

Micah 6:8 Pt. 4

Justice & Mercy II (Hesed)

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Micah 6:8

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.

This is where we are in our series on Micah 6:8: Daniel talked about context, next Eric talked about practicing what is good, which is “relational kindness with integrity.” Last week we began Justice and Mercy which we will finish this week and then next week Daniel will talk about walking humbly.

Last week, I told you it was very difficult to figure out the line between justice and mercy: that is why I am preaching them over two weeks. They go together: you cannot separate them. Be sure to review last week if you missed it since the first part is about justice, which is to be aligned with God’s standards. This week we will expand by starting with the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6, and 7.

Sermon On The Mount



In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching the people about many topics but in particular the Law and Justice. The balance scales go back to God’s law:

Matthew 5:38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’^[a] **39** But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. **40** And if anyone

wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. **41** If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. **42** Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. If something bad happens, then the same should happen to you. Retributive justice: something happens because of a wrong done.

Jesus also uses humor: you have heard it said (but he's quoting himself actually!) Jesus takes the Law and stretches it to highlight God’s relationship with his people. Where is the justice in this when someone slaps you and you turn the other cheek? This is not about your justice, your

getting to slap the other person. He says not to resist them but to walk with them. He says don’t commit murder or commit adultery and deepens the reality of sin and brokenness by extending them to even our thoughts. Is Jesus getting rid of the Law? No, he says he has not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. His Justice and Law highlights two main points: righteousness and mercy.

Sermon On The Mount

1. God is righteous and we are unrighteous.

2. God’s mercy.



This is the first piece of the Sermon on the Mount: you realize how unrighteous you are. It also highlights God's mercy. From the Garden of Eden onward, God wants to restore the broken relationship he has with his creation. This extends through captivity in Egypt onward: he gives them the Law, they sin, he draws them back. Then complain and fall away and he continually draws them back. In the middle of their exile, he promises righteousness and this cannot be accomplished through the actions of the people.

It can only be accomplished through HESED, or God's mercy.

HESED

Empalagar



I love the word *Empalagar* in Spanish. Most of the time, you can easily translate Spanish words into English. However, there is no word in English for Empalagar: It's the idea of something that is overly sweet, not just too sweet. If I take a bite of something that is overly sweet, I cannot take one more bite. Sometimes I say "I am empalagated." It can also be applied to things beyond food, such as behavior.

Hesed

Mercy
Kindness
Lovingkindness
Goodness

Hesed has a similar translation issue in English. Hesed is not just mercy: it's kindness, lovingkindness, and goodness. Plus, it's in the Bible 250 times, with about half of the uses in the Psalms.

Hesed

Character of God

This word appeals to God's character; it's central to **who he is**. It's often used when there is evil coming against a person and they cry for God's Hesed.

Lamentations 3:22-23

The LORD'S **lovingkindnesses** indeed never cease,
For His compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.

Hesed is also used to have mercy according to God's great lovingkindness as seen in Lam 3:22-23. Hesed is new every morning and never ceases: again, it's central to God's character.

Hesed

Character of God
Foundation of God's relationship with Israel
Central claim against Israel

It's also the basis of his relationship with Israel: without it, there is no relationship with Israel and only others conquering them. It's what causes God to listen to his people when they are in slavery in Egypt. It's also central to his claim against

Israel: they don't love God's HESED and reflect it to the world. They don't care for others: the orphans and widows. They take advantage of others instead, amassing wealth with dishonest scales without mercy.

“LOVE” MERCY

Micah tells us to LOVE mercy: This love is to desire something, to cling to it: to love HESED is to have love for it and cling to it.

To love something is to make it central to itself. For example, you will see lots of photos of my wife and kids on my phone because they are central to my life. Likewise, if I love HESED, I will make it central in my life.

Prodigal Son



We see this Hesed in the story of the Prodigal son. A man's son tells him he is dead to him and he wants his inheritance now. The father gives it to him and he squanders it on parties and food, ending up as a servant feeding pigs. He is so hungry he desires the pigs' food. This is like us: we are so lost and broken and have nothing left. So the son returns to his father's house and hopes his father will receive him back as a servant. Certainly, he will not receive him back as a son because of all he said and did. The

father, meanwhile, watches for his son every day and one day sees a gaunt, emaciated figure that he recognizes as his son. He smelled bad yet the father embraces him and plans a feast because his son is home. This is God's HESED for us: his kindness and mercy poured out on us.

Good Samaritan



Someone asked Jesus a question about the greatest commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. “*Who is my neighbor?*” Jesus answers with a story:

A man walks on a dangerous road and is beaten by robbers and left for dead on the road. A fellow Jew comes by but avoids him. Another Jewish leader does the same. Then a Samaritan (a people group hated by the Jews) comes along. Really, he is the last person likely to help the man and yet he picks him up, binds his wounds, takes him into town, and offers to pay for his future care. So who was his neighbor? It was the Samaritan, offering HESED. This is what we are called to do: to offer HESED, the love of the Father, to the world around us, even those we hate.

The kingdom of heaven is about those who are blessed:

Sermon On The Mount

The poor
Those who mourn
The meek
The hungry and thirsty
The merciful
The pure in heart
The peacemakers
The persecuted



The kingdom is about the lost, the poor, the beaten-down. HESED is God's loving kindness for these people.

Retributive justice involves balanced scales. But this alone missed half the justice. You cannot just punish the wrong doing without caring for the one who has had had the done wrong to him. You must care for the lost and beaten down without punishment. You have to seek retribution and restoration, not based on our own ideas of who is deserving but based on God's lovingkindness poured out on us and people around us.

Four Ways to Respond:

LOVE MERCY

Practice
Pray the Psalms
Tell your story
Seek the Kingdom

How do we do this?

1. First, we must **practice** this. We look around for the lost, poor, and beaten down.

2. Next, **pray** the **Psalms**: HESED is in there over and over. This week, I used an app that lets me pull up every time a certain word is used in the Bible. I spent about an hour reading every verse that uses HESED and it was powerful.

Also, **pray** the **Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi**: (at the Village, we sing a song about this).

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

3. Practice **telling your story**. You are grabbing onto God's mercy in your life. This reminds us all of the mercy of God.
4. Finally, **seek the Kingdom**. This kingdom is for the lost, poor, and beaten down. The same ones Jesus said were blessed in the sermon on the Mount.

