

## **What does God require? – 05/ /02/2017**

***“He has told you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8***

Beloved in the Lord,

What does God require of you? What is your response to this question? What must you do to be pleasing to God? Is there something that you can do to earn God’s grace and favour? All throughout time, man has struggled with these and similar questions. I believe that the reason for this is that we are born with an innate knowledge of God. Deep down we all know that there is a God and that we are answerable to Him, and are dependent upon His good favour.

I believe that is why we have so many religions in the world. Religion tries to answer these and many other questions. Religions provide guidelines as to what must be done to appease God and gain His favour. Many religions portray God as someone who needs to be appeased.

Let us narrow the parameters a little and consider only Christian religions. There are countless numbers of people who call themselves Christian, who are not free from the slavery of servitude to a religion. They have not yet understood that true Christianity is not an observance of a religion, a set of rules, but rather it is a loving relationship with our Heavenly Father, made possible by Jesus Christ. The truth is that there is nothing that we can do to earn God’s grace.

God has done it all. He gave us His Son Jesus, because He loves us so very much. This gift is a complete and total gift.

Our text today is the closing verse of a longer discourse. To gain a better understanding we will read the preceding verses:

***With what shall I come to the LORD  
And bow myself before the God on high?  
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings,  
With yearling calves?  
<sup>7</sup> Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams,  
In ten thousand rivers of oil?  
Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts,  
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?  
<sup>8</sup> He has told you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you***

February 5, 2017

What does God require?

***But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:6-8)***

You see, God is not asking us for great sacrifices, or rituals, or certain amounts of money, nor observance of festivals or even attendance at Church. God is not asking for this and that. No, He desires/requires of us to reflect His glory. We should reflect Him by doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly before Him.

We can only do this if we forsake religion as such, and adhere to Him in faith. There is a huge difference between religion and faith. Religion does certain things with the hope of gaining something in return., whereas faith simply trusts in God, knowing that He will provide. Faith is focused on relationship building. Religion ends and faith starts at the Cross. Religion focuses on what I do, whereas faith is about what God has done for me. Religion is more works based and faith is founded on trust in what God has done and is doing. Religion is man centred and faith is God centred.

True faith begins at the cross. Paul wrote:

***“ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”(Gal.2:20)***

This is where real faith begins. ***I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;***

True faith crucifies the old self and puts on The Lord Jesus Christ. You no longer live for yourself, but Christ lives through you. The question changes from what can I do; to what can God do through me? How can God bring glory to His name through me?

Religion tends to make one egotistical and proud. The worst hypocrites are religious ones. Jesus had some harsh things to say to the religious hypocrites of His day. In fact, His harsh words were not directed at drunks, prostitutes, adulterers or any other sinners, but at the religious right. Jesus called the Scribes and Pharisees white washed tombs that look good from the outside, but inside are full of rotting bones. If there is one thing that God totally abhors, it is religious pride and hypocrisy.

There is no room for pride in our relationship with God. A true Christian understands that he or she is a sinner who lives only by the Grace of God. A true Christian does not lift oneself up and say things like: “Look how wonderful I am and how much I am doing for God.” A real Christian never seeks his own glory. A Christian seeks to bring all the glory to God alone. To acknowledge what a wonderful God He is, to receive us as His children when we believe in Jesus. As Newton wrote in the song: *“Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.”*

Religion is blind. It has trouble seeing beyond self. Faith sees the truth and the truth is Jesus.

What does God require of you? To acknowledge that you are totally dependent on His grace and to walk humbly before Him secure in that fact. It is so important that we acknowledge this daily. We need to humble ourselves before Him every day. We need to renew our trust in Him daily. I cannot overemphasise this point. Pride, our ego is like a noxious weed that is hard to get rid of and keep under control. As soon as you think it is gone, it is back again.

A while ago I weeded the path down the side of our house. I was not impressed at how quickly the weeds have returned and how quickly they spread. If I want the path to be clean, I need to be weeding regularly.

We need to be constantly alert and aware in regards to self. We need to attack the weeds of ego and pride as soon as they show themselves. The longer we allow them to stay, the more damage they do and the harder it becomes to eradicate them.

Pride is Satan's favourite tool.

It is always lurking ready to raise itself the moment we give it any opportunity to do so. We need to be on the alert always. David gives us a great prayer which works well to keep the weed of pride from overtaking.

***Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.***

***<sup>13</sup> Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins;***

***Let them not rule over me;***

***Then I will be blameless,***

***And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.***

***<sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart***

***Be acceptable in Your sight,***

***O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer. (Ps.19:12-14)***

This should be our daily prayer. This prayer helps us to keep pride away and to walk humbly before our God.

Last Sunday we considered the key to a blessed life and we saw that there were three foundations:

1. ***God is worthy to receive glory and honour and power.***
2. ***God has created all things.***
3. ***All things happen by his will.***

Our reflections today are a continuation of that theme.

What does God require from us?

That we live in a loving, faith relationship with Him through Jesus. This relationship entails doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly before Him. When we submit to Him in faith then these come naturally. When we walk humbly, we follow the example of John the Baptist who proclaimed: "I must decrease that He may increase." May we focus less upon

ourselves and more upon Him. As we do, our lives will reflect Him more and more, we will experience great peace, joy and freedom. Let us daily weed out every trace of foolish pride and may Christ live through us and touch others with His grace and love. To Him be glory forevermore.

**Amen.**

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.***