

## **JUSTICE, KINDNESS, HUMILITY 24/7**

Justice is doing for  
others what we  
would have done  
for ourselves.

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### ***Scripture:***

### **Psalm 15**

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, who may abide in your tent? Who may dwell on your holy hill?  
<sup>2</sup>Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart;  
<sup>3</sup>who do not slander with their tongue, and do no evil to their friends, nor take up a reproach against their neighbors; <sup>4</sup>in whose eyes the wicked are despised, but who honor those who fear the LORD; who stand by their oath even to their hurt; <sup>5</sup>who do not lend money at interest, and do not take a bribe against the innocent.  
Those who do these things shall never be moved.

### **Micah 6:1-8**

<sup>1</sup>Hear what the LORD says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. <sup>2</sup>Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the LORD has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel. <sup>3</sup>“O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! <sup>4</sup>For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.  
<sup>5</sup>O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised, what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”  
<sup>6</sup>“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? <sup>7</sup>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?” <sup>8</sup>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.”

## **This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!**



### **JUSTICE, KINDNESS, HUMILITY 24/7**

How do you define justice? Want to shout out a few ideas?

According to Wikipedia, understandings of justice differ in every culture, since cultures are influenced by their shared history. Each culture's ethics create values which influence the notion of justice, although there are some justice principles that are one and the same in most of the cultures based on moral values of right and wrong.

Advocates of the divine command theory of justice argue that justice is under the authoritative command of God. For example, murder is wrong and must be punished, because God commands that in the command “Thou shall not kill.” The Ten Commandments had a huge influence on our sense of justice in the United States and around the world. It is the moral code for Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

### **FAIR TREATMENT**

Social justice refers to people having an equal chance in life and fair treatment with a lack of bias against them.



**Distributive justice is where wealth, power, respect, and opportunities for work are distributed equally. Our pledge of allegiance highlights our sense of justice when we say, “with liberty and justice for all.”**

In the US we usually include fairness and equity when we define justice. But Socrates in Ancient Greece, focused on peace and harmony as the products of justice when he said, “Justice is a proper, harmonious relationship between the warring parts of the person or city.”

### **THE PROPHET MICAH**

Socrates’ relational perspective on justice connects directly with our passage in Micah today.

According to the prophet Micah in this passage, justice is relational. It is the cause and the result of a harmonious relationship with God. When Micah set up this chapter 6 like a case trial of the people of Israel before God as their judge, he was dealing with the people of Jerusalem who had lost their way and wanted to know how to get back on the path of God. Micah rebuked Israel because of dishonesty in the marketplace and corruption in their

government. They were worshipping idols of wealth and believing in superstitions.

Micah was a country prophet from a little town outside of Jerusalem. I imagine it was probably like Neola, Iowa. The name Micah means: “One who is Like God.” Isaiah lived at the same time around 800 BC. The people Micah was addressing had been following wayward Kings who were not faithful to God.

But before this passage in Micah 6, look back to and read how the prophet famously predicts the Messiah’s birth in Bethlehem. It reads: “But you, O Bethlehem, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.”

### **RESTORING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP**

The other famous scripture from the book of Micah is the passage I read today from Chapter 6. It is written as a dialogue with God about how the people could restore their good relationship with God. Since this was a culture accustomed to offering animal sacrifices to the Gods, they were surprised that Micah suggested burnt offerings were not pleasing to God. Instead they needed to repair their relationship by doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly close to God.

That formula is a perfect formula for repairing any relationship we have today, as well. If you aren’t getting along with someone right now, try killing them with kindness. Then authentically advocate for them where they feel they are being treated unfairly, and then be humble through the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit. If you do these three things, your relationship will surely be restored.

### **BEING HUMBLE**

One can’t do justice and kindness without being humble. One is usually not even interested in justice or kindness until they are authentically humble. For the health and wellbeing of all relationships both parties must be just, kind, and humble for the relationship to be strong.

In Micah 6 God was deeply disappointed and put the people of Israel on trial in this text because they have been seizing the property of others, and being violent to the poor. In this passage, justice is measured by how well the most vulnerable in the community are provided for. God is angry with Israel for not creating a just community where the poor are nurtured and sustained.

**By doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly we create life-giving communities with peace and harmony for all.**

## JUSTICE

I found a story that illuminates what justice is:

The story is told of a man who asked to see heaven and hell. First he was taken to hell, where there were long tables filled with the most sumptuous foods and delicacies. But when the man looked at the people's faces there was only sadness. He then noticed that their bodies were skinny and gaunt. Next he was brought to heaven, where the man was shown the exact same scene. There too the tables were heaped with food. Except in heaven, the people appeared to be well fed, and the expression on their faces was joyful.

When the man asked the guide to show him the difference between the people's experience in heaven and hell he pointed to their arms. There the man saw that in both places the people's elbows were held in a straight position, so that even though they held forks in their hands they were unable to reach their own mouths. In this way, the people in hell starved amidst the bounty. While in heaven, the people understood that if they fed each other, and shared that which was before them that they could all be satisfied.

This is a story for today. There are many in our world who are suffering economically and emotionally. Despite living in the wealthiest country in the world, people go hungry! America's bounty is rich and plentiful but we still need to learn to share it. The difference between a heaven or a hell of our own making is in the acceptance of responsibility to sustain one another. That is justice.

Justice is being a voice for the oppressed unprotected persons, widows, foreigners, immigrants, and to fight for the rights of the disabled, minorities, senior citizens, the poor and anyone who is being treated as less than a beloved child of God, no matter what religion they practice.

God calls us to do justice, to live lives of humble faith where we listen for God's voice among those different from us. That includes Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, and people of other faiths who are also striving to practice justice, love kindness, and walk humbly.

We are to see each other as all created in the image of God and all as our brothers and sisters. To do justice, love kindness and walk humbly we must abide by the one universal law and Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you! It is not easy, but God requires this of you, not just today or tomorrow, but twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Thanks be to God! Amen

### **Benediction:**

**And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever more. Amen**



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