

Sunday, October 9, 2022

DiscipleImpact

The world tells Christians that it's OK to have a faith, just keep it to yourself, it's a personal thing, don't push your agenda and beliefs on others.

Jesus says , ***“Go into all the world and preach he gospel to every creature.*** (Mark 16:15)

It is easy for Christians to take the easier path and just keep their faith personal and private. Yet, it is clear the both the Old and New Testament is crystal clear that God's people, Disciples, are to have a visible and active role in engaging a lost and suffering world. We are to make an IMPACT for God. This can be a challenging and fearful venture, but we really have no choice, if we are to be TRUE DISCIPLES>

Let's look at an Old Testament verse that gives us 3 – Three Key ways to IMPACT our nation and society. By the way one of the verses we are soon to read are actually inscribed on the walls of the Library of Congress.

Micah 6:6-8 ... ⁶ ***With what shall I come before the LORD, And bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, With calves a year old?*** ⁷ ***Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, Ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*** ⁸ ***He has shown you, O man, what is***

good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God? (NKJV)

Micah explains 3 requirements of IMPACTing our world for CHRIST...TODAY and EVERYDAY

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I. ACTIONS: Act Justly -

This word “justly” essentially means “the right thing.” It comes from the word meaning “court verdict.” In other words: Do what's right.

“What does the Lord require of you?” ***“To act justly, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.”***

What did “justice” mean in that context? The word “justice” means fairness, fair play and equity within the human family. In the thought of the Old Testament to do justice involved the basic needs, requirements, or even rights of people living together in community. Justice, then, is decidedly social in nature. The practice of justice, either by God or the people, would be to rectify the inequities of a society that allowed some people to be oppressed to the point where they were deprived of the basic needs, requirements, and rights that would allow them to function as part of the community. Doing justice would involve both personal and social responsibilities.

It would compel one never to act in ways that might produce injustice. And it would also compel one to address the social causes of injustice or conditions that fostered it. God demands that the Hebrew people take responsibility for their personal behavior and the behavior of their leaders. There are **nine words** that are most often associated with the word, “justice,” in the Bible. "Widow," "fatherless," "orphans," "poor," "hungry," "stranger," "needy," "weak" and "oppressed." In this list of words, you did not find the word, “rich.” Indeed, rich is often associated with injustice. You don’t have to worry about the rich, because the rich will be able to afford justice. Worry about the widows, the fatherless, the orphans, the poor, the hungry, the strangers, the needy, the weak and the oppressed. God requires that we work for fairness for the little people of our world. God requires a commitment to the poor, oppressed, and powerless in a society, people who have no voice of their own by which to redress the injustices that marginalize them as human beings. And, as is so often evident in Scripture as well as human experience, such a practice of justice most often brings one into conflict with oppressors who are perpetrating the injustice, and that makes doing justice an act of courage as well as an act of devotion to God. “To act justly”...What are we doing to promote justice in our community? Do we keep informed?

Do we offer to be advocates for people in need? Do we speak out against injustice? **President Lincoln said**, “To sin by silence when one should speak makes cowards of men.” **There is no place for injustice, inequity or unfairness in our lives. Our faith must lead us to ethical behavior. Knowledge without responsible action is sin.** We should ask ourselves: What can I do to preserve human rights? How can I uphold the sanctity of life? How should I respond to injustice?

We’re called to IMPACT our world for CHRIST TODAY not only in restaurants We are called to IMPACT our world for CHRIST at the ball field...at the golf course....in the classroom. We’re called to IMPACT our world for CHRIST in the office cubicle and anyplace else we find ourselves!

The Christian group D.C. Talk said -- “*The greatest problem with Christianity today, are people who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and deny Him by their lifestyle, that is what a unbelieving world, simply finds unbelievable.*” **God is calling His Disciples to be Holy and make an IMPACT for Christ by Acting Justly!**

II. ATTITUDE: LOVE MERCY

The second thing that God requires of us is that we “love mercy.”

Do you remember playing a game called mercy when you were younger? You would lock hands with someone and try to bend the other person's hands until they called for mercy. I'm glad that's not the way God does it with us! A businessman needed to have a professional photo taken. When the photographer was done, the man looked at his photo and complained, “This doesn't do me justice.” The photographer responded, “With a face like yours you don't need justice—you need mercy.” We all need mercy, and we need to offer it. We are compelled by Christ to offer unconditional acceptance of others, in spite of their faults, idiosyncrasies, sins and shortcomings. We need to approach people without preconceived notions; we should give others the benefit of the doubt, and not let things like ethnicity or gender come in the way of friendship. And loving mercy means we grant forgiveness. We should ask ourselves: How can I show mercy to others? Who is in need, and how can I help? Who do I need to forgive?

To have mercy means to fill our hearts with compassion and kindness toward one another. The Hebrew word that Micah uses ‘*Chesed*’ here is translated as “mercy,” is a

rich one, used “variously as mercy, tender mercies, lovingkindness, steadfast love.

Love others with God's heart. God says in *Hosea 6:6*, “***I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me.***” -- (Today's English Version)

Mercy is defined as ‘kindness’; ‘favor’; ‘good deed’; compassion’

1. ‘Mercy’ is used nearly 300 times in the Bible
- a. ‘Grace’ 176 times
- b. “forgive” 112 times
- c. ‘hell’ 54 times

.....It is a word that most often used in a covenant sense, involving the attitude of two parties who are in covenantal relationship with one another. In relation to God's mercy, it is used most often of His grace, or of UNEXPECTED kindness.

.....Notice also that the requirement here is not that we HAVE mercy, but that we are to LOVE mercy. There is a big difference between the two. One way of describing the difference is to say that we don't just do acts of kindness from a sense of obedience or compulsion, but we do them out of love. There seems to have been an emphasis in Jesus' teaching on the idea of UNEXPECTED acts of kindness.

- > In the parable of the Good Samaritan, it was the one considered least likely to offer help who did so.
- > The parable of the prodigal son reveals to us the heart of a father who accepted his son against the expectation of almost everyone.
- > The story of the woman caught in adultery teaches a compassionate mercy scarcely revealed in Old Testament Jewish law.
- > The dying thief on a cross has a lesson for us about the depth of God's mercy.

It is God's will and desire for His children to LOVE mercy

1. We do this by sharing His grace, not judgment
2. We do this by sharing His forgiveness, not blame
3. We do this by sharing His patience, not irritations
4. We do this by sharing His kindness, not our harshness
5. We does this by sharing Him holiness, not our human fleshliness

To love mercy is to love others with God's heart. And to love others that's a nice way of saying, "*love everybody with the heart of God*"

Jesus says in Matthew 5:7, "⁷Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

Hold a door open for someone. Let that other car go first. Phone a friend, not because you need a lifeline, but

because you might be the lifeline God wants to use to touch him or her with His love.

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The story of a man and his wife who go to a restaurant that features steak and a salad bar. As they dine, a girl comes out with a gallon bucket of Thousand Island dressing to fill up the salad bar. But she catches her heel and launches the Gallon container of dressing all over this one guy. He's got Thousand Island dressing from the top of his head to the bottom of his shoes; dripping off his forehead, off his chin, on the lapels of his suit, all over his tie, all over his pants, all over his shoes. He is a mess. Now if you were the one covered by Thousand Island dressing, what would you do? How would you respond?

This guy, he goes ballistic. He starts calling this poor girl every name a marine drill sergeant ever used. And he says, "I can't believe just how stupid you are. Look at this! This is the first chance I've had to wear this suit. It cost me \$350 and you have completely ruined it." She's

going, "Sir..." and she's trying to clean up. "Get away from me! You caused enough damage already." His wife chimes in. "That's right. It's a \$350 suit...blah ... blah ... blah."

Everybody in the whole restaurant is watching, and he demands, "I want to see the manager." The manager comes out and says, "Is there a problem?" "Yes there's a problem. This stupid girl has ruined my suit. It's the first chance I've had to wear it. It costs \$350."

"Sir, we'll clean your suit for you. No problem. We'll take care of that." The guy says, "I don't want my suit cleaned. I want a new suit. It's completely ruined. I want a new suit. I want a check right now for \$350." The manager disappeared, and the guy with him. I imagine he wrote him a check and justice was served. Now here's what interesting about this story is that this happened on a Sunday afternoon. So why in the world would a guy be in a suit on a Sunday afternoon? Oh, I don't know.

Probably just came from hearing a great sermon on loving your neighbor as yourself or about turning the other cheek. People who work in food service will tell you that the very worst people to wait on are the people who just got out of church on a Sunday morning.

That's tragic, because, friends, we're called to IMPACT our world for CHRIST not only inside the walls of a church, but to IMPACT our world for CHRIST outside these walls.

Contrast that story with this one:

Booker T. Washington, the famous black educator who was also a humble believer in Christ, took over the presidency of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama many years ago. One afternoon he was walking through an all-white neighborhood in the city when he was stopped by a wealthy white woman. Not knowing Mr. Washington by sight, she called him over and asked him if he would like to earn a few dollars by chopping wood. Washington rolled up his sleeves and proceeded to do the work she asked. After he had carried it into the house, he declined the money and went on his way. But a neighbor girl recognized him and ran to tell the woman who it was that had chopped her wood. Frightfully embarrassed, the woman went the next day to Booker T. Washington's office at the Institute and apologized profusely. But he replied gently, "It's all right. I enjoy physical labor now and then. Besides, it is a delight to do something for a friend."

II. AIM: Walk Humbly With Your God

This verse translates even more clearly as “walk carefully with your God or “be careful to live in a way that God wants you too, to please God and rely on His power’ for His Glory!

A. To do this, both parties have to be going the same direction

You will never learn to walk with God, until you know which way He is going, and then you change YOUR course to match His.

Walking with God means to go in God’s direction.

1. God’s way is clearly Marked (1 John 2:6) "*whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.*"

2. God’s way is always the best way.

(Psalm 1) "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*" -

"Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

B. To do this, both parties have to be going at the same pace

· In order to walk humbly with God, you must match His pace (speed, tempo) and stop getting ahead of or falling behind Him

C. To do this, both parties have to be going to the same destination

If you want true fellowship with God, make sure you’re going to His final destination

God causes His Children to reach their potential in life. (Eph. 2:10) "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*"

D. To do this, both parties have to be going for the same purpose

· Why are you walking humbly with God? The purpose for this action is to get and stay in His perfect will for your live. The moment you start ‘walking with God’ for any other purpose, you are no longer doing His will. (This speaks to motive)

God’s purpose is a deliberate, determined one. (His purpose will be accomplished)

(Isa. 46:11) "*yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*"

E. To do this, both parties have to be going under the same power

Since God is operating under a spiritual power, the only way for your to walk humbly with Him is to do the same. The instance you begin operating under the power of the

flesh, is the instance you stop walking with God. We walk humbly with God, when we come to him in prayer. I love the prayer that goes, “Dear Lord, so far today I’m doing alright. I’ve not gossiped, lost my temper, been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or self-indulgent. I’ve not whined, ...cursed, or eaten any chocolate. I’ve not charged on my credit card. However, I am about to get out of bed in a few minutes, and I will need a lot more help after that.”

Time in prayer and God’s Word daily sets the focus for the day, Take such time to say, “God, this is the day you have made. It’s your gift. Help me to use it wisely for your glory.” Or, “Lord, it’s going to be a long, long day, I need your help and direction.”

To walk “humbly” with God means I take MYSELF out of 1st place, and put HIM in 1st place.

He’s FIRST in all your decisions.

He’s FIRST in all your attitudes.

He’s FIRST in all your words.

He’s FIRST in all your problems.

He’s FIRST in your home.

He’s FIRST in your money.

It’s Time to for True Disciples to Make an IMPACT TODAY... as John Wesley said...

“Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In

all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, 15

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