



# micah

RECOVERING THE MICAH MANDATE IN THE MAYHEM OF OUR MODERN WORLD

He has told you, O man, 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 6:8).

There is a word in the English language that has had somewhat of a revival in recent days. It is the word, *mayhem*, which simply means *violent or damaging disorder or chaos*. There is even a commercial on television about “Mr. Mayhem” who reminds us that we need to be adequately insured because mayhem happens in life. We live in a world filled with mayhem.

Today, we are studying the Old Testament book of Micah. He lived in the 8th century B.C. during the moral and spiritual mayhem in both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel. He prophesied to the two capital cities: Samaria in the north and Jerusalem in the south.

Micah was a man who spoke forthrightly to the very heart of the nation. Some even call the book of Micah, *The Tale of Two Cities*. Micah prophesied, spoke to and addressed the need for spiritual repentance, the need for social reform and the need for holiness in the lives of the people. And this “prophet of mayhem” addresses

this message to us today in much the same way.

Although we are not Israel or the covenant people of old, God has put His people, the church, in the midst of the current mayhem of today. We are here to be *salt and light*. Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13a-14a ESV).

We are to live our lives in a way in which we seek to give glory to the name of God, to stand by His truth and His righteousness. We are to address all the confusing and chaotic issues as well as the corruption of our day with the truth of God’s Word. God’s truth is not just something we study in church on Sundays; it is a part of our lives—our decision-making, the way we live, what we do and where we go.

The prophet Micah clearly identified the call of God upon his life and the authority of his ministry when he said, “But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare

to Jacob [southern kingdom] his transgression and to Israel [northern kingdom] his sin" (Micah 3:8 ESV).

Sin is a big deal with God. Micah was actually calling the people of Israel to acknowledge the holiness of God's character and to live righteous lives.

The following are some verses to help orient us to the message that Micah spoke:

"The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. [So here, we see the two cities and the multiple kings—real time, real place.] Hear, you peoples, all of you; pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it, and let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, the LORD from His holy temple. For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split open, like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place. All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?" (Micah 1:1-5 ESV).

Micah is saying that God is about to move in power and judgment. Micah describes what the people

were doing in the following verse:

"Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil on their beds! When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand" (Micah 2:1 ESV).

"Do not preach"—thus they preach—"one should not preach of such things; disgrace will not overtake us" (Micah 2:6 ESV).

The people were resistant. They didn't hear preaching. They didn't hear teaching. They didn't hear truth. They were just simply devising their own way of life.

"And I said: 'Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?—you who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones, who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces and chop them up like meat in a pot, like flesh in a cauldron" (Micah 3:1-3 ESV).

Graphic, isn't it? It's repulsive. The leaders of the nation were so perverse in the way in which they handled the people that Micah describes it as if the leaders were tearing and stripping apart the lives of the people.

"The godly has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among mankind; they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net. Their hands are on what is evil, to do it well;

the prince and the judge ask for a bribe, and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul; thus they weave it together” (Micah 7:2-3 ESV).

The Bible says that during this time in the life of the nation, there was a weaving of one strand of evil after another strand of evil until all that was left was the fullness and the finality of the judgment of God upon the people.

What does this tell us about God? God sees, God knows and God hates sin—the sin in the hearts of His people and the sin and evil that are evident in the world.

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“We in the church have failed to remind this generation that while God is love, He also has the capacity to hate. He hates sin (Proverbs 6:16-19) and He will judge it with the fierceness of His wrath. This generation is schooled in the teaching about an indulgent, soft-hearted God whose judgments are uncertain and who coddles those who break His commandments. This generation finds it difficult to believe that God hates sin.”

—Billy Graham

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The bottom line? God hates sin, and sin creates mayhem in the world and in our lives.

I would be unjust to the book of Micah if I didn't point out the incredible accuracy of the unfolding judgments and prophecies of Micah.

As I mentioned earlier, Micah lived and ministered in the mid 8th Century B.C., probably somewhere between 750 and 715 B.C. The following is a list of prophecies that were spoken by Micah and fulfilled with incredible accuracy, just as Micah predicted.

|                                 |          |         |
|---------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Fall of Samaria                 | 722 B.C. | 1:6-7   |
| Invasion of Judah               | 702 B.C. | 1:9-16  |
| Fall of Jerusalem               | 586 B.C. | 3:12    |
| Babylonian Captivity            | 586 B.C. | 4:10    |
| Restoration and Return          | 490 B.C. | 4:18    |
| Battle of Armageddon            |          | 4:11-12 |
| Bethlehem, Birthplace of Christ |          | 5:2     |

Here we see Micah's prophecy concerning the fall of Samaria, the invasion of Judah, the fall of Jerusalem (which would take place some 200 years later), the Babylonian captivity and a return and restoration. Micah even looks down the corridor of time and places for us one of the earliest pictures of the battle of Armageddon.

However, none of the prophecies found in the book of Micah could be more amazing than the foretelling of the birth of Christ 700 years before it occurred:

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me One who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days” (Micah 5:2 ESV).

Micah tells about a ruler, a Messiah born in Bethlehem, who is going to come to bring justice and righteousness on the earth. It is so

interesting that Micah specifically said “Bethlehem.” He didn’t make a generalistic prediction that Jesus would be born somewhere around Jerusalem. Micah specifically named this old town, this little insignificant place of Bethlehem 700 years before the arrival of Jesus Christ.

We also read in the book of Matthew how wise men from the east read these writings and went to Bethlehem.

Given all the directions in which I could focus our attention concerning the book of Micah, I have decided to devote attention to one verse, one that needs to be downloaded in our hearts in the midst of a world filled with mayhem and one that has been titled, *The Micah Mandate*.

Interestingly, the title, *The Micah Mandate*, was given by a former President of the United States of America. Although Theodore Roosevelt was no longer President of the United States at the start of World War I, he was greatly respected by American troops. He was asked to write an inscription that would be printed in Bibles that were to be given to the troops. Yes, there was a time when Bibles were given to the troops facing battle—not because it was a restraint under the Constitution, but because it was a part of the freedom of the Constitution. Roosevelt began this way:

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“The teaching of the New Testament is foreshadowed in Micah’s verse, ‘What more doth the LORD require of thee than to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.’ Do justice; and therefore fight valiantly against those that stand for the reign of Moloch and Beelzebub on this earth.”

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That’s not exactly a politically correct statement, is it? Roosevelt identified the enemy in terms of a biblical characterization of rebels in the Old Testament. He went on to say,

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“Love mercy; treat your enemies well; succor the afflicted; treat every woman as if she were your sister; care for the little children; and be tender with the old and helpless. Walk humbly; you will do so if you study the life and teachings of the Savior, walking in His steps. And remember; the most perfect machinery of government will not keep us as a nation from destruction if there is not within us a soul. No abounding of material prosperity shall avail us if our own spiritual senses atrophy. The foes of our own household will surely prevail against us unless there be in our people an inner life which gives its outward expression in a morality like unto that preached by the seers and prophets of God when the grandeur that was Greece and the glory that was Rome still lay in the future” (Theodore Roosevelt, *The Micah Mandate*).

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What an interesting statement by a former President of the United States of America! Theodore Roosevelt was thoroughly convinced that the only way the outward well-being of life could be sustained was if there was an inward principle that would guard and govern life. So what is the verse referenced in Micah as the basis for *The Micah Mandate*?

“He has told you, O man, 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 6:8 ESV).

That is a pretty simple three-point message: (1) do justice, (2) love mercy, (3) walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8 tells us that God had expectations for His covenant people. They were to live uniquely and distinctively amid the mayhem of the world.

How does this apply to us today? How should we see ourselves, our relationships, our role within society in light of what Micah said then, and how does the New Testament reinforce its teaching to us today as followers of Jesus Christ?

## **DO JUSTICE**

One of the greatest injustices in our world today is what we have done to the word, *justice*. We have a generation of people speaking about *justice* and yet, we have twisted and distorted its meaning.

The word, *mishpat*, is the Hebrew word translated, *justice*, and it means:

“...the prescribed way, the rightful action, or appropriate mode of life. It is linked with a greater standard—not so much fairness, but righteousness.”

Justice is a standard based on the character of God. God, who is a moral being, establishes the standard of righteousness through which everything that is just and unjust is measured. Rather than taking the concept of justice and comparing it with righteousness, we twist it and make it the acceptance of every one’s own choice lifestyle and ultimately their character, regardless of any other standard. We have become unjust in our application of justice.

We have lost any sense of balance and understanding of justice. Justice, mercy and humility are like three legs on the stool. You can’t sit on a stool with just two legs, and we are living in a world where we’ve lost all sense of spiritual and moral equilibrium. We’re struggling. We’re failing. We’re falling and faltering. We don’t understand that justice has to do with a moral standard of God and not just standards of equality among men. We rename issues according to current trends and treat symptoms, but never get to the systemic reality of what is wrong with our world, our nation, and even with the church. We have moral and spiritual vertigo.

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34 ESV).

This is not an Israel-only statement in the Bible; it is universally true. We are seeing the reproach of sin upon our society and upon our nation in ways like never before.

When we vote on November 8, 11 of the 44 presidents who have served our country will have been elected during my lifetime. Yet, from my childhood to today, I have never seen our nation more dissonant, more broken, more out-of-control and distressed than it is right now as we look at the two candidates representing the primary parties in this election.

I think we all wish these two candidates were people of higher character with stronger communication skills and better ideas. But neither one of these candidates—no candidate—can fix what is wrong with America. America has a broken soul that cannot be fixed by politicians. This has to be fixed *in us* and the only one who can do that is God.

In addition, not only are we struggling with the personalities in this election, we are also struggling with the parties themselves. Both parties have failed to provide the representative government they were intended to provide through the elective process.

The bottom line? We have become a nation where the parties that rule in this nation are people of extortion, exploitation, deception

and manipulation. They have created a part of what Micah addressed in Scripture and what God calls the injustice of the world around us.

One party has perpetuated exploitive practices just like the vivid description seen in Micah 3:

“And I said: ‘Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?—you who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones, who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them” (Micah 3:1-3a ESV)

For decades and in many ways, this party—in the name of defending the poor—has done nothing but exploit the poor for their own purposes. Time and time again, they have used their platform to create a dependent voting block among those who are in poverty and those who are minorities, and yet they have failed to provide any sense of uplift and change in the lives of people within these groups.

On the other hand, we have the party of deception and broken promises. Time and time again, this party has fueled the hoax and the dreams of change within lives. They have tried to align themselves with many prominent church leaders in America. But rather than honestly delivering promises and standing for righteousness, they have taken

every opportunity to provide change and have squandered and wasted it. They have manipulated their roles and they been brokers of their own power.

“Can I forget any longer the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is accursed? Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights? Your rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. Therefore I strike you with a grievous blow, making you desolate because of your sins” (Micah 6:10-13 ESV).

Let me be very clear. God is not a politician and He does not ride the backs of elephants or donkeys. His prophets are called to stand and point at both, and tell them to repent and look to God!

Let’s explore the matter of *justice* and *doing justice* in more detail by looking at some of the critical issues at stake in this upcoming election from a biblical perspective—whether they are on or off the platforms of either one of these parties.

### **1. The Sanctity of Life**

The Bible is very clear that God is the Author and Creator of life. Even within the womb before a person is born, God shapes and molds every person. Every single human life has significance!

Ask yourself this question: Is the backdrop of my thinking about life

the issue of *survival of the fittest*? If it is, if we are only survivalists in an evolutionary process, we can do anything we want to manipulate life. But if we believe that there is, in fact, significance to human life, then we have to defend it. We have to stand for justice for the unborn and the defenseless. The greatest injustice in our society is when a child is torn from the womb of its mother.

This summer as I was along the eastern seaboard of the United States, I noticed multiple signs and massive beds marked off along the shoreline. The signs that were posted informed me that if I in any way affected or disturbed the eggs of sea turtles, there was a very specific amount of penalty cost and even incarceration that would be exercised against me by the federal government. On another coast, there were also warning signs with similar penalties, but this time it was about birds.

As I read these signs, I tried to reconcile in my mind how our government would exercise taxes against its own people to fund and pay for abortions while at the same time, threaten to incarcerate and penalize the same taxpayers if they disturb the eggs of turtles and birds.

I don’t have anything against turtles and birds; they are part of God’s creation. But they pale in significance to the uniqueness and distinctiveness of humankind and how God made us.

Tragically, this is where we are. The government has used judicial legislation that began in 1973, with *Roe vs. Wade*. It was never put to the vote of the people. A group of Supreme Court judges made a decision—in the name of constitutional rights—to categorically establish abortion on demand. We are here for the sake of life, and it is not a matter that we can trivialize.

One of the parties I mentioned a moment ago has been the ardent defenders of the practices of abortion on demand. At their convention this year, the entire crowd erupted and even celebrated when a woman stood up and gave testimony of having an abortion. They made it very clear they will do whatever they have to in order to defend the right to destroy human life in the womb, even to the degree of excising taxes against us to fund organizations like Planned Parenthood—half a billion dollars a year.

We must speak to this issue! The Bible says one of the things that God hates are those who shed innocent blood. Read Proverbs 6:16-17.

The average abortion in America costs anywhere from \$450 to almost \$2000. 64 percent (approximately 2/3) of abortion providers will perform abortions 13 weeks or later after conception. There are sonograms on the Internet that show what a 13 or 14-week old baby looks like in their

mothers. Anyone can see it is not a “blob;” it is a human being!

You may be thinking, “It’s a lot more complicated than that!” Is it really? It’s spiritually wrong, it’s biologically wrong, it’s medically wrong, it’s socially wrong, it’s morally wrong. We are tearing the flesh off our people! We can never be quiet about the sanctity of life.

Are you turning your back on the defenseless in this election? Or are you going to stand up, speak out, and take action to defend the rights of the unborn—to do justice?

## **2. The Sacredness of Marriage**

Our world has trashed and trivialized what marriage is. The Bible is very specific that God is the author of the institution of marriage and family life. Marriage is not something that came out of the progression of human culture; it came out of the very creative order and design of God.

When you think about it, the Bible is a very politically *incorrect* book on the subject of marriage as it relates to both gender identity and physical partners. We can’t make marriage a generic institution when God made it a gender-specific relationship.

The Bible is clear: male and female He created them (see Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 5:2). You may say, “Oh well, that’s just the way our world is.” Consider these two questions: Are you going to leave your children and your grandchildren



to deal with the trivialization and the destruction of marriage just because you choose to do nothing about it? Are you going to stand out and speak up?

I am not talking about creating marches and protests. I am saying you need to go to the voting booth and do everything you can to try and leverage the opportunity of influence from someone who might think differently. For example, over the past eight years we have seen a different agenda driven by our president and his administration.

### **3. The Significance of Racial Respect and Reconciliation**

I don't know of anything that grieves my heart more than this: We, who profess to know the love of Christ, don't know what it is to love our neighbors—to make a foundation to live together, to love together, to share together.

Are you actively working to build friendships and relationships with people who are not of your race, background or culture? Simply living on the racial divide is not acceptable as the people of God. There is still a horrific sense in this world where we are willing to go to church on Sunday and be divided by race.

There is only one race—the *human race*. The whole human race is affected by something called *sin*. Sin is the rebellion of our hearts against God and the cause of grave injustice against

our neighbors. What we all need is the grace and forgiveness of God. Build friendships and relationships with people around faith and do not let race be a divider.

Every one of us needs to see the need and change the discord of our nation by building friendships and care with those who are not just alike. It is natural for us to be around people that are like us—people who like what we like, do what we do, think like we think. However, the church has been called to love people *everywhere* and to love people *anywhere*. We need to make this a priority. The church cannot change the racial discord of the history of our nation (though the church is so wrongly blamed for it at times). Yet, we can make a difference in the future of our communities through faith and hope and love.

### **4. The Selection of the Courts**

The major decisions of my lifetime have been judicial; almost none of them have been legislative. By “judicial,” I mean they were decided by the Supreme Court. The stakes have never been higher concerning the selection of the Supreme Court.

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“The Supreme Court that begins its 2016 term Monday stands at the threshold of an ideological transformation unmatched in nearly a half century, one that eventually could put in play legal precedents ranging from *Roe v. Wade* to *Citizens United*.

"Not since 1968 has a presidential election carried such momentous implications for the nation's highest court, now divided down the middle following the death of conservative icon Antonin Scalia...

"A victory by Hillary Clinton not only would break the glass ceiling at the White House but shake the foundations of the court's marble palace, leading to its first liberal majority since the Vietnam era. Donald Trump's election, on the other hand, would continue and perhaps even advance conservative control for decades to come.

"While the change in personnel could happen fast... the ideological shifts may take years to play out, particularly in areas of the law that have been relatively stable for decades. But Supreme Court experts predict repercussions from the 2016 election will grow in significance over time" (Richard Wolf, *USA Today*, posted September 30, 2016).

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You may think this article is from a conservative leadership magazine. No. It is from *USA Today*, posted just a few days ago.

The Supreme Court and other courts matter! So much of what is happening in our nation today is being driven by the courts. The Office of the President will determine the judges of the future. So do justice, church! What is the right thing for the courts? What are the right decisions for the future?

What is as important as the person who occupies the Oval Office? Their choice of friends. One thing rarely talked about in politics is the group of people who will surround the next president—the people who will be the enablers, the fulfillers, the actors in the scheme of things to come.

Recently, I read an article by Franklin Graham, of Samaritan's Purse, who spoke to the controversy and conflict regarding the issues surrounding the character of presidential politics in our nation.

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"The crude comments made by Donald J. Trump more than 11 years ago cannot be defended. But the godless progressive agenda of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton likewise cannot be defended. I am not endorsing any candidates in this election. I have said it throughout this presidential campaign, and I will say it again—both candidates are flawed. The only hope for the United States is God. Our nation's many sins have permeated our society, leading us to where we are today. But as Christians we can't back down from our responsibility to remain engaged in the politics of our nation. On November 8th we will all have a choice to make. The two candidates have very different visions for the future of America. The most important issue of this election is the Supreme Court. That impacts everything. There's no question, Trump and Clinton scandals might be news for the moment,

but who they appoint to the Supreme Court will remake the fabric of our society for our children and our grandchildren, for generations to come” (Franklin Graham, *Facebook* post, October 8, 2016).

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This is an important perspective in the selection of our next president. While some may feel like not voting in an election, confronted by the character of the candidates, we cannot lose sight of the bigger picture. What is going to happen in the courts? Is justice in the Supreme Court going to be based upon any other external foundation of righteousness and truth or is it simply going to be the dictates of whoever holds that office?

## 5. The Service of Work

I am not an economist and I am not a social worker. I am just a pragmatist and a biblicist when it comes to the service of work. As a nation, we need to focus on the encouragement and ultimately, the challenge to ask that responsible action and mutual contribution be made of all people in work. In the early days in America, there was much discussion about the founding of this nation on the Puritan work ethic. And Scripture puts a premium on work:

“For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10 ESV).

I am not speaking today of the matter of people who are genuinely in need—children, elderly, people in need of care. We as a nation should do everything we can to provide for those who are in need. But as a nation we need to change and stop where we are enabling people to receive from our government without contributing back to our government. It is an injustice.

Earlier this year, Phillip Holmes wrote an article called, *The Heart of Socialism: A Sympathetic Response to Advocates of Social Programs*. Mr. Holmes is a man who grew up in a community where he was living on federal assistance and government subsidy for many years in his life. In the article, he talked about his family, but he also talked about observing the cycles of poverty that surrounded him and the need for a sustainable deliverance:

“The government doesn’t generate profit apart from its citizens. Every single dime the government receives comes out of what otherwise would be the wages of its citizens...” (Phillip Holmes, Guest Contributor, *Desiring God*, March 17, 2016).

Holmes went on to write that we give social programs too much credit and the importance of family and faith too little. Social programs substitute for the family, empower the government, and hinder the church. I think Holmes is absolutely right.

It is interesting to note that in 1929, when Joseph Stalin was giving instructions to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, one of the things that he instructed them to do was to enforce a ban on “charitable and cultural activities by churches.” A Kremlin spokesman explained, “The State cannot tolerate any challenge to its claim on the heartstrings of the Russian people.”

Why does this matter? I am a pastor of a church full of families— young families—who are striving to build and establish their life and future. They are being hindered and subverted at every level through debt, taxation, insurance costs that are out of control and through things that bring pressure on the family. At the end of the day, the cost of all of these things is creating a financial distress that is destroying marriages and families in America.

## **6. The Security of Future Religious Freedom**

We have only just begun to see the magnitude of this threat in our world. To be a Christian—to speak out in the public square and to identify the Bible as a standard of truth—is very quickly met with language of intolerance and bigotry, among other things. Given the direction we are going, it is just a matter of time until we become the targets of injustice in our world. The Apostle Paul told the church in the first century:

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way” (1 Timothy 2:1-2 ESV).

By the way, Nero would soon be the Emperor of Rome—nothing good there. And Paul reminded the people of the need to pray that in every way that they would be able to live out their faith, and to preach and fulfill the Gospel.

Days ago, the school district in Henry County, Georgia, fired off a directive to school administrators, ordering them to eradicate anything remotely religious from all public school buildings:

“You are hereby directed to remove all items which contain religious symbols, such as crosses, printed Bibles, angels, Bible verses, printed prayers, and biblical quotations from the common areas, hallways, classrooms, and office of East Lake Elementary School.”

Notice it said nothing about the Koran or other religious groups. It specifically targeted Christianity. It goes on to say:

“Further...religious and biblical references should not be included in notes to parents, email signature lines, or any other correspondence sent on behalf of East Lake Elementary School.”

Later the spokesperson for the school districts indicated this information “was not intended as something that was supposed to be shared or put out with public consumption. It was more of a directive for our administrators to remind their employees of this particular law that is in place as dictated by the federal government”

In other words, the spokesperson was saying the Henry County School District is going to enforce this edict, but they didn’t really want anybody else to know about it.

The spokesperson goes on to say about their school personnel, “They cannot have a Bible sitting on top of their desk or they cannot have some other type of religious doctrine sitting on their desk.”

Someone asked if the Bible would also be banned from the library. The response? “That’s a good question. I don’t know that we have any Bibles within our libraries.” (Fox News.com, *School Orders Teachers to Remove “Religious” Items From Classrooms*, October 4, 2016).

These are critical issues for the future of our nation, our children and generations to come. Do not stand down. Do not step aside. Do not ignore what is happening.

There is nothing easy about what is wrong with our nation. However, we can do what is *right* in the midst of what is wrong—not based upon a politician and a party, but based upon where we stand as the

people of God and what God says to us regarding His Word.

I want to urge you to register to vote if you are not registered. And then, vote with conviction and out of commitment because you want to do justice!

## LOVE KINDNESS

Have a different attitude—not a vengeful sense of moral rightness, but really love people where they are, how they are. Love people with kindness. Kindness changes the world. None of us are drawn to people who are rude, recalcitrant and difficult.

We have to extend a balance of standing for what is just, but expressing what is kind. Kindness builds friendships. Isn’t it kindness that is lost in a family that perpetuates the brokenness found in so many of our homes? We have to bring kindness back to the table, back to the neighborhood, and back to who we are.

By the way, the greatest thing that American Christianity has given the world has been kindness. Who do you think built the hospitals, the orphanages, the rescue centers and the retreats so common in our nation and around the world? Look at their roots and see how many were done in the name of the name of Jesus.

One of our primary commitments at Warren is to show kindness through foster care and adoption. If we believe in the sanctity of life, we had better step in and love and

care for children who do not have parents. We can make a difference through our kindness.

### **WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD**

Pride is an attitude of an un-surrendered life; humility is the attitude of a surrendered life. Frankly, the only thing that gives us hope is not the law of God, but the grace of God. How great is our need for grace!

I love the fact that in the midst of this discussion of judgment, Micah says:

“Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:18-19).

Can this really be true? In the midst of the mayhem, can there be mercy and grace and kindness? Yes! It is not because of something that anyone has done other than the One who was the most humble to ever walk on this planet. His name is Jesus. Jesus, the son of God, humbled Himself, taking on the form of man, surrendering Himself to suffer on a cross, bearing the sins of all of mankind, rising again, and justifying us.

God did not put away His wrath. God has never changed

His position and perspective concerning sin. God *always* moves in wrath against sin. But God provided mercy in Christ. What we don't deserve and what we can never earn, God has done because He has not abandoned us.

Who is like the Lord? That is the challenge of the book of Micah—to see the wonder of God's mercy. The Micah Mandate pointed people toward the “Messiah of Mayhem,” the One who would come in Bethlehem and provide God's forgiveness.

Our world needs to see us standing for righteousness and to hear the truth of grace and mercy because God, and only God, can transform the brokenness of human hearts. It is this fundamental truth that holds life and the world together. God rules.

While I cannot make a lot of things right or get around the cesspool of mayhem that surrounds me, I know what I need and what I can proclaim is a Savior. I can live with joy, victory and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ because of who He is and what He has done.



*Father, I pause and pray in this moment asking for Your mercy on me and on your people. I pray for our country, our communities, our city. I pray, Lord, knowing that my words today can create affliction and contradiction, but I also know there is no dispute about Your word to do justice, to love mercy,*

*to love kindness, and to walk humbly.*

*I pray that in my own spirit there would not be a spirit of arrogance and authority, but a spirit of humility and brokenness that indeed, I might provide challenge in this role You have given me with your people and that together,*

*we might humbly pray and ask that You would intervene and bring grace and mercy. Lord, in a society that is so broken and filled with mayhem, thank You, Jesus, that You are hope. We give this moment, this day, this time in our lives and in the future of our nation to You. In Jesus' name, amen.*

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