**Do Justice and Love Mercy**

**The Word**

Read together Micah 6:6-8

**The Big Idea**

God desires his people to combine a life of religious activity and worship with a life of care and compassion for the vulnerable and needy in society. Even beyond the government’s role, the church has a unique opportunity and responsibility to step into the broken places of society and to offer the love and truth of Jesus Christ. Each of us is invited to consider how God has uniquely gifted and placed us to serve the needy around us.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. How did Sunday’s message change or add to your view of justice? What would you want to add to Sunday’s conversation about justice?

2. On Sunday we discussed big government vs. small government views. But regardless of what view we hold, we were the challenged to consider that we need to take responsibility as the church to be the answer to some of the world’s problems that the government simply isn’t equipped to answer.

3. Consider the Tim Keller quote mentioned on Sunday: “To do justice means to go to places where the fabric of shalom has broken down, where the weaker members of society are falling through the fabric, and to repair it. How can we do that? The only way to reweave and strengthen the fabric is by weaving yourself into it. Reweaving shalom means to sacrificially thread and lace your time, goods, power, and resources into the lives and needs of others.” What issues and questions and ideas does that raise for you?

4. Consider the question posed at the end of Sunday’s message: “If Jesus were living in Orange County in 2016, where would he be, and who would he be spending his time with?” What answers do you come up with as a group, and how does that impact how we are being called to engage Orange County?

5. As you consider the needs of the world, is there a particular burden or passion God has put on your heart? Are there a particular group of people he has given you a heart for? What steps might you take to move towards that passion?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. The Passage: Micah 6:6-8

A. God brings a charge against his people for neglecting justice and mercy for the vulnerable (6:1-2)

B. Consider some of God’s charges against Israel (Micah 2:1-2, 3:9-11, 6:10-12)

C. God’s desire for them is not more religious rituals and practices (v. 6-7), but rather faithfulness to these core priorities of justice, mercy, and humility (v. 8)

1. “Do justice”

a. Justice = fairness, rightness, equitability, giving people what is their due (whether punishment or acquittal or care, etc.)

b. In the Old Testament “justice” is most often mentioned in conjunction with a particular group of people: the widow, orphan, immigrant, poor (see Zechariah 7:9-10). These are the people most susceptible to injustice. So to do justice is to be thrown into the lives of the vulnerable, poor, powerless

2. “Love Mercy”

a. Mercy is an attitude of care and compassion especially for those in need

b. Mercy offers positive care, relief, resources, etc.

3. So justice tends to focus on protecting/defending from harm, and mercy tends to focus on providing positive relief, care, and resources, but both are important

II. Other Biblical passages capture this same theme of God’s heart for his people

See Isaiah 58:3-7, James 1:27, Matthew 23:23

III. Applying these biblical commands and values today

A. There is disagreement on the government’s role in establishing justice and providing mercy for the vulnerable (whether government should focus primarily on establishing justice and getting out of the way or whether government should more proactively create programs and structures that provide care for the vulnerable). See Romans 13:4

B. But either way the church is called to promote justice and mercy

1. And the church is uniquely called and often far better equipped than the government to provide these things in society

2. So whether we are for small government or big government, as Christians we must take responsibility to play our part

3. The church has always been on the front lines of justice and mercy ministry in society (caring for abandoned babies, caring for the poor, ending the slave trade, establishing hospitals, fighting sex trafficking, etc.)

4. The church is to go to the places where the fabric of Shalom has frayed and offer God’s hope, love, and care

IV. We need to expand our imagination for what the church can be in and for the world

A. Consider what your role can be

1. What passions and burdens has God placed on your heart?

2. What gifts has he given you?

B. Consider where Jesus would be and who he’d be with if he lived in OC in 2016, and consider what it would mean for you to follow him in that.