

Micah 6: What the Lord Requires of Us, Part 2

↪ **Micah 6:8**, the last time we were together we began looking at a lawsuit that God filed against His people for breaking their covenant with Him. God gave them or reminded them of what mattered most to Him. I find it interesting and instructive that in a big-three list of God's requirements, two of the three have to do with how we treat each other and only one has to do with how we relate directly with God.

1. Too many times we think we are good with God even though we aren't very good with people, **Matthew 5:23-24; 1st John 4:20.**

✓ The people of Micah's day got tired of acting right and treating people right, so they focused their attention on ritual practices and sacrifices hoping God would overlook their behavior.

2. Last time we saw that God wants us to "do justly;" this week we are focusing on "loving mercy."

✓ The word for mercy here in the Hebrew is the word "hesed" and is alternately translated in your Old Testament as unfailing love, loving-kindness, or kindness. We see it with reference to God on numerous occasions, **Exodus 34:6; Psalms 86:5; Numbers 14:18; Lamentations 3:22.** It refers to a kindness that is unexpected or undeserved. It is action, not just emotion or feeling; it only matures when carried through in action, just like acting justly, **Matthew 5:16.** You have to "let it."

✓ Lovingkindness or mercy is something that is to be done and not just believed in or felt. Notice that it doesn't in this case just say "do" mercy like it does for justice; instead, it says "love mercy." This is really getting to the heart of the matter which is, of course, our heart. You've got to learn to love it, or you will not really ever do it.

3. In **Matthew 9**, Jesus gives us better understanding of the mercy and lovingkindness He's looking for.

✓ **Matthew 9:10-13**, this comes right down to it with regards to the passage in Micah. The people were completely willing to sacrifice scores of animals, rivers of oil, even their own flesh and blood, but God says, "No," "love mercy." Sacrifice is relatively easy, it's quick, it's not all that messy because you're just there for a few moments doing a few things...I buy some stuff, I give some money, I help out.

✓ It's not bad! It's certainly better than doing nothing, but if it's all we ever do, we haven't learned the difference between mercy and sacrifice. Jesus in Matthew 9 isn't just feeding people or clothing or healing; He's hanging out with these people; He knew their names; it was personal with Him. In order to love mercy, to choose mercy over sacrifice, we have to get our hearts involved. Develop relationships, share our lives; it's messy!

In order to love mercy and choose it over sacrifice, we are going to have to involve our hearts and tangle up our lives with others. Not until sacrifice is no longer the issue and personal love for others is the driving force, are we really doing what He says.
