



If there's a God, what does he want from me? In other words, how do I please God? And this is always relevant and it's an important question, but because how we answer it has eternal consequences.

[ 5 : 40 ] And this is a very, very practical question in the time of Micah, almost 800 years before Christ. Israel had split into two kingdoms and neither one of those kingdoms were generally living in a way that we could say was pleasing to God.

So throughout the book, Micah accuses Israel of being unfaithful to its covenant with God. Israel's political leaders had become corrupt.

They had stolen from their fellow citizens to become wealthy. Also, they had distorted justice. They bended justice to favor the wealthy who could pay them off.

And that might sound familiar to you. Even Israel's prophets became corrupt because they had convinced the Israelites that they could get right standing with God by paying them.

And again, that scenario might sound familiar to you. It might sound even like what we see in modern times with some preachers and prosperity gospels.

[ 6 : 57 ] Or it might sound like certain segments of our political and civic life even in a Christian nation. So it is a relevant question that we can ask now.

And it was very relevant in the time of Micah. Because Israel was clearly guilty. In fact, the five verses in this passage before our text in it, God indicates that Israel is unfaithful to him.

And he indicts Israel for their unfaithfulness. So the people clearly need to be reconciled to God. So Micah begins to offer some speculations of how they might approach God.

How they may become reconciled. How they might worship him. And by extension, his questions represents how people, how all of us might rationalize ways that we could earn God's favor.

Shall I come with burnt offerings with calves a year old? We learn in Leviticus 1 that the burnt offering is given as atonement for the one who is making the offering.

[ 8 : 23 ] It atones for sins so that the one who is offering it is left in right standing with God. and we also know from Leviticus that the calf that was to be offered as a burnt offering could be offered as early as eight days old.

But here Micah is asking about a one-year-old calf. So that's a huge difference between eight days and one-year-old. So to understand the significance and the difference it's important to remember that the burnt offering was literally completely burnt up.

All of the animal was placed on the altar and totally consumed by fire. None of it was taken for food. So this was a literal loss, a significant loss.

The person giving the offering was literally sacrificing his food. But you could imagine an eight-day calf being very small.

A one-year-old calf would be much larger. At eight days there would be very little meat that the person was forfeiting. but at one-year-old a calf could be 700, 800, or 900 pounds.

[ 9 : 44 ] So this was a sacrifice of maybe 900 pounds of meat. 900 pounds of food. And consider that this is after that person has cared for that calf for a year.

It's been feeding the calf, probably been rescuing it from dangers, they put a lot of effort into raising this calf. And not only that, just after 12 months is when a calf is now able to breed.

So you're not only giving up that 900 pounds of meat, but you're also giving up future wealth because you're also foregoing any calves that might be born to this animal.

So Micah is painting the picture of someone who goes above and beyond what the law requires.

Then in verse 7, Micah asks about excessive offerings.

What if I offer thousands of rams? rams? But Micah knew very well that by Levitical law, only one ram was required for atonement of sins.

[ 11 : 09 ] So despite that, he again emphasizes going above and beyond the law what the law requires. Because he does not just suggest giving a grossly inflated amount of rams, but he then adds to the number of rams.

He adds to the offering that is already incredibly large, he is also suggesting adding an incredible amount of oil as an offering. Now only 10 ounces of oil, that's less than the very small drink you get for Wendy's.

Only 10 ounces of oil was needed, according to the guilt offering described in Leviticus 14. But then he says, how about giving rivers of oil?

And not just rivers, but tens of thousands of rivers. We don't have any rivers in the Bahamas, but you can imagine this is a huge amount of oil.

So let's recap. One ram is needed according to the law, but Micah says yes, let's give 2,000, or 5,000, or 8,000 rams.

[12:24] And that's a mind-boggling number, but we can still sort of imagine that. After all, there's written evidence in Scripture that King Solomon himself gave more.

King Solomon, who was literally the richest man in the world, he sacrificed 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep for the dedication of the temple about 200 years before Micah.

But I doubt that any of us could imagine tens of thousands of rivers of oil. So Micah suggests that even though 10 ounces, about that much, is required by the law, let's give at least 10,000 rivers full of oil to be offered as a cleansing.

Obviously, Micah is exaggerating the amounts that's to be given. He's asking if we give incredibly above and beyond what is required by the law, does this please God?

Are we then acceptable to him? Then in the later part of verse 7, he suggests what we probably think is unthinkable.

[13:57] Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? So what he's saying literally is what if I take my own child and sacrifice my child, kill my child as an offering to God?

Because that would demonstrate that I am prepared to give anything and do anything to show my devotion to God. Now, I think in twisted human reasoning, some people might consider that this is a good thing.

In fact, we know that some people did think it was a good thing because people actually did this for hundreds of years. This was a practice that was prevalent in Canaan when God brought the Israelites out of Egypt and it went on for hundreds of years.

They offered their children up to the false God Molech. And then sadly, even some Israelites began to think this was a good thing and they fell into the same practice.

But of course, we know that this was actually an evil thing. And it was one that God explicitly prohibited. It was one that God never required.

[15:31] God. So people were going out of their way to create their own ways of what they thought would please God. And that's where these people who were practicing human practices went wrong, some human sacrifices.

They did what seemed right to them. They conceived this belief in their own minds, thinking it was good. Instead, they should have been relying and leaning on the instructions of the Almighty God who is entirely good.

And so throughout Scripture, we are warned about choosing our own righteousness over God's righteousness. In Judges, we see the depravity that resulted when every man did what was right, in his own eyes.

And in the Proverbs, we are warned that there's a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to the way of death. Thankfully, there is also good news.

And that's in my second and final point, God's revelation. God is God's will.

[17:00] God didn't just create us and then leave us on our own to figure things out for ourselves. He has actually revealed himself and he's revealed his will to us.

So Micah 6 and 8 is another instance in which God disrupts our own speculation about what is good. And in this verse, he tells us plainly through Micah what is good and what is his will for us.

And this is what he says. He wants us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. And these three things are the opposite of what was being done by the majority in Israel.

Micah's time. We could probably say it's the opposite of what's being done by the majority in our time, in our country. But we ought to do what is just.

And we do what is just by ensuring that everyone has fair treatment. We have to see that no one is disadvantaged arbitrarily or for exploitation or just because we feel that we could benefit from giving advantages to people who can reward us.

[18:31] It's treating people fairly no matter what it means to us personally. And we ought to love kindness. We should constantly seek to show kindness to others.

The New International Version actually says to love mercy. So we should especially try to extend kindness to those who are in need of forgiveness and understanding.

And thirdly, we ought to walk humbly with God. And this means that we need to be in covenant relationship with God. God needs to be the head of our lives.

And notice that is a humble walk, which is in direct contrast to what we saw in verses 6 and 7.

If we think through it, then we would see that pride is really at the heart of the speculations that we see in verses 6 and 7.

[ 19 : 43 ] Those speculations are an attempt to earn our own salvation. But in verse 8, we see that we ought to yield to God totally, submitting to His direction for our lives.

We're not leaning on our own understanding, our own rationalization, but we are leaning on God.

So we've seen that establishing our own righteousness is not pleasing to God.

And on the other hand, we see that God is pleased when we live justly, and we love kindness, and we walk humbly with Him. But how do we get from the first one to the other?

There's a gap there that needs to be bridged, because we can't just wake up one morning and decide we're going to live in a way that's pleasing to God. So for that, I want us to look at Hebrews 9, 11-14.

Hebrews 9, 11-14. Hebrews 9, 11-14. But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, that is not of this creation, He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

[ 21 : 33 ] For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

This passage in Hebrews 9 allows us to see that Christ is the great sacrifice to God. And being the great sacrifice to God, He is the bridge that closes the gap between our dead works, which are just that, they're dead, they do nothing for us in terms of our righteousness before God, and our living that truly pleases God.

So whether the Israelites sacrificed one lamb as a burnt offering or 50,000 lambs or one calf or 100,000 calves, it was not the way to their eternal life with God.

It didn't renew their minds and their hearts, did not clear their consciences. What it did at best was cleanse them for a period of time, and then they needed to offer more sacrifices.

But Christ's sacrifice was once and for all, and it also purified our conscience. It renewed our minds.

[ 23 : 20 ] what this means is that we are not the ones sacrificing for our salvation.

No matter how much we give, it's not a sufficient sacrifice. But it's when we partake in the great sacrifice of Christ that we have eternal redemption.

The blood of Christ redeems us once and for all from sin so that we have eternal life. Christ's great sacrifice also purifies our conscience so that the mind is renewed, so that we think differently.

We are regenerated to be truly sensitive to the things of God. And we are empowered through the Holy Spirit to truly do what is just, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.

It is not doing justice, it's not loving kindness, and it's not walking with God that actually saves us.

[ 24 : 39 ] It's Christ's sacrifice that saves us. His great sacrifice. And loving justice and mercy and walking with God, they are the evidences of that salvation.

We can't do that on our own. We only do that if we have partaken in Christ's sacrifice. So I've talked a lot this morning, and I've not mentioned fathers yet.

So how does this especially apply to fathers? Let's look at Genesis 18 and verse 19 for that.

Genesis 18, verse 19. And this is what God says about Abraham in that verse.

for I have chosen him that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.

[ 26 : 00 ] So here we see a solemn responsibility that God places on Abraham as the one who would be the father of Israel. By extension, he is the father of all of us who worship the living God.

As a spiritual father, God expects Abraham to train his children and all his household to serve the Lord. God uses very familiar terms.

They're very similar terms to what we read today in Micah 6. He specifically expects Abraham to train his children to do what is righteous and to do justice.

So in the same way, all of us who are fathers, we're called to train our children. We're called to train our children in the ways of the Lord. We find this admission to parents in several scriptures that's often emphasized to fathers in particular.

We can recall one that is our memory verse, our verses to remember, and I'm going to ask anybody to recite it. I'm going to remind you of it. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

[ 27 : 28 ] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. I shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise.

And that's from Deuteronomy chapter, there you go, Deuteronomy chapter 6. I give you the easy part. That's from Deuteronomy chapter 6. So fathers, we have to be intentional about teaching godliness to our children, especially in today's world.

We can't assume that because we are taking them to church that they are adopting the beliefs that they hear. Even outside of this church walls, we need to be in our homes, speaking to our children, and in our cars.

That's one of the huge blessings that I've had as a parent. It's my responsibility to drive my children to school. And I find that those are the times when I really get to actually interact and speak because they're trapped with me for 40 minutes in traffic and they have no choice but to talk to me or at least listen to me.

So let's take advantage of these opportunities. We have to be intentional because those who are opposed to God, those who are opposed to the things of God, they're being very intentional.

[ 29 : 02 ] They're being strategic. They're finding ways to get into schools even and to try and program our children with their beliefs. They're trying to stifle the gospel.

We have our children in our homes. Let us make sure that we are espousing the gospel to them. So without intentional training, our children will likely follow the influence of the world or invent their own ideas of what is right, what is wrong, how they should live, and how they can please God. Let's not leave our children to speculate. This responsibility also falls on single mothers. that's reality. We have mothers who are raising children on their own who don't have a father active in the lives of their children.

So those mothers must take on the responsibility of being the father, the primary teacher in the home. mother.

And mothers might be helpful too to find surrogate fathers, men who can have a godly influence in the lives of your children.

[ 30 : 29 ] And that might mean using the resources of a church, like Kingdom Life Church. That might mean using the resources of counterculture, for example, where these shrewds, I emphasize, and incidentally, about four weeks ago, we talked about this very subject.

We talked about the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and the first question was, what is the chief end of man? Do you have any counterculture students in here?

Anyone? That's my Ezekiel. Okay, no Ezekiel. I see Andre. What is the chief end of man? Don't embarrass me now.

Let's glorify. Correct. Okay. To glorify God and enjoy Him forever. So, within these ministries and church, we are teaching these things.

All right? So, not having the father in the home, we cannot take that as an excuse. We have to use the resources of brothers and sisters who can be godly surrogate fathers to our children.

[ 31 : 51 ] So, fathers, let's teach our children that Christ has already given the great sacrifice that brings eternal life. that is the most most important, the highest lesson that we can teach them in life.

If we teach nothing at all, we ought to teach that. And fathers, by the way, we can't teach this effectively without ourselves partaking of the great sacrifice, without partaking of the grace of God. We need to be touched. We need to be relying on the grace of God even to teach our children and not make this a works type of thing. All right?

Let's rely on God fully. So, we need to teach them that we don't need to make millions of dollars and give it away to the church to please God, like Mansa Musa did.

In fact, Mansa Musa was so deceived, he did not even know who the true and living God was. And he put a lot of effort, I'm sure, into the sacrifice that he gave, into that great offering.

[ 33 : 05 ] But we must teach that salvation does not depend on how much we tithe or what we give up during length, or any of these things that we hear that are really deceptions.

But our salvation depends on where we stand in Christ. It's a free gift, and it's received in faith, just as Abraham was justified by faith and not by works.

Christ has already paid the exorbitant, the extravagant price that saves our souls, and his sacrifice then allows us to live in a manner that's pleasing to our God.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you that you are God above all, and that you reveal yourself to us in the pages of your scripture.

You reveal to us yourself in nature. You let us know that you are real, and you let us know that we don't need to speculate.

[ 34 : 25 ] We don't need to guess as to how we ought to live to please you. We thank you for that, Lord. We thank you for that kindness. And we pray, Father, that you would draw all you have chosen to you.

to love you. We pray, Father, that you would continue to open the eyes of men and women, that you would continue to save, that you would regenerate hearts, and that you would redeem minds to learn to love you.

And we pray, Lord, that your spirit would teach us how to walk humbly with you, that we would truly be generous to one another, be just with one another, that we would learn to love mercy, and that we would walk, not only on our own understanding, but we would walk humbly with you as head and lord of our life.

Father, we pray especially for fathers, that fathers would rightfully teach, that our fathers would rightfully lead, and we pray, Lord, that you would be a blessing to families through our fathers, and a blessing to this nation who needs you.

We pray this, Lord, in the name of Christ, the one who was our great sacrifice. Amen. Amen.