

**Text:** [Micah 6:6-8 \(NRSV\)](#)

**Date:** September 7, 2025

**Title:** “Making a Difference”

**Theme:** We make a difference by doing justice, loving kindness, AND walking humbly with God – not one, not two, but all three.

*I think throughout, you will want to leave Joe’s mic open. This way I can turn my pack on and jump in whenever.*

## **Introduction**

Project: Sermon Slide

FB Live: IMAG – Joe from stage

- Today’s format: a conversational sermon
- Thanks to the tech team & Jeneene & Abby for acting as hosts/facilitators for our online congregation
- Thanks to our setup and food teams, and to all of you for being flexible!
- Gathered today around the theme of *Making a Difference*
- *Why this theme?* You don’t show up here on Sundays without believing there’s good to be done in the world
- All of us want to know that we’re doing something that matters to someone – we’re made for meaning
- But there are times when that feels more difficult
- And times when we need to be reminded that what we do does matter – that’s why we’re talking about this
- There are few passages of scripture more fitting to this than Micah 6 – and especially Micah 6:8
- **SLIDE – SCRIPTURE:** “He has told you, O mortal, 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?”
- Let’s say this together now – I highlighted DO JUSTICE, LOVE KINDNESS, and WALK HUMBLY because those three ideas are really the key

### **Breakout #1 – Icebreaker (7 min)**

- Take a minute to introduce yourselves, then answer this question:
- What do you already do that feels like it matters/makes a difference? Why do you feel that way? It can be work, a hobby, volunteering at church or elsewhere.
- Or, if you struggle to feel like what you do makes a difference, you can talk about that too!

#### **>>Go into breakout groups at Joe's direction**

Project: Question #1 Slide

FB Live: IMAG – Jeneene & Abby

#### **>>Return from breakout groups at Joe's direction**

Project: Sermon / Message Slide

FB Live: IMAG – Joe from Stage

- Joe invites Jeneene & Abby to share some responses from the online congregation

#### **>>Cut over to summary from Jeneene & Abby (put their audio into the hall)**

Project: IMAG – Jeneene & Abby

FB Live: IMAG – Jeneene & Abby

### **Teaching #1 – About the Prophets**

#### **>>Cut back to Joe on stage**

Project: Sermon Slide

FB Live: IMAG – Joe from stage

- We often think of prophets as being people who tell the future
- *Sometimes* they got a word from God that allowed them to see what was to come
- But that wasn't really the emphasis of the prophets of ancient Israel
- More often, the prophet's role was to remind the people of what they'd forgotten
- And specifically, to call out the ways in which people had leaned into the RITUAL practice of religion while ignoring its ETHICAL demands

- In other words – when people are going to church on Sunday and making a show of what fine upstanding people they are
- But then throughout the week they're living like they don't know who Jesus is
- That's the prophet's moment!
- And particularly in times when the rich and the powerful were focused on their own gain rather than their responsibility toward others
- Micah, in the passage we read, is asking: what's needed? Is it more sacrifices? Will that make things better?
- What God says is no: this is what's required - do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God
- If you have never taken the time to memorize this verse – then I want that to be part of your challenge this week
- It's in the bulletin, take it with you
- Even if all you remember is do justice, love kindness, walk humbly
- That's enough!

### **Breakout #2 – What does it mean to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly? (7 min)**

- Look again at Micah 6:8, which says that the Lord REQUIRES us to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. What do those three ideas - doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God - mean to you?

**>>Go into breakout groups at Joe's direction**

Project: Question #2 Slide

FB Live: IMAG – Jeneene & Abby

**>>Return from breakout groups at Joe's direction**

Project: Sermon / Message Slide

FB Live: IMAG – Joe from Stage

- Joe will invite folks in the room to share some ideas – **roving mics** (I'll try to get people to stand if possible)

Project: Sermon / Message Slide

FB Live: IMAG – shots of speakers or wide shot of room (whatever's possible)

## **Teaching #2 – Biblical Context for Doing Justice, Loving Kindness, Walking Humbly**

- So, now we've thought about it some on our own, let me give you a little more biblical context
- To DO JUSTICE in the scripture is about several things
  - Yes, it means equal justice under law
  - But also responsibility to care for several groups in particular: the immigrant, the orphan, the widow, the poor are named repeatedly (Zechariah 7:9-10 names all 4)
  - And when injustice and oppression is seen, we are called to work at correcting it
  - DOING justice means standing up for others
  - This may look like accompanying someone to a court hearing, going to a protest, standing up to a boss who has it out for a co-worker, or confronting/reporting a bully
- LOVING KINDNESS is rooted in the famous Hebrew word *hesed*
  - Which is hard to translate, but at its core is loyalty, love, compassion, and mercy that flows from God
  - It's the kind of love that is costly and inconvenient because above all – it's committed
  - To LOVE KINDNESS means that this *hesed* way of caring for others is embedded in how you interact with the world
  - That means things like, forgiving someone who has really hurt you, or digging deep to help a member of the family who is in need, even through they haven't been very kind to you through the years, or listening to someone who has politics very different from your own
- WALKING HUMBLY describes how we orient ourselves toward God and others - we talked about this last week
  - But it's having appropriate humility when it comes to what we say about God – knowing that we won't always get God or the things of God right
  - It's also having appropriate humility when talking about people – we are so quick to judge people based on their circumstances
  - Walking humbly means that we listen to learn – and that we'll listen to everyone

- Walking humbly is what makes us the kind of people others WANT to be around and WANT to work with
  - Justice-doers without humility are insufferable tyrants
  - Kindness-lovers without humility smother you and overstep your boundaries
- One way to think about this is that
  - JUSTICE keeps love from becoming sentimental;
  - KINDNESS keeps justice from going to harshness & cruelty;
  - and HUMILITY keeps us searching for a fuller picture of understanding rather than immediately assuming we already “get it”

### **Breakout #3 – What’s compelling to you right now? (7 min)**

1. When you think about going out to do justice & love kindness - which idea is more compelling to you right now? Why?
2. Consider the examples you gave at the beginning, of how you already make a difference. Are yours examples of kindness, or justice, or both?

>>Go into breakout groups at Joe’s direction

Project: Question #3 Slide

FB Live: IMAG – Jeneene & Abby

>>Return from breakout groups at Joe’s direction

Project: Sermon / Message Slide

FB Live: IMAG – Joe from Stage

- Joe will invite folks in the room to share ideas – roving mics
- Then to Jeneene & Abby

>>Cut over to summary from Jeneene & Abby (put their audio into the hall)

Project: IMAG – Jeneene & Abby

FB Live: IMAG – Jeneene & Abby

>>Cut back to Joe on stage

Project: Sermon / Message Slide

FB Live: IMAG – Joe from Stage

## **Conclusion / Wrap Up**

- All of us probably gravitate toward doing justice OR loving kindness more, and that's ok
- But the world doesn't get better without God's people doing both, and doing them both with humility
- Neither is sufficient on its own - it's not do justice OR love kindness OR walk humbly...it's AND to all three.
- THAT'S what makes a difference.
- Two challenges this week:
  1. Memorize the verse
  2. And take on ONE thing that represents either the calling to justice or kindness, and to do it with humility

**By Joe Monahan, Medford UMC, Medford NJ**