



FAITH
FOCUS

NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Events

Monday 7/6 – Friday
7/10:

Youth Summer Camp



Sunday 7/19 – Saturday
7/25:

JAARS Mission Trip



O Lord, What is Good?

By now, you have probably developed some form of opinion in response to the recent events of our day. Or, you have at least had someone else express their opinion to you. Much could be said, and quite frankly, is being said. However, the overwhelming question many of us are facing is, “What do we say?” For some, silence and contemplation are the best language. For others, verbally speaking out against injustice in our society is the best form of speech. As a result of how we choose to respond, or in some cases not respond, there are unnecessary societal pressures. If you are silent, then you must not care about justice. If you are vocal, then you must not care about the police. Regardless of how you respond, you have likely been placed into a particular camp, and have likewise been judged for it. And sadly, many Christians have been guilty of casting the judgment onto others as well.

Because of this, I would contend that we are asking the wrong question. Indeed, we all want to know what we should say (or do), but the question we should be asking is, “What does the Bible say?” And if we honestly search the Scriptures with an open mind and heart, we will undoubtedly be equipped with a proper response to the things unfolding around us.

There are several passages we could turn to, but my mind keeps returning to Micah 6:8, “He has told you O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do *justice*, love *mercy*, and to *walk humbly* with our God?”

“Justice, mercy, and humility are three attributes that do not come naturally to you and I, but because of the righteousness of Christ imparted to us, there is hope that we can still live in them.”

In the context of Micah 6, the people of Israel were offering up sacrifices of worship to their God while simultaneously neglecting to administer true justice and mercy toward those in their midst. The word for “justice” in the Hebrew more literally means “to do what is right”. As God’s covenant people, they had repeatedly been graciously shown what was morally right and wrong, and yet were failing to act justly and mercifully. In Amos 5:22 the Lord echoes a similar sentiment: “Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them.” True worship of God and a genuine desire to do that which is right, must go hand in hand. God is not pleased with one without the



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other. I am not calling for the church to be social justice warriors, but I am asking each of us (including myself) to consider the words of David in Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts. And see if there be any hurtful way in me and lead me in the everlasting way." Is it possible that we are offering up our praises and worship to God while neglecting to act justly and love mercy? Lord, please reveal to us the hurtful ways of our heart.

Finally, Micah concludes verse 8 by imploring the people of Israel to walk humbly with their God. There is a sense that seeking to do justice and love mercy are nearly impossible without doing so in humility. And significantly, the humility that Micah expresses here is vertical. We cannot rightly walk humbly with others until we have first been humbled before God. And it is through the sentiment of Psalm 139 that the Lord reveals to us our deepest sins, and by His grace cleanses us of them to bring us to a place of humility. One final note. This is continual. To "walk" humbly implies there is a journey ahead; one that is going to require the Spirit's sanctifying work in our lives day by day.

Our hope is this: as the Lord daily sanctifies His children, they will gradually be able to see more rightly, desire justice purely, and love mercy continually.

Pastor Nate Miller

Hidden With Christ

Many of us have spent the last few months sheltered in our homes. Hiding from an unseen threat, a virus. A real threat, but one that we are unable to see with the naked eye. A real threat that causes real harm and for some, can lead to real death. A real threat that has led us to hide. Hiding can cause anxiety, fear, and sadness. I admit, I have experienced a breadth of emotions during this time. The complexity of hiding is that it feels both active and submissive. Active in making a conscious choice to shelter in place. This active effort requires obtaining supplies, avoiding others, canceling events, and changing daily routines.

On the flipside, hiding is also submissive. We hide in our houses from an outside force that we hope cannot penetrate our protective surroundings. Our submissiveness takes the form of waiting for a change, hoping to get back to normal, relying on a cure, obeying those in authority. In the same way that we are protecting our physical life by hiding, we are protected in our spiritual life by hiding. In Colossians 3 verse 3 we read: For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. The Apostle Paul is expounding on what he said earlier, that because we are united to Christ in His resurrection, we are raised with Him to new life and thus we are hidden with Him in God. What does it mean to be hidden with Christ? Similar to today, hiding in Christ is both active and submissive. Actively we pursue Christ. Actively we set our mind on things above. Actively we walk with Christ. Actively we seek righteousness. Submissively we wait on Christ and His timing. Submissively we place our hope in Christ. Submissively we rely completely on Christ for salvation. Submissively we obey the commands of Christ.

To be "hidden with Christ" means that we place our faith and hope entirely in Christ. In our hiding we acknowledge that Christ received the punishment we deserved. At the cross, the full, unbridled wrath of God came down upon Jesus, and, in that moment of judgment, there was nowhere for Jesus to hide. Jesus, for us, is exposed to the all-consuming expression of sin's cruelty and the wrath of God. Clothed in our shame, crowned with our thorns, and exposed to the judgment of God that we deserve—Jesus is our hiding place. For there is no safer place to hide. Outside of Christ, there is no safe place to hide, but being found in Christ there is peace and safety. As the great hymn reminds, "Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee." May we hide ourselves in thee, Christ, our rock, our fortress, and our only savior.

Pastor Will Verdon

Growing the Family of God for the Glory of God.