situation.
       2. Emotionalism – It is good if it feels right.
       3. Majority rule – It is good if everyone else says so.
    2. God is good – **Matthew 19:16-17**
    3. God order’s good – **Genesis 1:31** – Pertaining to the order and purpose for which it was created – it is as it should be/meant to be.
    4. **1 Samuel 12:23** – good is taught by God (Samuel to the people at Saul’s coronation.)
12. Obligation – ***“what does the Lord require of you”***
    1. The revelation of what is good is not a suggestion – it is not a mere example as to the kind of things to consider following but is the exact standard.
    2. **Deuteronomy 4:1-4** – not a list of suggestions to pick and choose from but demands to follow.
    3. **Matthew 7:21-23** – we cannot bargain with God – what we do is meaningless unless it is what He has required.
13. The Requirement
14. Do Justly (Duty to man)
    1. *mišp̱âṭ* – right, that which is just, lawful, according to law. (Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon)
       1. Relationship with both God and man involved.
       2. Emphasis on relation with man – but such is only rightly governed by proper relationship with God’s law.
          1. ***“He (God) looked for justice (mišp̱âṭ), but behold, oppression (miśp̱âḥ)” (Isaiah 5:7)***.
       3. ***“do justly”*** – involves decision making on our part which is fair, equitable, and right as it is in agreement with God’s standard.
    2. **Micah 6:9-12** – their chastisement for sin is in part due to unjust action – deceitful measures/scales/weights.
    3. Rulers have not upheld justice, but ignored it in pursuit of self to the hurt of the people – **Micah 3:1-3**
       1. ***“know justice?”*** – you should.
       2. ***“hate good and love evil”*** – opposite of justice.
       3. **(vv. 2-3)** – graphic imagery to describe their treatment of their brethren – they abuse their power, taking advantage of the powerless.
       4. **Cf. Isaiah 1:17, 21-23** – betrayed justice, and upheld evil and oppression.
    4. God wants justice in our relationships – i.e. to do what is right according to His law, no matter the person or situation:
       1. **Colossians 3:17-4:1** – we must do justly in these relationships by doing whatever by the authority of Jesus.
       2. **1 Timothy 3:7** – good testimony among all. (Requirement for each Christian as well.)
       3. **Integrity** – holding fast to what is right in every situation no matter what.
15. Love Mercy (Duty to man and God)
    1. The “do(ing) justly” is important, but not enough – it must come from something greater, and go beyond merely what is “the letter of the law.”
       1. **Romans 5:7** – contrast of ***“righteous man”*** and ***“good man”***
       2. “a righteous man is one who acts on the cold principle of justice. Such a man neither gives nor takes. He gives neither short measure nor over measure…But the good man is more than just; he is kind, amiable, and generous. He is devoted to the welfare and happiness of others.” (R.L. Whiteside, Commentary on Romans, 118)
    2. ***“to love mercy” (NKJV); “to love kindness” (NASB, ESV); “to love lovingkindness” (LSB)***
       1. To show compassionate, warmheartedness to man.
       2. **Micah 2:1-5** – those in power have not used their position to protect others but manipulate the system to their advantage.
          1. **(v. 5)** – as they have moved the landmarks and defrauded others, none for their own heritage (spiritual) will be preserved.
       3. **Isaiah 3:13-15** – acted in self-interest to the neglect of the less fortunate.
       4. **Luke 6:31, 36** – doing to men as you’d have them do to you, showing mercy.
          1. Not negative – don’t do what you wouldn’t want done.
          2. **But positive – proactive – looking to the interest of others.**
          3. **Philippians 2:3-4** – their interests are greater than yours.
    3. **Mercy** – *ḥeseḏ* – “implies personal involvement and commitment in a relationship beyond the rule of law.” (VINE)
       1. **“loyalty” (NASB, fn); “steadfast love” (ESV, fn);**
       2. **God to man** – the covenantal love He has for His people – goes above and beyond to nurturer the relationship, and preserve it.
          1. **Micah 7:18-20** – ***“mercy” (v. 18***)
       3. Not a cold, rote observation oof the law, but a devoted, loyal love of the heart in response to His devoted, tender love – **Micah 6:4-5**
       4. Man to God – **Hosea 6:4-6** – ***“faithfulness” (v. 4), “mercy” (v. 6)***
       5. **God wants our sincere love and devotion – He wants us to be One with Him, and committed to His will.**
16. Walk Humbly With Your God (Duty to God)
    1. Humility is key in service to God – **cf. 1 Samuel 15:17-19** – ***“when you were little in your own eyes”***
    2. His will must never be minimized:
       1. Replacing true prophets with false – **Micah 2:6, 11**
       2. Mercenary prophets – **Micah 3:5-7, 11** – say what is desired to those who pay.
    3. To ***“walk humbly with your God”*** is to never question His will, or belittle it, but fully surrender to it.
       1. **Acts 4:18-20** – ***“we cannot but…”*** because God has told us to do this.
       2. **Luke 5:5** – ***“at Your word I will”***
       3. **Colossians 3:17** – whatever we do is done in His name.

**Conclusion**

1. God’s requirement of His people who have seen His great love and grace is no minor thing.
2. He is not someone to merely appease with outward action or tolerate through divided attention.
3. He demands and deserves our entirety, and He desires a real relationship with us.