



Micah 6:8

Gathering

JUSTICE

The need for social justice has taken center stage in our society, but unfortunately, it's not a new phenomenon in the history of mankind. The prophet Micah is one of the social justice voices of the Old Testament, and his statement on Micah 6:8 is one of the most memorable statements in the Old Testament:

"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 with your God" (NIVUK)

Social justice is a concept of fair and just relations between individuals in a society. On this verse the prophet states that justice starts with a proper relationship with God, who is righteous and just. If you read the whole book, you realize Micah was very sensitive about the social situation of his day, particularly as it affected his homeland. He is relatively unknown to us today outside of his book, although he is mentioned in Jeremiah 26:18. Micah was from Moresheth (1:1) in Southern Judah and prophesied sometime between 750 and 686 BC, during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, the kings of Judah. He was also a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea. As a prophet, he was confident in his calling. He said: *"But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgressions, to Israel his sin"* (3:8 NIV).

The prophet's message was twofold: Judgment and hope. The people's world to whom the prophet Micah spoke was in shambles. He prophesied about the downfall of Samaria (1:6) and warned about the coming defeat and captivity of Jerusalem (1:9-16). The rulers were self-serving and corrupt. They were forsaking the Lord and causing the people to seek other gods and worship idols (6:1-3). There was no safety, no security and there was no place to hide. It needs to be noted that whilst the people were following the law (6:6-7) the prophet reminded them that nothing offered to the Lord was acceptable without obedience.

Micah's message also brought hope. Into this kind of world, Micah announced of the birthplace of the Messiah (5:2). From the little town of Bethlehem would come a leader who would establish a kingdom of peace, justice and mercy for all people. But the people were not just to sit by and wait for this leader and kingdom

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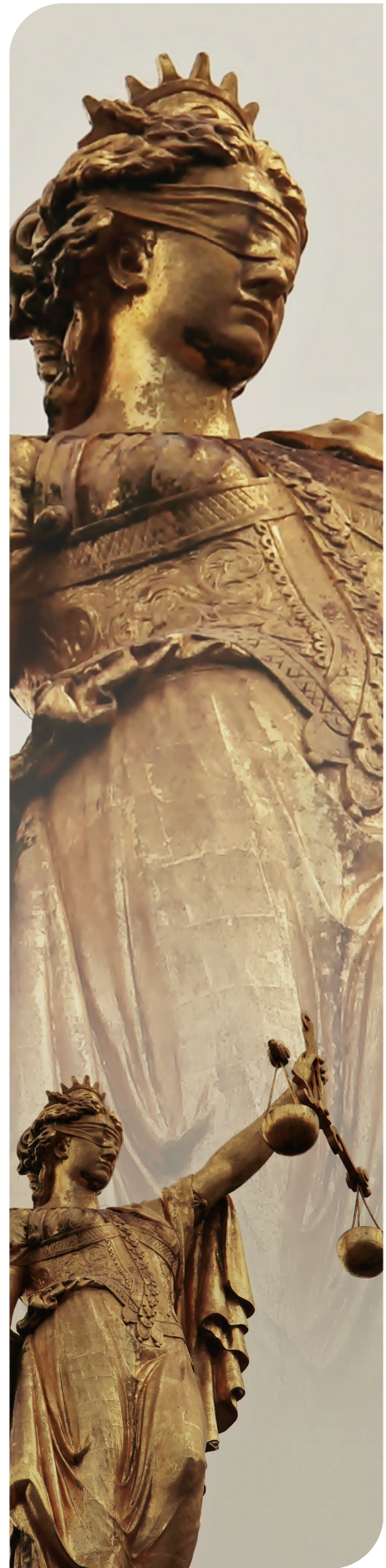
to appear but were instructed in their waiting to demonstrate the characteristics of the kingdom in their everyday lives.

As God's children, let's take an active role not only fighting the evils of society, but by being agents of righteousness and mercy: being honest and fair in all our dealings, remaining kind and faithful to others, and walking in daily submission to the One who loves us. That's how we will point others to God, the source of justice.

After reading the Scripture, consider these questions:

- The world in which we live today is not all that much different to the day in which Micah prophesized. We certainly have many challenges. Can you identify those challenges?
- How did Micah's background knowledge of the kings of Judah (reigns of corruption and idolatry) facilitate the delivery of his message?
- What are the gods or idols that can, at times, take the place of our worship of the one true God?
- As you live out your Christian life daily, what is it that the Lord requires of you?

Complete your monthly report and turn it in to the Corps Officer.



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Sometimes we make the Christian life something it is not by placing ourselves under self-imposed rules. There are those who believe that they can commit sin and yet, if they do what is expected socially, e.g. attend church services and activities or give service to the community, that it will cancel out the sin in their lives.



Explore deeper what Micah says to assess the level of justice in your daily living:

ACT JUSTLY

God's kingdom was established by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He called people to repent and to change their perspective on life. When we experience God's justice for ourselves, we then extend that justice to others. Jesus taught that all people have value in His kingdom. Do you value everybody the same? Discuss how prejudice, discrimination and racism affects us all.

MERCY

Mercy and love are linked with God. God loves us and nothing will change that.

Read Lamentations 3:22-23, what insight do we get by this truth in regard to loving others?

WALK HUMBLY

Jesus Christ lived a life of service and love. When we clothe ourselves in humility and walk the walk of Jesus, we show ourselves to be His children. Humility comes as we receive God's forgiveness.

What then is the key to staying humble considering the values of today's society?

READ DEUTERONOMY 6:1-6

Is it possible for you to love and serve God with your whole heart and soul and mind? If so, what makes that possible?

*Written by Colonel Deslea Maxwell,
Territorial Women's Ministries Department*

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