



## Part 6: Pursue God's Beautiful Kingdom

Micah 6:6-8

Pursue God's beautiful Kingdom by seeking the renewal of a broken world.

### I. A Shriveled Gospel

Question: Will you go to heaven when you die? While a fair question, it's indicative of the way the gospel was understood by many people in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century...

But the gospel Jesus announced was much more comprehensive than one's destination at death. His gospel was about God's beautiful Kingdom breaking into history in him as God's King. It was about this life as much as the next.

*The gospel is the good news that God has kept His promises to Israel to rescue and renew His groaning creation from Satan, sin, and death through King Jesus (his life, death, resurrection, and ascension). Life in God's beautiful Kingdom is available now and forever to all who entrust themselves to King Jesus and follow him as Lord.*

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33

### II. The Need for Prophets

The history of God's people is that we get distracted, seduced, intimidated, we get fearful... We also tend to think we can substitute religious ritual for relational fidelity.

“With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?” Micah 6:6

“For I desire steadfast love, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” Hosea 6:6

So, God sends prophets to wake us up and call us back to covenant fidelity.

Jesus is God’s ultimate prophet. His entire life and ministry were calling people back to fidelity with God. Jesus clearly understood himself in the long line of God’s Old Testament prophets.

And the language the prophets most often used was justice, righteousness, and steadfast love.

“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” Amos 5:24

### III. Our Response to God’s Grace: Steadfast Love

“He has shown you, O man, 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.” Micah 6:8

Note: Jesus refers to Micah 6:8 when rebuking the religious leaders (Matthew 23:23-24). They were focused on the technicalities and missing the God’s heart: justice, mercy, and faithfulness (steadfast love).

#### A. Act justly (*mishpat*).

Justice (*mishpat*) is fair treatment of people, and it is especially concerned with the treatment of the most vulnerable in a society. In the Old Testament, God called His people to express particular concern for the “quartet of the vulnerable” referring to widows, orphans, immigrants, and the poor (Deut. 4:6-8; Psalm 146:7-9).

Summary of the Bible’s commitment to justice:

- Equal treatment for all
- Special concern for those without power
- Radical generosity

Closely related to justice is “righteousness” (*tsedaqah*) meaning a commitment to relate rightly to those in your community, especially the poor and powerless, with fairness, compassion, and generosity.

“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.” Psalm 89:14

“...if you are trying to live your life in accordance with the Bible, the concept and call to justice are inescapable. We do justice when we give all human beings their due as

creations of God. Doing justice includes not only the righting of wrongs, but generosity and social concern, especially toward the poor and vulnerable. This kind of life reflects the character of God. It consists of a broad range of activities, from simple fair and honest dealings with people in daily life, to regular, radically generous giving of your time and resources, to activism that seeks to end particular forms of injustice, violence, and oppression.” – Tim Keller, *Generous Justice*

Justice is about the right use of our power. Having power does not make you evil, but it does make you responsible. We should use our power the way God uses His power in Jesus – for the sake of the powerless, oppressed, and vulnerable.

B. Love mercy (*hesed* = steadfast, loyal love).

*Hesed* is used 250 times in the Old Testament. It is translated as mercy, grace, faithful, steadfast love, loyal love. This is the way the Lord is described.

We are called to love resiliently with the love God pours into us through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This resilient love is modeled after God’s love for us in Jesus. The Gospel paradigm is that we were once powerless, vulnerable and slaves. We are to show steadfast love to God and others in the same way God has shown it to us.

C. Humbly walk with God.

Walking is the Hebrew idiom for a lifestyle. We are called to offer our whole lives to Jesus receiving from him the power to follow him wherever he calls us. This takes us back to our first commitment.

We are rightly humbled that He has shown us mercy and grace in Jesus, saving us from the power of sin, Satan, and death.

#### **IV. Imitate God’s Use of Power (Mark 10:35-45)**

Like our Lord, we are called to be servant people. We are called to pursue God’s Kingdom and righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

Some have power through unjust means while others have power through righteous means. Having power does not make one evil, but it does make one responsible.

*Pursue God’s beautiful Kingdom by seeking the renewal of a broken world.*

Recommended actions:

1. Review the practice: Doing Justice (<https://greenwoodcc.com/do-justice/>).
2. Pray over Greenwood’s local and global mission partners looking for ways to become involved.
3. Ask Jesus to lead you into his mission in a way that will bring you alive.