

# Micah 6:8

## Justice & Mercy Pt. 1

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Jan. 19, 2025

This is a wonderful verse and one of my favorites. We often see it stand alone.

### Micah 6:8

He has shown you, O mortal, 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

Daniel - Context

Eric - What is good?

- "Relational kindness with integrity"

- What is required?

- Practice

Daniel gave us the context for Micah 6:8 two weeks ago: he had been meditating on this verse for a long time. He referred back to a sermon I did where I said Micah 6:8 is often taken out of context. If all you remember over the course of these 5 weeks is this verse, that is good! But context is important. Last week, Eric talked about the first section of the verse (He has shown you...) and he said **relational kindness with integrity embodies who God is.**

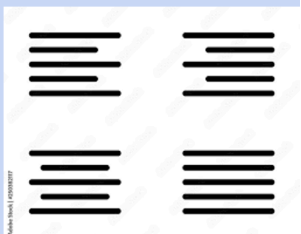
But what does it mean to require something of someone? Today, I want to pause and tell you how much I struggled this week with the giant idea of JUSTICE that mankind has wrestled with for a very long time. NT Wright, John Piper, John Owen, Tim Keller, CS Lewis, etc. all talk about justice in Christian literature. I just didn't know what to focus on so I called Rod. How do I separate justice and mercy? They are so intertwined with each other: Rod suggested I preach ONE sermon over the course of two weeks instead of two sermons. I encourage you to listen to both weeks: this conversation will continue next week.

What do we do with justice and mercy????

### What is Justice?

Mispat

Justification



Mispat ("Mish Pot") is often translated as justification which means to be aligned to a standard. In a word document you can make the text left-justified, center-justified, or even right-justified. You can also justify both sides to look like a big block: Justified literally means to be aligned to a standard.

## Vernon Dursley's Justice



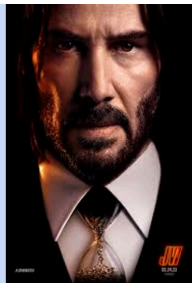
to decide where the line is. But he is a villain.

In our culture, there is a character, Vernon Dursley, from Harry Potter who is Harry's uncle. He has lived in terror of his nephew who has learned magic. When Harry comes home, the whole family is terrified. When something magical happens at their home, Harry receives a letter that says he will be expelled if there is any more magic: when Uncle Dursley finds this out, he actually says "Justice!" He takes Harry and locks him in his room. Dursley's justice is: **My Power, My Rules**. He is aligned to a standard and he gets

### Micah 2:1-2

Woe to those who plan iniquity,  
to those who plot evil on their beds!  
At morning's light they carry it out  
**because it is in their power to do it.**  
They covet fields and seize them,  
and houses, and take them.  
They defraud people of their homes,  
they rob them of their inheritance.

## John Wick's Justice



Another example of justice in our culture is John Wick, a very long and violent movie that I don't recommend. John is an assassin who gets a dog. A mob boss steals a car and kills John Wick's dog. John seeks justice and proceeds to go out and kill 77 bad people. *What???* This is John Wick's justice. In our culture, he is the hero, the one we look up to. You can google "John Wick" and find out that it has become a word for "true" justice. But this is not justice:

The scales are actually not balanced. Neither of these examples are balanced: they benefit the person giving them out: **My power, my rules.**

True and good justice is to be aligned to God's standard

### Justice is Balanced Scales

#### Micah 6:10-12

Am I still to forget your ill-gotten treasures, you wicked house,  
and the short ephah, which is accursed?  
Shall I acquit someone with **dishonest scales**,  
with a bag of false weights?  
Your rich people are violent;  
your inhabitants are liars  
and their tongues speak deceitfully.

At MY pilgrim group this week, everyone got 5 minutes to share but when it was my turn, I gave myself 3 more minutes: **My power, my rules.**

The book of Exodus gives us The Law and Psalm 119 talks about it. It's beautiful! Every verse talks about God's Mizpah...let's take a minute and meditate on God's law through Psalm 119; MIsphah is in Psalm 119 23 times!

## Psalm 119

v.20 - My soul is consumed with longing for your **laws** at all times.

v.30 - I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your **laws**.

v.52 - I remember, LORD, your ancient **laws**, and I find comfort in them.

I long for your justice!

I have set my heart on your justice!

I find comfort in your mishap, your justice.

## Psalm 119

v.62 - At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous **laws**.

v.108 - Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your **laws**.

v.156 - Your compassion, LORD, is great; preserve my life according to your **laws**.

The justice of God is something to be longed for, to give thanks for, to praise God for, to find comfort in. The Law preserves life!

If we go back and look at the law in Exodus and Leviticus, we will see that the scales are balanced: there is repayment for loss, adultery, eating, animals (even if one person's bull goes another bull, either for the first time or repeatedly).

My question for us:

**Are your scales balanced?**

No

Do I live under God's justice! I do not; I speed, roll through stop signs, tell white lies. For example, I don't go back and check on my children in five minutes like I said I would because I don't want to wake them up. We live in a local and global economy where we have a lot and some people have nothing and live in slavery. Our scales are not balanced.

## This is why we need Jesus

### Romans 5:8-9

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

This is why we need Jesus! We have been justified by his blood: His blood balances our scales. His love reaches out and draw us out of the muck and mire of our own sin and justice and lifts us up by his mercy.

# MERCY

As we think through justice, acting justly, *it is because we have his mercy.*

## Act Justly

Retributive Justice

Wrongs punished

Restorative Justice

Mercy extended

## Four ways to Respond

### Act Justly

Practice

Confess

Repent

Practice

1. We can practice lining up ourselves under his relational integrity.
2. We can confess when we don't get it right, when we fall off the path, &
3. Repent (turn around) and
4. Practice justice.

I love to compare Saul and David:

Saul is the king and God of Israel asks him to destroy a town and everything in it. He does this except for a few sheep that Saul wants to use as sacrifices. This act of disobedience rejects him as king!

David, on the other hand, goes and does terrible things like adultery and murder yet he is a man after God's own heart.

Why is one rejected and one isn't? It's because **one of them confesses and repents and turns to God and the other one is defensive and turns away from God.**

We can confess and repent only because we have Jesus!

Up until now, we have been talking about justice that is repaid with some kind of punishment: if I'm not aligned under God, there is some kind of punishment or retribution called **Retributive Justice**. This is what we have in Jesus: God's justice is poured out on Jesus.

The other side is **Restorative Justice** which draws people out of their sin: it's mercy extended to them.

As we think about this going into next week, I want us to practice this: Treating others as those deserving God's justice. What does it look like to take the mercy offered to us and bring about restorative justice to the people around us?

Mercy and Justice HAVE to go together, otherwise they are just attempts to get it right. We have been offered restorative justice which lifts us out of our unbalanced scales. We are offered mercy in this way.