



WOW: Word Of the Week

Justice

June 10, 2020

“He has told you...what is good, and what does Yahweh ask from you but **to act justly**, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” ~Micah 6:8

I begin with a few words of introduction for those who do not know me or my story. I share to give context to today’s “bits.” (You can skip over the biography if you wish.)

I grew up in central Kansas in the 50s and 60s. I am sure there was prejudice, but I did not know it. The church my family attended included a Hispanic family and I counted their daughter as one of my church friends; she was a bridesmaid in my sister’s wedding.

While I was in high school, events in Little Rock, Oxford and Memphis were subjects of conversation and prayer in our home. In 1965 I attended summer session at Samuel Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts where my studies focused on black history and the black experience in our nation. At Wichita State in the last 60s, I enjoyed worship with black brothers and sisters.

By the mid-1970s, I was serving as minister of an integrated congregation in Lansing, Michigan, where I served with black and Hispanic elders and deacons. We visited and ate in one another’s homes. My boys grew up in that church. In our neighborhood, a black family, the Wallace’s -- Mickey, Phyllis, and their three sons -- were good friends. There is more, but that is my story.

I write for my fellow Christians who are seeking a word from God. The word for this week is “justice.” Justice is big news We want justice. We seek justice. It is easier to ask for justice than it is to give justice. Micah 6:8 was quoted in a letter sent out earlier this month by the elders at the Lansing church, the church where I preached for over a decade. They are my brothers in the Lord. The leadership of the church is still integrated. I share parts of their letter.

Observing that “we are being inundated with news about the injustice in this country today,” the elders urged us to seek guidance and authority for our behaviors in God’s word. Citing Micah 6:8, they wrote that “the answer to injustice in this country today is not protesting or rioting to encourage reform. The answer is a need for change of heart.”

To act justly means living with a sense of right and wrong. Love mercy. Justice and mercy are part of God’s nature. God expects us to love our fellow human beings with justice and mercy; God expects our loyalty to him – walk humbly with your God. Their letter concludes: What is valuable in God’s sight is a humble heart that does what is right.

For those committed to life in Christ’s kingdom, this message is pertinent. The principles set forth in Micah have the power to soften conflict, direct meaningful dialog, and bring justice and mercy.

Some would say this answer is simplistic. I do not see the answer given by my brothers, with heritages on both sides of the divide, as simplistic. I know them and respect them. They are spiritually wise. I cannot change everyone else, but I can change me. We who follow Christ can change us. We can begin today. What will please God? As individuals and as the body of Christ, let us act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly.