

A Simple Walk with God

Thomas Robinson, *Jubilee*, June 1, 2014

Micah 6:6-8

⁶ “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?
⁷ 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?”
⁸ He has told you, Human (*Adham*), what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice,
and to love steadfast love (*hesed*),
and humbly to walk with your God?

Leviticus 25:10

¹⁰ And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you....

Micah 1:1 Introducing Micah

¹ The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham (742-734 bc), Ahaz (734-716), and Hezekiah (716-702), kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Micah 6:1-5 The Challenge of a Court Drama

¹ Hear what the LORD says: | Arise, plead your case before the mountains, | and let the hills hear your voice. | ² Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the LORD, | and you enduring foundations of the earth, | for the LORD has an indictment against his people, | and he will contend with Israel. |

³ “O my people, what have I done to you? | How have I wearied you? Answer me! |

⁴ 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. |

⁵ O my people, remember what Balak king of Moab devised, | and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, | and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, | that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD.”

Micah 7:18-20 The Final Words of the Prophet

¹⁷ Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity | and passing over transgression | for the remnant of his inheritance? | He does not retain his anger forever, | because he delights in steadfast love. | ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us; | he will tread our iniquities underfoot. | You will cast all our sins | into the depths of the sea. | ²⁰ You will show faithfulness to Jacob | and steadfast love to Abraham, | as you have sworn to our fathers | from the days of old.

2 Kings 16:2-4 The Center of Political Power During Micah’s Ministry

² Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign (734 bc), and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God, as his ancestor David had done, ³ but he walked in the way of the kings of Israel. He even burned his son as an offering, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. ⁴ And he sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

A Jubilee of Experiences

A different introduction: On the first Sunday of June, 1964, (50 years ago), I began my journey as a minister when I started preaching for the little Church of Christ in Voca, TX. I was 18 yrs old, finishing my 1st year of college. They were desperate! Farmers, laborers. It was a 2 hr drive on Sunday morning south from Abilene, TX. Teaching a Bible Class, leading singing, preaching, lunch with a family, drive back. I continued till the next Aug. when I moved to a closer country church. Voca is still there, pop 56, church 20 members. That first Sunday I took Micah 6:6-8 as my text. I still have the manuscript, partly typed, partly handwritten. The text is famous among the prophetic books. It fascinated me.

A Prophetic Drama

Micah was a colleague of Isaiah of Jerusalem in the late 8th cent. bc. (Mic 4:1-3 = Isa 2:2-4). He saw the destruction of the N. Kingdom of Israel by Assyria in 722 bc. and the effect of Assyrian pressure on the Kingdom of Judah: paganization, corruption, child sacrifice. Micah combines fierce oracles of judgment with anticipations of hope and healing. In Mic 6:1-5 Micah opens a prophetic courtroom drama: Yahweh brings an indictment against Israel. The court is all creation: Mountains, hills – a reminder of God as creator of all. We expect slashing condemnation: injustice, bribery, false prophets, corruption of power. Instead the words of Yahweh are almost pleading: a love and hope that overrides betrayal. God reminds them of their gospel: the Exodus from slavery, entering the promised land. God began and built their relationship with acts of deliverance, the gift of life.

What Does God Want?

The voice of response begins promising, but insolence emerges. What do you want from me? I'm supposed to bow before this 'High God.' I do! I do everything the temple requires, and more. Daily burnt offerings. Thousands of rams. Whaddaya want? Rivers of oil? Then, cynical, ironical: My firstborn? I do everything. Why doesn't it work? Why is it empty? Micah captures the perennial quandary of religion. It becomes a bargain with a needy God. Sacrifice becomes payoff rather than pouring out gratitude to a God who needs nothing. We do hard things, exact things for God. We do precise performance, better than others. The relationship has been lost! What? Impossible! Just tell us what to do. Hard is better.

A Simple Walk with God

The prophet responds to every person before God. What does God want? You already know. It is simple and flows from the character of the creating, saving, loving God.

Start from the end: Walk with God. God created you for a relationship of love with each other and with God. Recognize that you are a creature; walk humbly, but walk. Sing and dance with him. Yell and argue with him. Work, meditate, learn, and create with him. The God of the universe wants you as a companion, as his image in his world. Walk with God.

Do justice. From the kings and power manipulators (2:1-2) to the lowliest individual, every person faces challenges to treat others with justice. Justice in government policies, in business, in relationships, especially with anyone vulnerable to me. Honor that person, those people, as creatures of God, loved by him. Do it in action. Implement it. Make it real.

Love Steadfast Love (hesed). A combination of love, grace, and faithfulness: companionship with God, who "delights in *hesed*." Love even for enemies – Jesus. Seek out ways to love. Love it! God's character becomes our character. Jesus walked this walk and calls us to it.