What the Lord Requires
Micah 6:3-8
SS Lesson for 07/19/2015

Devotional Scripture: Deut 10:12-13; Eccl 12:13

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson reviews the biblical answers to the question **What the Lord Requires**. The study’s aim is to show that if we can understand and implement the principles outlined in the lesson, we may well escape discipline and enjoy God’s blessing. The study’s application is to start today to dynamically employ the principles available to us to follow the Lord in our lives.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Micah 6:8

*He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Again (cf. 1:2) **the Lord** called on witnesses to listen to His case (“lawsuit or litigation”; trans. “accusation” in 6:2a and “case” in v. 2b) against His covenant people. He then challenged Israel to stand up... before the mountains and give her side of the dispute with God. He was calling for outside witnesses to confirm that He had been just and righteous with His people and that Israel had been wrong in its attitudes and actions before God. The witnesses He appealed to were people everywhere, represented by “the mountains” (cf. v. 2) and the hills. **The Lord** then began to set forth His case against His people. He repeated His call to the mountains (cf. v. 1) to listen to His accusation (rḥ; cf. comments on v. 1) and “case” (rḥ) against His people **Israel**. In setting forth His case the Lord addressed the nation as **My people** (cf. v. 5). By a question (What have I done to you?) the Lord affirmed His innocence (cf. “What have I done?” in 1 Sam. 17:29; 20:1; 26:18; 29:8). He also asked the people to answer Him by naming some way in which He had burdened (lit., “wearied”) them. Though the Israelites had often complained against God, they had no grounds for such complaints. For that reason they could not answer God’s accusation. God reminded the people of His goodness in leading them out of Egypt into the Promised Land. The prophets often reminded the people of their deliverance from Egyptian slavery. The Exodus was a great focal event in the life of Israel because by it God had delivered them from foreign domination and also because it was followed by the Lord’s giving the Law to them through Moses. The word redeemed (pāḏāh, “to ransom”; cf. Deut. 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 24:18) would remind them of the slaying of the Passover lambs so that the oldest son of each Israelite family would not be killed (Ex. 12:3, 7, 12-13). God’s mention of Moses would remind the people of the Law, and the name of Aaron would bring to mind the priesthood. Perhaps Miriam is mentioned because her name would bring to mind her song to the Lord (Ex. 15:21) and her role as a prophetess (Ex. 15:20). Because Moses represented God to man and Aaron represented man to God, the people had a unique relationship with the Lord. Micah next reminded God’s people (cf. “My people” in v. 3) of their forefathers’ experience in the wilderness when Balak... of Moab tried to get Balaam to prophesy against the covenant people (Num. 22-24). Rather than cursing the people, Balaam blessed them. This was another evidence of God’s goodness to them. Another great event in the nation’s life was the journey from Shittim, the Israelites’ last campsite east of the Jordan River (cf. Josh. 3:1), to Gilgal, the first encampment after the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River (cf. Josh. 4:18-19). In all these things God had not burdened His people. Rather He was their Protector and Defender, giving them grace over and over.

In these well-known verses the prophet responded to the Lord’s indictment. Micah spoke as a righteous person who understood his people’s guilt. He was not like the many leaders who had refused to shepherd the people properly. Speaking for the nation, Micah asked what he must take before the Lord in worship to regain His good favor. Micah asked if he should approach the Lord with burnt offerings. Should he go with calves ready to be sacrificed? By these questions the prophet was not downplaying the importance of the sacrificial system. The Lord had set up the Levitical system to provide, among other things, atonement...
for the people’s sin. Micah, as a righteous member of the covenant community, was no doubt involved in the sacrificial system. He knew, however, that the sacrifices were meant to be outward expressions of inner trust and dependence on God for His grace and mercy. Micah then asked in hyperbole if the Lord would want thousands of rams, or 10,000 rivers of oil, or even his own firstborn child (the fruit of his body) to atone for his transgression and sin (cf. 1:5; 3:8; 7:18). He of course knew these would not appease God’s wrath on the nation. Nor was Micah condoning the evil practice of child sacrifice, forbidden in the Law (cf. Lev. 18:1; 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31; 18:10). He asked those rhetorical questions to suggest to Israel that nothing—not even the most extreme sacrifice—could atone for what she had done. Also this emphasized that God did not want them to “pay” Him. Instead God wanted them to change their actions and attitudes. Micah then told the nation (O man means any person in Israel) exactly what God did desire from them. God did not want them to be related to Him in only a ritualistic way. God wanted them to be related inwardly—to obey Him because they desired to, not because it was a burden on them. That relationship, which is good (beneficial), involves three things: that individuals (a) act justly (be fair in their dealings with others), (b) love mercy (hesed, “loyal love”; i.e., carry through on their commitments to meet others needs), and (c) walk humbly with... God (fellowship with Him in modesty, without arrogance). “Humbly” translates the verb sāma’ (which occurs only here in the OT); it means to be modest. (The adjective sāmi’a occurs only once, in Prov. 11:2.) The Lord had already told them of these demands (Deut. 10:12, 18). Doing justice “is a way of loving mercy, which in turn is a manifestation of walking humbly with God” (James Luther Mays, Micah: A Commentary, p. 142). Many people in Micah’s day were not being just (Micah 2:1-2; 3:1-3; 6:11), or showing loyal love to those to whom they were supposed to be committed (2:8-9; 3:10-11; 6:12), or walking in humble fellowship with God (2:3).

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Christian author Howard Hendricks (1924-2013) used to tell a story about Bud Wilkinson, who was the head football coach at the University of Oklahoma from 1947 to 1963. On one occasion, Wilkinson was in a certain city giving a series of lectures on physical fitness. During an interview, a reporter asked, “Mr. Wilkinson, what would you say is the contribution of football to physical fitness?” The reporter expected a rather lengthy answer, but Wilkinson’s reply was surprisingly brief: “Absolutely nothing.” The reporter, somewhat taken aback, responded, “Would you care to elaborate on that?” “Certainly,” the coach said. “I define football as 22 men on the field who desperately need exercise.” Today’s study is a challenge to be more than spectators—to know what God requires of us all. Our task is to “get out on the field” and do it. But it is easy to drift into the thinking that a football coach at the University of Oklahoma from 1947 to 1963. On one occasion, Wilkinson was in a certain...
the “pain”—was not external, but internal. Despite all of the “-ites” that posed threats periodically (Canaanites, etc.), the people who brought the most misery to the Israelites were the Israelites themselves! They were their own worst enemy. Just before today’s text, the Lord began confronting His people as though He were a prosecutor in a courtroom. He challenged the people to plead their case “before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say” (Micah 6:1, 2). This language is rooted in the “witness language” used by Moses in Deuteronomy 30:19. The witnesses of Heaven, earth, the mountains, etc., had remained in place since the time of that great leader. Thus they have watched the history of the Israelites through the years. They were commanded in Micah 6:2 to “hear” what the Lord had to say about his people and to verify whether his assessment of them was accurate.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

The Challenge of God (Micah 6:3-5)

3 "O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me.
4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
5 O My people, remember now What Balak king of Moab counseled, And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, From Acacia Grove to Gilgal, That you may know the righteousness of the Lord."

Has God not blessed (3)

Blessing of salvation (Rom 5:8-9)
8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Blessing of life (Gen 2:7)
7 the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Blessing of provisions (Ps 136:23-26)
23 to the One who remembered us in our low estate His love endures forever. 24 and freed us from our enemies, His love endures forever. 25 and who gives food to every creature. His love endures forever. 26 Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.

Blessing of protection (Ps 37:28)
28 For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off;

Has God not delivered (4)

Deliverance from Satan (Matt 6:13)
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

Deliverance from deadly perils (2 Cor 1:10)
He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,
Deliverance from troubles (Ps 34:19)
A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all;

Deliverance from trials (2 Peter 2:9)
if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

Deliverance from temptations by providing a way out (1 Cor 10:13)
No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Is God not righteous (5)

Righteous and full of grace and compassion (Ps 116:5)
5 The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

Righteous in His laws (Ps 119:137)
137 Righteous are you, O Lord, and your laws are right.

Righteous in all His ways (Ps 145:17)
17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.

Righteous in all He does (Dan 9:14)
14 The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

The Requirements of God (Micah 6:6-8)

6 With what shall I come before the Lord, And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves a year old?
7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

Recognition of what pleases God (6-7)

Recognize that seeking His will for our life pleases God (Eph 5:8-10)
8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord.

Recognize that obedience pleases God (Colossians 3:20)
20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Recognize that praying for others pleases God (1 Tim 2:1-3)
1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone— 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior,
Recognize that living in righteousness pleases God (1 John 3:22)

22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

To live justly (8)

**Definition of Just**

a verdict (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree (human or [participant's] divine law, individual or collective), including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstractly, justice, including a participant's right or privilege (statutory or customary), or even a style. (from Strong's Concordance)

To be proper, fitting, using the right custom, manner or plan (from Thayer's Greek Lexicon and Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon)

The sphere in which things are in proper relationship to one's claims (from Vine's Expository Dictionary)

"Judge of thyself in thyself without acceptance of thine own person, so as not to spare thy sins, nor take pleasure in them, because thou hast done them. Neither praise thyself in what is good in thee, nor accuse God in what is evil in thee. For this is wrong judgment, and so, not judgment at all. This thou didst, being evil; reverse it, and it will be right. Praise God in what is good in thee; accuse thyself in what is evil. So shalt thou anticipate the judgment of God, as He saith, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:31). (from Barnes' Notes)

Justification only comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22-24)

22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

To be just is to do what is right and acceptable to God (Prov 21:3)

To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

To be just is to live a clean life and stop doing wrong (Isa 1:16-17)

16 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, 17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

God loves the just and will not forsake them (Ps 37:28)

For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off;

God guards the course of the Just (Prov 2:7-8)

7 He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, 8 for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.

To be just has the same requirements as the type of fasting that God desires (Isa 58:6-11)

6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? 8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. 9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, 10 and if you spend
yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the
darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. 11 The LORD will guide you always; he will
satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered
garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

To be just is to reform our ways (Jer 7:3-6)
3 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will
let you live in this place. 4 Do not trust in deceptive words and say, "This is the temple of the LORD, the
temple of the LORD!" 5 If you really change your ways and your actions and
deal with each other justly, 6 if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed
innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm,

To love mercy (8)

Definition of Mercy
"Mercy is a form of love determined by the state or condition of its objects. Their state is one of suffering
and need, while they may be unworthy or ill-deserving. Mercy is at once the disposition of love respecting
such, and the kindly ministry of love for their relief" (From The New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

Mercy is "loving-kindness; steadfast love; grace; faithfulness; goodness; devotion." The word refers
primarily to mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations between the parties of a relationship (especially
Yahweh and Israel). But it is not only a matter of obligation; it is also of generosity. (from Vine's
Expository Dictionary)

God requires mercy because it is a blessing (Matt 5:7)
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

God requires mercy because it is a prerequisite of getting mercy (Matt 18:32-35)
32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours
because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'
34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.
35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your
heart."

God requires mercy because He is merciful and wants us to be also (Luke 6:36)
Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

God requires mercy because it is a characteristic of His chosen people (Col 3:12)
Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness,
humility, gentleness and patience.

God requires mercy because mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)
because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs
over judgment!

Mercy has as its components love, compassion, kindness and patience (Ps 103:8-14)
8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always
accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us
according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those
who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13
As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

Commentary from the UBS Handbook
That God is merciful is an important concept in the Old Testament- mercy is part of God's nature (Ex 34:5-6). From Ps 103:8-14, we can readily see that its components include love, compassion, kindness, forbearance. It is a way of living that God requires of all of his followers. (from the UBS Handbook Series)

Walk humbly with God (8)

Definition of Humility
A freedom from arrogance that grows out of the recognition that all we have and are comes from God. Biblical humility is also a recognition that by ourselves we are inadequate, without dignity and worthless. Yet, because we are created in God's image and because believers are in Christ, we have infinite worth and dignity (1 Cor 4:6-7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). True humility does not produce pride but gratitude. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Humility in the spiritual sense is an inwrought grace of the soul that allows one to think of himself no more highly than he ought to think (Eph 4:1-2; Col 3:12-13; cf. Rom 12:3). (From The New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

God requires humility because it is a requirement for being with Him (Isa 57:15)
For this is what the high and lofty One says--he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."

God requires humility because it shows our repentance of sin (Ezek 16:63)
Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

God requires humility because it is a blessing (Matt 5:3)
"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

God requires humility because it leads to justification (Luke 18:13-14)
13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

God requires humility because it is a part of submission to God (James 4:7-8)
7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you.

God requires humility because it is a prerequisite of being lifted up by God (1 Peter 5:5-6)
5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.
Commentary on humbleness from Barnes Notes

It is not a "crouching before God" displeased, (such as they had thought of,) but the humble love of the forgiven; "walk humbly," as the creature with the Creator, but in love, with thine own God. Humble thyself with God, who humbled himself in the flesh: walk on with Him, who is thy Way. Neither humility nor obedience alone would be true graces; but to cleave fast to God, because He is thine All, and to bow thyself down, because thou art nothing, and thine All is He and of Him. It is altogether a Gospel-precept; bidding us, "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matt 5:48); "Be merciful, as your Father also is merciful;" (Luke 6:36); and yet, in the end, have "that same mind which was also in Christ Jesus, who made Himself of no reputation” (Phil 2:5,7,9)

Commentary on the three requirements of man from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

In one of the most memorable statements in the Old Testament, Micah threw aside all the pretentious proposals and brought Israel back to basics. “He hath shewed thee, 0 man, what is good” was a rebuke for their ignorance. Why ask what God required when He had already shown them? It was found in their law. God’s requirements were three: “to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” The first two relate to treatment of one’s fellow man. Acts of justice proceed from a love of mercy. Alas, Micah’s contemporaries hated good, loved evil, and committed acts of injustice (3:1-3). No sacrifice could compensate for this. The third requirement, “to walk humbly with thy God,” is the foundation for the other two. A humble walk with God begins with an acknowledgment of sin and unworthiness and an acceptance of His gracious forgiveness (cf. Psalms. 32:1-5; 51:1-4, 16-17). It continues with a daily submission to His will as revealed in His Word and empowered by the Holy Spirit. What God expected of Israel He still expects of us, for His righteous standards rest on His eternal, holy nature.

Commentary on the three requirements of man from Keil & Delitzsch Commentary

God’s requirements are not outward sacrifices of any kind, but only the fulfilment of three following duties: namely, above all things, doing righteousness and exercising love. These two embrace all the commandments of the second table, of whose fulfilment Israel thought so little, that it was addicted to the very opposite-namely, injustice, oppression, and want of affection (Mic 2:1-2,8; 3:2-3,9 ff., 6:10 ff.). There is also a third: humble walk with God, i.e., in fellowship with God, as Israel, being a holy priestly nation, ought to walk.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from David Guzik

A. The LORD’s complaint against His people.

1. (1-2) In court with the LORD.

Hear now what the LORD says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, O you mountains, the LORDs complaint, and let the strong foundations of the earth; for the LORD has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel.

a. Arise, plead your case: Micah pictures a court of law, with Israel on trial before the Lord. In the presence of unshakable witnesses (the mountains and the hills and the strong foundations of the earth), the court comes to order.

b. The LORD has a complaint against His people, and He will contend with Israel: In His court, God will bring His case - His complaint against Israel.

2. (3-5) The LORDs complaint against His people.

O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me. For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, from Acacia Grove to Gilgal, that you may know the righteousness of the LORD.
a. Testify against Me: As Israel steps up to the witness stand, God asks them, What have I done to you? He has done nothing but good to Israel, and has been repaid with rejection and rebellion.

b. I redeemed you from the house of bondage: Not only did God not do evil to Israel, He also did them an enormous amount of good. He redeemed them and gave them godly leaders. God’s case against Israel looks pretty good.

c. Remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled: After meeting with King Balak of Moab, Balaam prophesied over Israel four times. As he spoke forth God’s word, he did not curse Israel - but he blessed them each time. When he was unsuccessful in cursing Israel, Balaam answered Balak on how to bring Israel under a curse. Instead of trying to have a prophet curse them, the Moabites lead them into fornication and idolatry, and God will curse them. Balak did just that, sending his young women into the camp of Israel to lead Israel into sexual immorality and idolatry. Because of their sin, God did curse Israel - He brought a plague of judgment upon Israel that killed 24,000.

i. In light of this, Israel must remember that God could never be persuaded to curse Israel, except if they brought curses on themselves through their own disobedience and rebellion. Like a great lawyer in court, God shows Israel that if they feel cursed in any way, it is entirely their responsibility.

3. (6-7) The answer of His people: What can I do?
With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

a. With what shall I come before the LORD: This is a question asked out of bitterness and resentment. Israel calls out to God from the witness stand, and says: Just what do You want from me?

b. Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? We can almost hear Israel shouting at God from the witness stand. You ask too much, God. Nothing will satisfy You. If we brought thousands of rams or rivers of oil or even my own firstborn it would not be enough. You are unreasonable.

i. Blinded to God’s goodness and character, he reasons within his own depraved frame of reference. He need not change; God must change . . . His willingness to raise the price does not reflect his generosity but veils a complaint that God demands too much. (Waltke)

4. (8) The reply of the LORD: He has shown you.
He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

a. He has shown you: God stops the shouting of the angry defendant from the witness box. You act as if it is some mystery what I require of you. In point of fact it is no mystery at all. I have shown you clearly what is good and what I require of you.

b. To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God: The LORD answers the contentious witness in open court. What I require of you isn’t complicated. Simply do three things.

c. Do justly: Act in a just, fair way towards others. Treat them the way you want to be treated.

d. Love mercy: Don’t just show mercy, but love to show it. Give others the same measure of mercy you want to receive from the Me.

e. Walk humbly with your God: Remember who I am - your God. If you keep that in mind, you will walk humbly before Me.

i. I would not advise any of you to try to be humble, but to be humble. As to acting humbly, when a man forces himself to it, that is poor stuff. When a man talks a great deal about his humility, when he is very humble to everybody, he is generally a canting hypocrite. Humility must be in the heart, and then it will come out spontaneously as the outflow of life in every act that a man performs. (Spurgeon)
ii. Spurgeon’s sermon *Micah’s Message for Today* applied the idea of how to **walk humbly with your God**:

- Walk humbly when you are spiritually strong
- Walk humbly when you have much work to do
- Walk humbly in all your motives
- Walk humbly studying God’s word
- Walk humbly when under trials
- Walk humbly in your devotions
- Walk humbly between you and your brothers in Christ
- Walk humbly when dealing with sinners

iii. True humility is thinking rightly of thyself, not meanly. When you have found out what you really are, you will be humble, for you are nothing to boast of. To be humble will make you safe. To be humble will make you happy. To be humble will make music in your heart when you go to bed. To be humble here will make you wake up in the likeness of your Master by-and-by. (Spurgeon)

f. God has proven His case before the court. Israel is afflicted, but it is not because of the neglect or disregard of God. Their own sin brought their affliction upon them. In addition, what God required of them was not mysterious or too difficult - they simply did not do it.

**B. The voice of the LORD cries out in the city.**

1. (9-12) God sees the injustice and deceit of Israel. The Lord’s voice cries to the city; wisdom shall see Your name: Hear the Rod! Who has appointed it? Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the short measure that is an abomination? Shall I count pure those with the wicked scales, and with the bag of deceitful weights? For her rich men are full of violence, her inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

   a. **Hear the Rod! Who has appointed it?** Israel felt the rod of God, but did not hear it. God tells them to **Hear the Rod**, both in the sense of the rod as a picture of the corrective discipline of God, and in the sense that the Rod can be personified as the voice of God Himself.

      i. We can rest contentedly in our sins and in our stupidities; and anyone who has watched gluttons shoveling down the most exquisite foods as if they did not know what they were eating, will admit that we can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists on being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world. (C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*)

   b. **The short measure that is an abomination . . . wicked scales . . . deceitful weights:** God was angry with Israel for plain old cheating in money matters. They lied and stole and cheated one another, all for the sake of making some money off each other.

   c. **Her rich men are full of violence:** The sin of Israel went further than just cheating others in business and commerce; they also made themselves rich through plain violence. They could expect the judgment of God for such sin.

      i. No society is ever entirely upright or godly; there are always evil people in it. But in a well-functioning society the evil are suppressed and those of good character are prominent and rule the land. In times of moral breakdown this is inverted. (Boice)

2. (13-16) God’s judgment on greedy and wicked Israel. Therefore I will also make you sick by striking you, by making you desolate because of your sins. You shall eat, but not be satisfied; hunger shall be in your midst. You may carry some away, but shall not save them; and what you do rescue I will give over to the sword. You shall sow, but not reap; you shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil; and make sweet wine, but not drink wine. For the statutes of Omri are kept; all the works of Ahabs house are done; and you walk in their counsels, that I may make you a desolation, and your inhabitants a hissing. Therefore you shall bear the reproach of My people.
a. **You shall eat, but not be satisfied . . . what you do rescue I will give over to the sword:** God promises a tragic end for their ill-gotten gains. He will allow them no satisfaction or blessing in what they possess.

b. **All the works of Ahab’s house are done; and you walk in their counsels:** Instead of walking in the ways of the LORD, they walked in the sinful example of wicked kings before them, and in the counsels of the ungodly.
   i. **Omri**, king of Israel, the father of Ahab, was one of the worst kings the Israelites ever had; and **Ahab** followed in his wicked fathers steps. The **statutes** of those kings were the very grossest idolatry. (Clarke)

(Adapted from URL: http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/view.cgi?bk=32&ch=6)

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

A television commercial from a few years ago featured a person wondering about how to prepare for retirement. As he pondered, a green pathway appeared magically on the ground. All he had to do was follow it! The dilemma was solved in about 15 seconds of commercial air time! “What does the Lord require of you?” asks Micah in today’s text. His answer, in essence, is this: You know the answer—God has already shown it to you. Just follow the path of his revealed truth. It bears repeating that many seek to know God’s will in certain areas even though his answer is already available—if they would only take the time to look into his Word. The oft-quoted advice is still true: “When all else fails, read the instructions”—especially when those instructions come from God!

**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. Those who refuse to repent will often blame God for their actions toward Him (Mic. 6:3)
2. Remembering God’s goodness protects us against despair in times of hardship (vs. 4)
3. God’s righteousness and faithfulness do not change with changing circumstances (vs. 5)
4. Genuine worship that is pleasing to God has nothing to do with material gifts, even if those gifts are our most precious possessions (vss. 6-7)
5. We know our hearts are right with God when we reflect the character of God in our daily lives (vs. 8)