

A "Do" People

I am either the worst person to talk about this subject or the best. It depends upon whether you think it is better to have a recovering sinner talk about where he is or a saint talk about where you should be. I fit in the first category. I am not the saint.

The sin I speak about is not one of the "big ten" it is the essence of the "big ten". Jesus spoke about the essence of the ten commandments in this way when He was asked what was the greatest commandment.

In Matthew 22 **37** Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Mark adds the love your neighbor part of that

29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.'^[e] **30** Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'^[f] **31** The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^[g] There is no commandment greater than these."

So let us speak about part of the passage assigned this morning. The part of the Scripture I would like to spend time with this morning Micah 6. **6** With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God?

What do I bring to the Lord our God? What do I "do". Offer my firstborn?

But a little Bible lesson first. Look at Micah 6. First God states God's case against Israel. God asks in 6:3 what have I done to you? How have I burdened you?

GOD HAS DONE

- REDEEM YOU FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT
- SENT MOSES, AARON, AND MARIAM AS LEADERS
- MADE BALAAM BLESS YOU 7 TIMES INSTEAD OF CURSE YOU
- PILED UP THE WATERS OF THE JORDAN SO YOU COULD ENTER THE PROMISED LAND.

Then God states all that God has done.

1. Redeemed you from slavery in Egypt.

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2. Sent Moses, Aaron and Mariam as leaders (The exodus is central to Israel)
3. When Balak king of Moab plotted and ask for Balaam's help in cursing the Israelites, Balaam at first refused because God said these were a blessed people and later Balak sent more money and more dignitaries, Balaam relented and went to Moab. But it backfired and Balaam actually blessed Israel 7 times instead of cursing them (Balaam may have been a "prophet" for "profit" but he did listen to the one true God). This is a very interesting read in Numbers 22 ff. Balaam's donkey talks to Balaam after he beats the donkey. It was the long trip from the Euphrates in modern day northern Iraq to southern Israel. (map / Joke)
4. Then God mentions the actual entrance into the Promised land. The journey from Shittim to Gilgal described in the book of Joshua . The waters of the Jordan (during flood stage) actually piled up so the Israelites could cross. And it scared the other tribal kings in Ammon and Canaan west of the Jordan. (map)

Joshua 5

1 Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they^[a] had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.

And when the Israelites got to Gilgal, they celebrated passover and blessed all the men who were born in the desert during the last 38 years.

So in verse 6 Micah responds to the Questions of the Lord with what we might say in our modern colloquialism of "OK, OK, I remember the great miracles You, my God have done. I am nothing before you. How do I

OH LORD WHAT DO I DO

- DO I BOW DOWN BEFORE YOU?
- DO I BRING OFFERINGS OF YEAR OLD CALVES?
- DO I BRING THOUSANDS OF RAMS AND TEN THOUSANDS RIVERS OF OLIVE OIL?
- DO I OFFER MY FIRSTBORN FOR MY TRANSGRESSIONS?
-

approach you? What do I do?

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1. Do I bow down before you?
2. Do I bring offerings of year old calves?
3. Do I bring thousands of rams and ten thousands rivers of olive oil?
4. Do I offer my firstborn for my transgressions?

Isn't that a reasonable response. What would you do? Confronted by God. How do we respond to God? Well later times we added more. Sacrifice in the temple, follow the rules of the Pharisees, and even later today we follow the rules of good Christian behavior.

There is some real tension here. The prophet wants to do what is right. He is a good man. He really wants to know what God wants?

I could give you the answer to this riddle and we could all go home and feel good about ourselves. But I don't know the answer. I know pieces of the answer. I know my journey toward this answer. What do I do?

One of my key Bible scriptures that has helped me define my life is

Matt 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

I is the passage I use for my non secure computer password. Thus I remember it every day several times a day. It first impacted my when I was studying Richard Foster and reading “Celebration of Discipline”, the book we used for the Men's Retreat this year. In that book is a quote from one of the Christian Greats Soren Kirkegaard. That quote is in your bulletin.

In a particularly penetrating comment on this passage of Scripture, Søren Kierkegaard considers what sort of effort could be made to pursue the kingdom of God. Should a person get a suitable job in order to exert a virtuous influence? His answer: no, we must *first seek* God's kingdom. Then should we give away all our money to feed the poor? Again the answer: no, we must *first seek* God's kingdom. Well, then perhaps we are to go out and preach this truth to the world that people are to seek first

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God's kingdom? Once again the answer is a resounding: no, we are *first* to seek the kingdom of God. Kierkegaard concludes, "Then in a certain sense it is nothing that I shall do. Yes, certainly, in a certain sense it is nothing, become nothing before God, learn to keep silent; in this silence is the beginning, which is, first to seek God's Kingdom."

Now the last verse of Micah says something very similar. When the prophet, Micah, and God are talking, Micah wants to "do" something. And God responds with

8 (God) has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

As a person, as a church, as a Christian, as one of God's people, as one of God's creation we seem to have a hard time understanding this concept of our relationship with God.

We respond with a "do". We make rules, we make theology, we make temple rites, we make church traditions,

Least we think that God has not given us this message it shows up many times in scripture.

(scripture series of slides)

Deuteronomy 10:12 And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, (Love and serve him)

1 Samuel 15:22 But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.(To obey is better than sacrifice)

Hosea 6:6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Hosea 12:6 But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.

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**Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and exalted One says—
he who lives forever, whose name is holy:
"I live in a high and holy place,
but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly
and to **revive the heart of the contrite.****

Isaiah 66:2 ...

**"These are the ones I look on with favor:
those who are humble and contrite in spirit,
and who tremble at my word.**

Now "me". Am I guilty of filling my life with "do" rather than "being" with God. Oh yah! in a big way. I am frequently brought up short when I realize that I have been doing rather than being. Last week I was working with Robert on the new church database in the church office when Lee Hammett came in just to say hi to me because I had not seen me in the fellowship hall. Lee is right. I should be with you all. I do the same thing with God. I get too busy "doing" and not "being".

I think that our lack of presence with God is not only about these scripture passages we just reviewed but one of the main reasons that God sent Jesus to be with us. God couldn't get or attention any other way so he sent the Christ.

What did Jesus say to the Pharisees about all the rules they seemed to lay on the people. Now remember that the Pharisees were the ones who tried to do God's will with their whole lives. He said they laid heavy burdens on the people.

Throughout history we have always, yes always, to busy to be with God. That is a sin I spoke about in the beginning. I do not know fully how to "be" with God. I often live the letter of the 10 commandments but not the spirit. Just like many of the people in scripture. So the partial answer to the question of "what do I do?" is to live the spirit of the 10 commandments. To love God, to build a relationship with God, probably through prayer, study and service. But be careful. Those, prayer, study and service, easily become "do" and not "be".

**8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?**

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To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly^[a] with your God.