

Series: 6:8@Six:Eight	Reference: Micah 6:8 & Various passages	Title: Purpose	Date: 10.07.18
Website Writeup:			
If you want to know more about the heart of Six:Eight as a church, we begin exploring that in depth in this new series. We begin with our 'Purpose', basing our discussion around Micah 6:8, the signature verse for our church.			

Color changes in text indicate slide changes

(Series Slide up first - Purpose)

Micah 6:8 is our signature verse as a church - He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice (act justly), to love kindness (mercy), and to walk humbly with your God? ¹

It's important to note that "Good" here is practical & moral - not speculative, ethereal, or philosophical. God's definition of good has three elements...

- (1) **Act justly** - which is a basic commitment to fairness in interpersonal relationships & social institutions. Not a communistic/socialistic view, nor a nod toward Liberation Theology. It merely communicates a basic commitment to treating each other rightly in all our dealings, no matter our level in life.
- (2) **Love mercy** - is to go beyond fairness, responding to the needs of others, compelling a person to help whenever possible. This is basic human kindness expressed in practical ways (verbal, financial, physical, medical, etc.)
- (3) **Walk humbly** - with God, is to remain responsive to God, submitting gladly to His will. This last point sets a boundary within which we're to live. In our kindness/mercy we can't let sympathy push us to do that which is unfair, or violates God's will - God's law is still our standard which must be upheld. We also can't be so rigidly "fair" that we have no room for compassion, or caring.²

Walking humbly with God is always to walk in the middle ground avoiding extremes. Like NT Wright said, "*Justice without forgiveness is revenge. Forgiveness without justice is appeasement.*" So, to come down hard on someone in a situation without having a heart of understanding & forgiveness isn't what Justice means. Also, to simply overlook transgression & sin, simply 'forgiving' without proper consequences is also not good, nor glorifying to God.

Do. Love. Walk. Do justice. Love mercy. Walk humbly. With who? With God, because as you do, you'll automatically do this with others. The focus always being on our vertical connection with Jesus, and as such his life flows through us horizontally to others. Like

¹ *New American Standard Bible : 1995 update.* 1995 (Mic 6:8). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

² Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible readers companion* (electronic ed.) (554). Wheaton: Victor Books.

individual lights strung together connected to the power source of Jesus, together as community automatically giving light & life to each other & those around us.

As Christians, everything comes under the umbrella of God's kingdom reign. A kingdom, not of geographical boundaries, rather expressed wherever His will is acknowledged & obeyed by people. Expressed in justice, mercy & a humble walk with God. In Micah's time the nation of Israel was divided. Idolatry was rampant. Injustice was the norm. The people weren't listening or following & therefore obedience to God wasn't manifest among His people, nor before the nations as was God's desire. At that time & through Micah, God brings a charge against his people. He asks: ³ *"My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me. ⁴ I brought you up out of Egypt & redeemed you from the land of slavery. ³*

He reminds them of His loving faithfulness to them. But although God had enacted justice for them & shown mercy to them, they weren't reciprocating in reflecting to others what God had shown to them. My relationship with Jesus is played out in my relationship with you. How I treat you reflects my heart before God. How I treat you doesn't make me a Christian, we aren't under the Law, but it does reveal, I'm a Christian reflecting God to others. They weren't walking humbly with Him by acting justly & mercifully to each other. Instead they complain about what they think God expects of them. They whine about the outward things & their hearts are far...

⁶ With what shall I come before the Lord & bow down before the exalted God? 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 thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?⁴

In other words, what's going to make God happy? Do I have to give up all my junk? Totally focused on externals, not on transformation of the heart. It's in that context which we get Micah 6:8 where God says in response to their complaints, I expect my people to do justice, love mercy & walk humbly - speaking of a transformed heart leading to loving action & attitude.

Six:Eight is unconventional, in the sense that we experience centrifugal force through centripetal force (twirling an ice-skater); we're externally focused as we're internally connected to Jesus. His kingdom is manifest in us as we, tethered to Him, spin that out to others. The worship service, community groups & other internal initiatives are our spiritual base camps, acting as both refreshment & training ground to bring the Kingdom of God to others. We strive to be culturally relevant to those who've given up on, or never experienced 'Church'. **If Six:Eight should ever go away, the surrounding community should express a loss; something profoundly 'good' should be missing from their community. Something just. Something merciful. Something humble.**

³ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Mic 6:3–4). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁴ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Mic 6:6–7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

We ask the question of others, are you on a spiritual journey, disillusioned, curious, or skeptical of Christ followers? If so, you're welcome here (but you're gonna be changed). We want to be rooted in history, relevant to the moment & a revelation for the future. We want to follow Jesus, to live as Jesus did & manifest Jesus in this world (purpose, vision, mission). To us, community, grace, the story of God & passionate worship (values) all matter greatly.

We want to take the next few weeks & review these foundational statements as a church against the backdrop of Micah's situation. **Today we'll start with the purpose statement: To live in obedience to Jesus' teaching & commands - To follow Jesus...**

These statements were born out of thought & prayer. They're not Scripture, in & of themselves, but are pregnant with the values of Scripture, reflective of the goodness expressed in Micah 6:8. We should notice, each one of the purpose, vision & mission statements can be boiled down to a short phrase for simplicity sake. The Scripture calls us to not only grasp the Gospel message with our intellect, but to assimilate it into our lives, allowing it to take over all we are (Micah 6:8).

Therefore, we like to say, everything's spiritual (expound) & everyone gets to play (expound). If we're Christ followers, then we're ministers of this Kingdom goodness. We live in obedience to Christ's teaching & commands - we follow. **Following & Obedience are synonymous; listening + following = obedience. Jesus expects His followers to listen & follow just as he expected it in Micah's time, as a result, we're obedient to that. We don't want to repeat the mistakes of Micah's day.**

Jesus told Peter in John 21, *'when you were younger you dressed yourself & went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you & lead you where you do not want to go.'*⁵ He wasn't just talking about Peter's future death, but also his life from that point on.

Scripture tells us, we've moved from being slaves of sin (the Kingdom of Satan) to slaves of righteousness (the Kingdom of God). Freedom from sin doesn't translate into freedom to do what I want - that's what Israel did in Micah's time. Rather, if we say we follow Jesus - our questions must change. Our desires must reflect the desires of God. Our heart, reflect His. We respond to what's right before us with justice & mercy as we walk humbly with God.

No longer are we saying, "Where do I want to go in life?" We're saying, "Where's God leading me? What is my kingdom purpose? How do I follow Jesus today?" Listening to God the Living Word & God the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to dress me in Christ's righteousness, taking me wherever He pleases. Which is frightening. We must be led & being led means trust; something they didn't have in Micah's time.

⁵ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Jn 21:18). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Jesus desires followers & wants us to understand the costs. ¹⁹ ... *a scribe came up & said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."* ²⁰ *And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."*

The Shallow Heart - We remember while Jesus was teaching in the Synagogue about what it meant to follow Him it says, ⁶⁰ *On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?"*⁶ They walked away. Large crowds followed Jesus up until the point of crucifixion, but then dissipated at the first sign of difficulty. Shallow hearts. This Scribe was the same. He was a disciple in the loose sense of the word, one on the periphery. One who liked the fuzzy feel good words of Jesus, but when he'd be called to sacrifice, he's nowhere to be found. Jesus wasn't saying a follower must live in poverty, rather a follower senses they have no true home here until Jesus returns. They're led wherever the master calls, even to places they don't want to go; geographical or metaphorical (expound).

Peter, as impetuous as he was, made these same bold statements of following Jesus even to death, but he denied Jesus three times. Yet, Peter's heart was sincere, he had to learn this lesson - he'd have to follow even in the difficult moments into places foreign & frightening. This Scribe is different than Peter. The preaching of Christ had riveted & charmed him; his heart had swelled; enthusiasm kindled. In that state he'll go anywhere with Him & feels impelled to tell Him so.⁷ Yet Jesus knows his heart & puts the challenge where it needs to be. The Shallow hearted person needs to ask, is Jesus worth it?

²¹Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go & bury my father." ²²And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead." ⁸

The Entangled Heart - There was a ministry started decades ago which exists for retired Christians. It exists because they've found many Christian men & women, though they may attend church their whole lives, have never lived out of this kingdom mindset. When they retire they find their whole life has been spent on things with no lasting eternal significance - they'd not asked Kingdom questions. Entangled hearts. **People, like this man, who look around at life & ask themselves at a young age, 'What do I want out of life?' They say, I can follow Jesus after I build my nest egg, after I build my career, after I pursue my dreams. Now that may not be a conscious decision, but they realize in retirement their subconscious motivations when 'work' goes away & they're faced with retirement boredom.**

⁶ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Jn 6:60). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁷ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Mt 8:20). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Mt 8:19–22). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

This man's dad wasn't dead. Jesus would certainly not say, 'Don't go to your dad's funeral today.' The man was saying, let me go home, work, do life, see my dad pass on, gain his estate, then I will follow you - after I find my security. The Entangled Heart needs to understand the primacy & urgency of Jesus' Kingdom call now.

The Divided Heart - ⁶¹ Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶² Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow & looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." ⁹ I recently met a Jewish woman who had raised her son in a Reformed Synagogue. I asked her where she goes to synagogue. She said, "My kids are grown, why would I still go to synagogue?" and laughed. Then she expressed disdain that her son was living in Jerusalem studying to be an orthodox Jewish rabbi, which didn't fit with her reformed views. She said, "I don't want him becoming one of them! But they think he's some kind of scholar. He studies like crazy & they think he's really going to be a great rabbi. But when he comes home to visit, my apartment becomes a frat house! He flies straight as an arrow in Jerusalem, but when he is home he sleeps around, smokes pot & drinks like there's no tomorrow!" She didn't really care about the partying, but thought it funny how he changes when home. He's a man with a foot in two worlds - The Divided Heart.

Before we judge this young man, let's ask the question of ourselves. Do we have the hand on the plowshare, looking back at what we think we're missing in life? It's a matter of integrity - are you the same person here on a Sunday morning you are in daily life? Thinking we're allowed to live as we please in the private moments & put on a show at church? Believing it's okay to live with someone without the commitment of marriage, or to harbor a private sin life not worrying about the integrity of our walk or witness in community? This is the person so divided they never grow forward, never take opportunity for ministry - Jesus as after thought. They haven't fully realized the deep joy of kingdom life & obedience to Jesus. The Divided Heart needs to renounce their former life & learn to trust Jesus.

Jesus said in John 14:23, ²³ ... "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them & make our home with them."¹⁰ The same message of Micah 6:8. Whether it's the shallow, entangled, or divided heart, we must realize that to listen & follow leads to obedience, and in doing so, God abides in us. Not an intellectual set of principles, but a vibrant relational life; God living in & through us when we're 100% bought in. And like the parable of the seeds on the various grounds, we must pray God makes our heart fertile soil to soak up His Word. There's so much more we could say, but I leave you with a few thoughts...

1. **Listening = Reading.** You can't become who you're meant to be in Jesus without a healthy love of His word. Spiritual formation means assimilating the Word of God into life - daily quiet time in the Word. A sermon, a Community Group & books by

⁹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Lk 9:61–62). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

¹⁰ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Jn 14:23). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

other authors are great - but they don't replace allowing God to speak through Scripture directly.

2. **Listening = Listening Prayer.** We don't just study, but we interact with God the Holy Spirit as guide & comforter. Do I listen as I pray, or chatter away at God?
3. **Listening & Following = Doing = Obedience.** Granted you don't attain relationship with God through good works. God wasn't saying to His people in Micah, "This is how you gain favor with me." They were already His people. He was saying, "As subjects of my Kingdom, you reflect your king." God creates you, saves you & prepares you for good works; ⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,* ⁹ *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* ¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* ¹¹ And James 1:22 makes it very clear; *...be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*¹²

Our Purpose... To live in obedience to Jesus' teaching & commands - To follow Jesus

An age old call which we share with those to whom Micah preached. A call consistent throughout Scripture & history. The Kingdom of God manifest where people listen, follow & obey - doing justice, loving mercy & walking humbly with God. That's why we have this purpose statement. There's grace for the shallow, entangled, or divided heart. Peter had to grow into it; he had to learn that his words of love & devotion had to be matched with action; he had to follow Jesus wherever He led. In Jesus, his life was no longer his own. Therefore, this becomes our purpose here at Six:Eight, to become & make followers of Jesus, unfettered by the shallow, entangled or divided heart which leads us into our vision statement next week - to live as Jesus did.

¹¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* 2001 (Eph 2:8–10). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

¹² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version.* 2001 (Jas 1:22). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.