Fathers Day 2017: The List

*Micah 6:8* He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; And what doth the LORD require of thee, But to do justly, and to love mercy, And to walk humbly with thy God?

The Perfect Day.

- In 24 years of marriage
  - I have learned that there is
    - a significant difference between
  - what I consider to be a perfect day
    - and my wife's idea of a perfect day.
- My perfect day starts
  - with sleeping a little longer than normal
    - then getting up
      - and cooking a huge breakfast.
  - That is the foundation of a good day.
    - From there my perfect day
      - can go any number of different ways,
      - as long as the day unfold spontaneously
        - and doesn't involve anything
          - on the long list of things
        - that I probably should be doing
          - instead of having a perfect day.
- For my wife, however,
  - a perfect day starts with waking up
    - and making a list
      - of all the stuff that we
        - are going to accomplish that day.
  - That is her foundation of a good day.
    - From there the day can unfold
      - in any number of ways
      - but the more things on the list
        - that get checked off,
          - the better the day is.
- Opposites attract, the old saying goes,
  - and in this case it couldn't be more true.
    - However, over the years,
      - though I would never admit this to her,
    - I have come to appreciate her lists.
- Many, if not all of the meaningful things
  - that I have accomplished in my life,
    - are due to those pervasive lists.
      - They really do work,
        - as bad as I hate to admit it.

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- You can imagine my surprise, then,
  - when I discovered, in the Bible,
    - that the Old Testament prophet, Micah,
  - when he began to contemplate
    - what it takes to serve the Lord,
      - compiled a list.
- Not only did he make a list
  - But he addressed that list to men.
- The list has long been recognized
  - as the finest statement of practical religion
    - in the whole of the Old Testament.
  - Indeed, it stands as the motto
    - of the alcove of religion
      - in the reading room
        - of the Library of Congress
          - in Washington, D.C.
      - and it has been called
        - a one-line summary
          - of the whole Law.
- So, what does the list say?
  - It simply gives us three directives
    - as the summation of what God requires of us
      - in our day to day living.
        - Do Justly.
        - Love Mercy.
        - And Walk Humbly with God.
- This gentleman is the most important list
  - that you will ever be handed.
    - It tells you and me,
      - in practical, real world terms,
        - what God really requires from our lives.
- On this Father’s Day morning
  - I wanted to take a moment
    - and remind you of the list.
  - Not the honey-do list
    - but the list of things
      - that God wants you to do.

Do Justly

- The List begins with justice.
  - It is a brief command
    - to simply do what is right,
• do what is good.

• What does it mean to do justice?
  o The Hebrew word here is *mispat*
    ▪ and it has both a negative
    ▪ and a positive side.
  o On the one hand it prohibits
    ▪ such actions as
      ▪ bribery,
      ▪ theft,
      ▪ oppression,
      ▪ perjury,
      ▪ and all other kinds of dishonest behavior.
  o But, as much as it is a prohibition of certain actions
    ▪ it also demands that we treat each other justly,
      ▪ that we stand
        o on the side of that which is
          ▪ right
          ▪ and fair
          ▪ and good.
  o In other words
    ▪ it is not just an admonishment
      ▪ not to steal
    ▪ but also an admonishment
      ▪ to be generous,
    ▪ not just a prohibition
      ▪ on oppressing the underprivileged
        o but a commandment
      ▪ To bless those who are cursed,
        o to love those who are unlovable,
          ▪ to help the oppressed,
            ▪ and to lift up the downtrodden.
  o All too often we focus on the things
    ▪ that a command like this
      ▪ prohibits us from doing
    ▪ without ever considering
      ▪ the things that it demands
        o that we do.
  o But, the command to do justly
    ▪ is more than a command
      ▪ to keep your hands clean,
        o it is a command to get involved,
          ▪ on the side of that which is right.
  o Gentlemen let me encourage you,
    ▪ don’t just focus on avoiding

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• that which is wrong.
  o Become involved
    ▪ with the community around you.
  • Jump in there
    o and get your hands involved
      ▪ in doing that which is right,
        • that which is good,
          o that which is just.

Love Mercy (Kindness)
• The next thing on the list is “love mercy.”
  o The Hebrew for “mercy” is ḥesed,
    ▪ which has the basic meaning of “kindness”.
  • Ḥesed is also an attribute of God
    o and is the basic description
      ▪ of his acts of redemption
        • or the mercy that he shows us.
  • I want you to think a moment about that.
    o The first command was to do
      ▪ what you know is right,
        • do justice,
          o treat others fairly,
        ▪ however, the second command
          • goes even further
            o as it requires of us
              ▪ that we do unto others
                • as God has done unto us.
    o God, in his mercy,
      ▪ did not make us pay
        • the debt we owed.
      ▪ God in his mercy,
        • did not hold us accountable
          o for all of our wrongs.
      • God in his mercy,
        o went far beyond justice
          ▪ and met us with kindness
            • and mercy
              • that we never deserved.
    o That is what the second item on the list
      ▪ requires of you.
        • Do justly.
          o Then when you reach the limits of justice,
            ▪ act kindly!
          ▪ Act out of mercy.
Love like you have been loved!
  - Treat others like God has treated you.

The command to do justly
  - only requires of you
    - to do that which is right
    - according to the law.

The command to love mercy
  - pushes you beyond that,
    - into the realm of kindness and compassion
    - that extends beyond the law.
  - This is what God requires of you, men:
    - Do justly and love mercy.

Walk Humbly With God

The final thing on the list
  - is to walk humbly with your God.

The command to “walk”
  - is a command to “live” in a certain way.

The word that is translated as “humbly”
  - has to do with submission,
    - behaving in an humble manner
    - towards God.

The whole command carries the idea
  - that you must be very careful
    - to live the way
      - God wants you to live.

As a matter of fact, the command to “walk humbly”
  - might have been better translated
    - as “walk carefully”
      - with your God.
  - It conveys the idea of being careful
    - to live the way
      - that God wants you to live.

In other words,
  - the first two things on the list
    - had to do with your dealings with others.
  - First you were commanded to do justly.
    - Don’t transgress the law of God or men.
      - Do the right thing.
  - Then you were commanded to love mercy.
    - To go beyond
      - the requirements of the law
        - in your display of kindness
          - to your fellow man.
Now, however,
  • we are given instruction
    • regarding our relationship with God.
  • Live the way “your” God wants you to live.
    • I love the way the text personalizes this command.
      • It brings your relationship with God
        • to the forefront.

• Walk humbly with YOUR God.
  • This is a deeply personal thing.
    • Righteous living arises
      • from your relationship with God.
  • When God becomes the center
    • of everything else in your life,
      • when he truly becomes “your” God,
    • then all of your living
      • will be governed by doing
        • what he wants you to do,
          • living the way
            • he wants you to live.

CLOSE
• That is the summation of the whole list.
  • Do justly.
    • Love mercy.
      • Walk humbly with your God.
• This morning we have a gift for every man
  • to help remind you of the list.
    • We ask that you would get a drink
      • and a keychain from the foyer
        • on your way out of service this morning.
• Every time you look at this keychain
  • We want you to remember the list.
• However, I also want you to remember this simple story:
  • A very busy man went on vacation.
    • He left his assistant a list
      • of all the things that needed to be done
        • in his absence.
  • Before he left in an effort to stress
    • the importance of the list,
      • he told his assistant
        • to read the list twice a day.
  • When the man returned,
    • things were a mess.
      • He asked his assistant,
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- "What in the world happened?!"
- The assistant said I’m not sure,
  - "I did exactly what you told me to do.
  - I read the list twice a day."
- Men, it is not enough just to read the list.
  - You must put it into action.
    - I think it is interesting
      - that The List begins with an action verb.
      - Do it, God says.
      - If we aren’t careful we can become experts
        - in knowing what is right to do,
          - without actually doing it.
    - The List, however,
      - says that you already know what is right
        - and this is what God requires of you:
          - Go do it!
- Gentlemen, you are leaders in your household.
  - The reason it matters so much
    - that men do justly,
      - love mercy
        - and walk humbly with God
      - is that you have a wife and children
        - who are following you.
  - If you live according to the list,
    - then they too will learn
      - to live that way.
- In light of that, I think it would be a good thing
  - for us to pray over the men
    - on this Father’s Day morning.
  - I want to ask families
    - to gather together
  - and we are going to pray
    - a prayer over our dads
      - that they would find the strength
        - and the courage,
          - in the Lord,
      - to live up to the list
        - in every part of their lives.