

SLIDE 1 (Series Slide - Purpose)**SLIDE 2** Micah 6:8 is our signature verse as a church.

He has told you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice (act justly), to love kindness (mercy),
And to walk humbly with your God? ¹

SLIDE 3 It is important to note that “Good” here is practical & moral - not speculative, ethereal, or philosophical. God’s definition of good has three elements. (1) “Act justly,” which is a basic commitment to fairness in interpersonal relationships, and social institutions. It isn’t an absolute egalitarian view, communistic or socialistic view, or a bend toward Liberation Theology. It merely communicates a basic commitment to treating each other rightly in all our dealings, no matter our level in life. (2) “Love mercy,” is to go beyond fairness, responding to the needs of others, compelling a person to help whenever it’s possible. This is basic human kindness expressed in practical ways (verbal, financial, physical, medical, etc.) (3) “Walk humbly” with God, is to remain responsive to God, submitting gladly to His will. This last point sets a boundary within which we’re to live. In our kindness/mercy we cannot let sympathy push us to do that which is unfair or violates God’s will - God’s law is still our standard which must be upheld. We also cannot be so rigidly “fair” that we have no room for compassion or caring.²

Walking humbly with God is always to walk in the middle ground avoiding extremes. For instance NT Wright has a quote I love, "Justice without forgiveness is revenge. Forgiveness without justice is appeasement." So, to come down hard on someone in a situation without having a heart of understanding and forgiveness is not what Justice means. Also, to simply overlook transgression and sin and simply ‘forgive’ without proper consequences is also not good or glorifying to God.

Do. Love. Walk. Do justice. Love mercy. Walk humbly. With who? With God, because as you do, you’ll automatically do this with others. The focus always being on God vertically, and as such his life flows through us horizontally to others. That is why I chose this graphic for the series. We are like individual lights connected to the power source of Christ, together as community automatically giving light and life to each other and those around us.

SLIDE 4 As Christians, everything comes under the umbrella of God’s kingdom reign. A kingdom, not of geographical boundaries, rather which is expressed wherever His will is acknowledged & obeyed by His people. It is expressed in justice, mercy, and a humble walk with God. In Micah’s time the nation of Israel was divided. Idolatry was rampant.

¹ *New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (Mic 6:8). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

² Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible readers companion* (electronic ed.) (554). Wheaton: Victor Books.

Injustice was the norm. The people were not listening or following, and therefore, obedience to God was not manifest. Therefore, His kingdom was not manifest among His people. And therefore, His kingdom was not manifest before the nations as was God's desire. At that time, and through Micah, God brings a charge against his people. He asks:

SLIDE 5

³“My people, what have I done to you?
How have I burdened you? Answer me.
⁴I brought you up out of Egypt
and redeemed you from the land of slavery. ³

He reminds them of His loving faithfulness to them. But although God had enacted justice for them, had shown mercy to them, they were not reciprocating with those around them. They were not reflecting to each other what God had shown to them. Remember, my relationship with Jesus is played out in my relationship with you. How I treat you reflects my heart before God. Remember, how I treat you does not make me a Christian, we are not under the Law, but it does reveal that I am a Christian reflecting God to others. They were not walking humbly with Him by acting justly and mercifully to each other. Instead they complain about what they think God expects of them. They whine about the outward things and their hearts are far...

SLIDE 6

⁶With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
⁷Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?⁴

In other words, what is going to make God happy!?! Do I have to give up all my junk? They are totally focused on externals and not on the changed heart. And it's in that context which we get Micah 6:8 where God says in response to their complaints, I expect my people to do justice, love mercy, and to walk humbly - he's speaking of a changed heart which leads to loving actions.

PAUSE

SLIDE 7 Six:Eight is unconventional, in the sense that we experience centrifugal force through centripetal force (expound); we're externally focused as we are internally

³ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Mic 6:3–4). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁴ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Mic 6:6–7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

connected to Jesus. Starting with Jesus, His kingdom should be manifest in us as we, tethered to Him, spin that out to others. The worship service, community groups, and other internal initiatives are our spiritual base camps, acting as both a spiritual refreshment and a training ground to bring the Kingdom of God to others. We should strive to be culturally relevant to those who have given up on, or never experienced 'Church'. **SLIDE 8** If Six:Eight should ever go away, the surrounding community should express a loss; something profoundly 'good' should be missing from their community. Something just. Something merciful. Something humble.

SLIDE 9 We ask the question of others, are you on a spiritual journey, disillusioned, curious, or skeptical of Christ followers? If so, you're welcome here (but you're gonna be changed here). We want to be rooted in history, relevant to the moment, and a revelation for the future. We want to follow Jesus, to live as Jesus did, and to manifest Jesus in this world (purpose, vision, mission). To us, community, grace, the story of God, and passionate worship (values) all matter greatly.

We want to take the next few weeks and review these foundational statements as a church against the backdrop of Micah's situation. **SLIDE 10** Today we will start with the purpose statement: To live in obedience to Jesus' teaching and commands - To follow Jesus

These statements were born out of thought and prayer. They are not Scripture, in and of themselves, but they are pregnant with the values of Scripture reflective of the goodness expressed in Micah 6:8. We should notice that each one of the purpose, vision, and mission statements can be boiled down to a short phrase for simplicity sake. The Scripture calls us to not only grasp the Gospel message with our intellect, but to assimilate it into our lives, allowing it to take over everything that we are (Micah 6:8).

SLIDE 11 Therefore, we like to say that everything is spiritual (expound) & everyone gets to play (expound). If we are Christ followers, then we are ministers of this kingdom goodness. We live in obedience to Christ's teaching & commands - we follow. **SLIDE 12** Following & Obedience are synonymous; listening + following = obedience. Jesus expects His followers to listen and follow just as he expected it in Micah's time, as a result, we are obedient in doing so. We don't want to repeat the mistakes of our brothers & sisters in Micah's day.

SLIDE 13 Jesus told Peter in John 21, 'when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go'.⁵ He was not just talking about Peter's future death, but also his life from that point on. **SLIDE 14** Scripture tells us that we have moved from being slaves of sin (the Kingdom of Satan) to slaves of righteousness (the Kingdom of God). Freedom from sin doesn't translate into freedom to do what I want - that is what Israel did in Micah's time. Rather, if we say we follow Jesus then our questions must change. Our desires must reflect the desires of

⁵ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Jn 21:18). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

God. Our heart must reflect His. We respond to what is right before us with justice & mercy as we walk humbly with God. **SLIDE 15** No longer are we saying, “Where do I want to go in life?” Conversely, we’re saying, “Where is God leading me? What is my kingdom purpose, and how do I follow Jesus today?” Listening to God the Living Word, listening to God the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to dress me in righteousness, and take me wherever He pleases. Which is frightening. We must be led, and being led means trust; something they did not have in Micah’s time.

SLIDE 16 Jesus desires followers, and wants us to understand the costs. ¹⁹ ... a scribe came up and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” ²⁰ And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

SLIDE 17 (The Shallow Heart) We remember while Jesus was teaching in the Synagogue about what it meant to follow Him it says, ⁶⁰ On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”⁶ They walked away. Large crowds followed Jesus up until the point of crucifixion, but then dissipated at the first sign of difficulty. Shallow hearts. This man was the same. He was a disciple in the loose sense of the word, one on the periphery. One who liked the fuzzy feel good words of Jesus’ message, but when he would be called to sacrifice he would be nowhere to be found. Jesus was not saying that a follower must live in poverty, but that a follower senses that they have no true home here until Jesus returns. That they are led wherever the master calls, even to places they do not want to go; geographical or metaphorical (expound).

Peter, as impetuous as he was, made these same bold statements of following Jesus even to death, but he denied Jesus three times. Yet, Peter’s heart was sincere, he had to learn this lesson that he would have to follow even in the difficult moments into places foreign & frightening. This Scribe is different than Peter. The preaching of Christ had riveted and charmed him; his heart had swelled; his enthusiasm had been kindled; and in that state of mind he will go anywhere with Him, and feels impelled to tell Him so.⁷ Yet Jesus knows his heart and puts the challenge out there where it needs to be. **SLIDE 18** The Shallow hearted person needs to count the costs - is Jesus worth it?

SLIDE 19 ²¹Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ²²And Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead.” ⁸

SLIDE 20 (The Entangled Heart) There was a ministry started decades ago which exists for retired Christians. It exists because they have found that many Christian men & women, though they may attend church their whole lives, have never lived out of this

⁶ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Jn 6:60). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁷ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Mt 8:20). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Mt 8:19–22). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

kingdom mindset. When they retire they find that their whole life has spent on things with no lasting eternal significance - they had not asked Kingdom questions. Entangled hearts. **SLIDE 21** People, like this man, who look around at life, and ask themselves at a young age, 'What do I want out of life?' They say, I can follow Jesus after I build my nest egg, after I build my career, after I pursue my dreams. Now that may not be a fully conscious decision, but they realize in retirement their subconscious motivations when 'work' goes away and they are faced with retirement boredom.

This man's dad was not dead. Jesus would certainly not say, 'Don't go to your dad's funeral today.' The man was saying, let me go home, work, do life, see my dad pass on, and gain his estate, then I will follow you - after I find my security. **SLIDE 22** The Entangled Hearted person needs to understand the primacy & urgency of the Jesus' Kingdom call now.

SLIDE 23 (The Divided Heart) ⁶¹ Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶² Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." ⁹ I recently met a Jewish woman who had raised her son in a Reformed Synagogue. I asked her where she goes to synagogue now. She said, "My kids are grown, why would I still go to synagogue?" and laughed. Then she expressed disdain that her son was living in Jerusalem studying to be an orthodox Jewish rabbi, which did not fit with her reformed views. She said, "I don't want him becoming one of them! But they think he is some kind of scholar. He studies like crazy and they think he is really going to be a great rabbi. But when he comes home to visit, my apartment becomes a frat house! He flies straight as an arrow in Jerusalem, but when he is home he sleeps around, smokes pot, and drinks like there's no tomorrow!" She didn't really care about the partying, but thought it was funny how he changes when home. He's a man with a foot in two worlds - The Divided Heart.

Before we judge this young man, let's ask the question of ourselves. Do we have the hand on the plowshare, looking back at what we think we are missing from our past or another life? It's a matter of integrity - are you the same person here on a Sunday morning that you are out there in your daily life? Do we think we are allowed to live as we please in the private moments and put on a show at church? Do we believe it is okay to live with someone without the commitment of marriage, or to harbor a private sin life and not worry about the integrity of our walk or witness in community? This is the person that is so divided that they never grow forward, never take opportunity for ministry, because Jesus is an after thought. They have not fully realized the deep joy of kingdom life and obedience to Jesus. (We could have easily used the Rich Young Ruler here as well; the person that cares so much about their material life they cannot put both feet into the kingdom.)

SLIDE 24 The Divided Heart needs to renounce their former life and learn to trust Jesus.

⁹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Lk 9:61-62). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

SLIDE 25 Jesus said in John 14:23, ²³ Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”¹⁰ The same message of Micah 6:8. Whether it’s the shallow, entangled or divided heart, we must realize that to listen and follow leads to obedience, and in doing so, God abides in us. It is not just an intellectual set of principles, it is a vibrant relational life; God living in and through us when we are 100% bought in (Romans 15:13). And like the parable of the seeds on the various grounds, we must pray that God makes our heart fertile soil to soak up His Word. There is so much more we could say, but there are a few thoughts I would leave you with.

SLIDE 26

1. Listening = Reading. You cannot become who you are meant to be in Jesus without a healthy love of His word. Basic discipleship tells us that we must assimilate the Word of God into our lives - that means a good old daily quiet time in the Word. A sermon, a Community Group, and books by other authors are great - but they do not replace you digging in, allowing God to speak through Scripture directly.
2. Listening = Listening Prayer. We don’t just study, but we interact with God in us; God the Holy Spirit as our guide and comforter. The question to ask is, do I listen when I pray, or do I just babble my desires to God?
3. Listening & Following = Doing = Obedience. Granted you do not attain relationship with God through good works. God was not saying to His people in Micah, “This is how you gain favor with me”, they were already His people. He was saying, “As subjects of my Kingdom, you reflect your king.” God creates you, saves you, and prepares you for good works to live out of; ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. ¹¹ And James makes it very clear; ²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.¹²

SLIDE 27 Our Purpose...

To live in obedience to Jesus’ teaching and commands - To follow Jesus

An age old call which we share with those Micah preached to. A call consistent throughout all the Scripture & history. The kingdom of God is manifest where his people listen, follow and obey - where they do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God. That is why we have this purpose statement. There is grace for the shallow, entangled, or divided heart. Peter had to grow into it; he had to learn that his words of love and devotion had to be matched with action; he had to follow Jesus wherever He led. In Jesus, his life was no longer his own. Therefore, this becomes our purpose here at Six:Eight, to become and to make followers of Jesus, unfettered by the shallow,

¹⁰ *The New International Version*. 2011 (Jn 14:23). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

¹¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Eph 2:8–10). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

¹² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. 2001 (Jas 1:22). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

entangled or divided heart. And that will lead us into our vision statement next week - to live as Jesus did.