

TAKE TIME OUT - Pastoral Retreat

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Monthly Message – July 2021

Reverend Janice A. Morgan MA. BSc.

Scripture: Micah 6:6-8:

⁶With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?...⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah, is a Prophet of the Hebrew Bible and a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah, Amos and Hosea during the reigns of kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah of Judah. His messages were directed to God's people and Jerusalem; rebuking them because of dishonesty in the marketplace and corruption in government. Through Micah, God warned the people of impending destruction if they did not change their hearts and ways. Micah gives us a concise summary of prophetic thought on what God requires of His people through three important Hebrew terms; as relevant and important today as when they were first spoken.

1} *Mishpat*: Justice, is the basic word used by Israel's prophets to describe the fairness and equality they believed should govern all social relationships ([Isaiah 1:27](#); [Amos 5:24](#)).

2} *Hesed*: usually translated Kindness, sometimes Mercy (also loyalty or integrity), describes fulfilling one's social obligations and responsibility.

3} *Hatsnea lekhet*: To Walk Humbly, describes a way of life directly opposed to the exploitation of power that Micah sees as the root of corruption and injustice in his society ([Micah 1:5](#); [3:9-12](#); [7:2-4](#)).

God requires of His people: **T**ruth, **J**ustice and **R**ighteousness at all times.

Micah describes God's rebuke to Israel as a lawsuit brought against the people; visualising a courtroom where God is the judge and His people are in the dock. God calls on the mountains, where they built their pagan altars and sacrificed to false gods, as a witness to His solemn statement of the people's guilt ([6:1-2](#)). God recites all the ways His people have wronged both Him and others, comparing this with what He requires of them. God proclaims judgement and appeals to them to repent; reminding them of His blessings through righteous leaders and intervention against the evil of corrupt leaders: e.g. King Balak of Moab, who paid Balaam to curse the Israelites. Like other prophets, Micah asserts that religious rituals, without the pursuit of justice in all areas of life, are meaningless ([6:4-5](#)).

Beware that God's Word is not hijacked to deceive: Justice is not law; Kindness is not weak; Humility is not false. God's justice is Truth, which cannot be changed, negotiated, or manipulated! But, Truth can be hidden and evil uses misdirection like a magician to trick the audience into believing an untruth. Right from the beginning ([Genesis 3](#)) God warns that the serpent is 'more crafty' than we can imagine. Posed in an innocent question Satan changes '**the**' tree for '**any**' tree, corrupting innocence and replacing eternity with mortality. Evil seeks only to destroy and we are just as susceptible to his lies as Adam and Eve. What we see, hear, and understand is not necessarily Truth!

Despite being exceedingly patient, with loving grace and mercy, God's people turned away from Him and His covenant promises. Their wilful disobedience and lack of thankfulness condemned them. God's Word is a source of Truth, discernment and strength when faced with false testimony, subtle deceptions, and misdirection. Trust in God teaches obedience; to have nothing is to lean all the more upon Jesus and the Holy Spirit. God's judgement is ignored with increased activity! A heart without God will deceive! God judges our heart for a change of mind and spirit, revealed in changed lives and behaviour, not meaningless activity.

It is amazing how hard we work for what we want and how easily we find excuses to ignore what we should be doing! Selfish desires and stubborn hearts are blind to the abundance of God's blessings. God has told us what He requires and shown us what is good; the Truth of His Word; the example of His Son Jesus; and the presence of the Holy Spirit. *What more can God do to show us the narrow gate and right path leading to our salvation and eternal life?* May God bless us with integrity of faith to repent of our wrongdoing and turn to His Son.

Amen!

Yours in Christ Jesus, Janice.

Poem: Scales of Justice ©Janice Morgan 2021

Scales of Justice balanced right
Will make the guilty feel uptight
Truth and honesty bear a good weight
But lies twist Truth into a messy state
Words are weighed by what they say
But the heart is weighed another way
The one who shows a harsh indifference
Will balance the scales without God's presence

Scales of Justice on their side
Jesus Christ cannot abide
For God created all that lives
Right from wrong in all He sieves
How can justice maintain a right stride
When Truth is carelessly cast aside
God's Spirit must be held upright
For righteousness to shine its Light

Scales of Justice bent and curved
Mete out judgements undeserved
Weights and measures don't hold steady
On twisted words previously made ready
The balance of facts will surely slip
When uneven paths of lies make us trip
Sound decisions need level ground
If an honest hearing is to be found

Scales of justice are upright and True
When God's Word is sought before we... 'do'
By Satan's subtle coils injustice occurs
Clear vision by gossip and half-truths he blurs
Deception is easy when God is left out
Corruption comes swiftly if Jesus we doubt

The sword of the Spirit will brightly burn
When the scales of Justice on equity turn.

July Calendar:

Thursday 1st Canada Day

Sunday 4th Independence Day USA
