

For the Living of These Days

Session 9: Micah – Act Justly

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly^[u] with your God. Micah 6:8 NIV

Micah and his message

Native of Mareshed near Gath, about 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

Became a prophet in 742 when Pekahiah in the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and 742 – 687 when Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were King in the Southern Kingdom (Judah) Micah 1:1

Prophet to both Northern Kingdom (people in Samaria) and Southern Kingdom (Jerusalem.)

Name means “who is like God?”

Message:

The great disparity between the very rich and the very poor was evidence of their disobedience to God Greedy landlords (2:1-5) and political corruption had cause the entire nation to be morally bankrupt (6:9-16, 7:1-7)

They who were greedy, falsely and swallowing worshiping God and oppressing the poor and marginalized needed a change of heart.

Without the heart change, their conformity to the Law was nothing more than hypocrisy. Micah 3:9-12. (Compare with other prophets with similar messages from Isaiah 1:15, Hosea 6:6 and Amos 5:21)

These are the requirements of God for a righteous, just and holy life! Micah 6:1-8 Act Justly, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with your God. (Cf Isaiah 1:17)

Act (Do) Justly

DO -- To perform; to execute; to carry into effect; to exert labor or power for bringing anything to the state desired, or to completion; or to bring anything to pass.

JUST’LY –In conformity to law, justice or propriety; by right.

“Act justly” would have been understood by Micah’s audience as living with a sense of right and wrong. In particular, the judicial courts had a responsibility to provide equity and protect the innocent. Injustice was a problem in Israel at that time ([Micah 2:1-2](#); [3:1-3](#); [6:11](#)).

Micah's picture of God

God's attributes of justice

Often we think of justice merely as punishment (getting what someone deserves – their 'just desserts.')

Is justice really all about punishment?

In scripture we find God defined by his need for and his offering of justice.

Justice is often mentioned alongside righteousness.

Job 37:23

Psalm 33:5

Psalm 89:14

Isaiah 11:4

God is righteous. He is upright and good, but He is also fair and equitable.

God doesn't show preference to some over others!

Psalm 9:8

Romans 2:11

Fairness is also justice, and this is what God requires of us.

God cares about the outsider

God chose the people of Israel for a reason – they were blessed to be a blessing to all nations. When they failed to do that they were being unrighteous and unjust. Look at Deuteronomy 10:18 and 27:19 and Psalm 68:4-5

Acting in Justice in the Old Testament

"Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place." Jeremiah 22:3 (ESV)

Acting in Justice as Jesus taught

Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost." Luke 19:9-10

Jesus and Zacchaesus Luke 19:1-10

How is Jesus showing us to deal justly with those who have been unjust to us?

Don't seek revenge

Reach out to them

Recognize the dignity, redeemability and worth of everyone

How are we to act justly in the church?

In the New Testament, James, the brother of Jesus, examines what it means to live out your faith, going beyond church attendance and Bible study.

James 1:22-27

James 2:1-26

Act Justly

When we look at words of the prophets, psalmists, Jesus and the early church leaders, what familiar words help us explain what acting justly means:

Impartial

Compassionate

Accurate

Lawful

Righteous

For the living of these days, we do justice when we:

Recognize that social systems are not always equitable. What are we to do about this?

Realize that God expects us to act

Realize that justice isn't based on anyone's personal virtue

When have you found it most difficult to act justly?