

RESETTING LIFE'S COMPASS

Demanding Justice

Micah 6:6-8

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Resetting life's compass is not just about the personal and private, as if I go off on some island with God and live the believer's life. Resetting life's compass is also corporate, societal and national. We never want self-care to turn into selfish care.

You see, here's the problem. We're all tangled up in this web, a network of messed up values, without meaning to or trying to. For example, a 30 second commercial during tonight's Super Bowl will cost \$3.8 million. Over the past ten years, it is estimated that \$1.85 billion has been spent on ads. Could something be upside down in our world? Could we possibly need to reset our compass? Revisit our values? By the way, years ago, G.K. Chesterton quipped, "It is really not so repulsive to see the poor asking for money as to see the rich asking for money. And advertisement is the rich asking for money" [*Everything Must Change*, by Brian McLaren, p. 320]. And as consumers, we are all tangled up in this system.

Another way to think about all this is to think of the problem as social selfishness. Last summer, we had some major storm damage to our roof. Rain came in on our walls, requiring new insulation, new dry wall work and repainting. Although our crisis was very small compared to global disasters, I promised myself that I would never again look lightly on news reports of natural disasters, floods, hurricanes. I would take those seriously. But after a few weeks, back to normal. If it isn't happening to us, it isn't happening!

Do you know what social injustice is? It is selfishness that has gone viral. Listen to some of Micah's words about social selfishness. "Do you expect me to overlook obscene wealth you've piled up by cheating and fraud? Do you think I'll tolerate shady deals and shifty scheming? I'm tired of the violent rich bullying their way..." (6:10-13). "They've all become experts in evil. Corrupt leaders demand bribes. The powerful rich make sure they get what they want" (7:3).

One way to tell that society needs to reset its compass is the manner in which it makes major things minor and minor things major. Again, thinking about today's Super Bowl, all we've been hearing lately is "Deflate-gate," the scandal about the under-inflated football during the recent AFC championship game. Don't get me wrong. Games should be fair. But do you really think Deflate-gate is the most unfair thing going on in our world today? In Nigeria, 90,000 Christians have been displaced and thousands have been murdered, including children and elderly. But we don't see. In our own city, poverty, homelessness and hunger. Racial tensions and subtle discrimination.

We can watch "Downtown Abbey" and see the injustice of an imbedded privilege upstairs where the Crawleys live, but we can't see imbedded privilege in our own world. We can see the movie "Selma" and wonder how those people could be so hate-filled and prejudiced, but we can't see our own blind spots. What movies will they be making about us and our injustices in 50 years?

Our text this morning has two speakers: the people speak in vv. 6-7 and Micah speaks for God in v. 8. What Micah (and Jesus) always fought for was the foundational value of the worth and dignity of every person. That's the compass heading. That's the starting place for any civilization.

Micah says DO justice; LOVE kindness (mercy); WALK humbly with God (v. 8). All verbs. Because following Jesus is not about looking at suffering and feeling pity. It is about doing something.

"...to walk humbly with your God." **Walk**, meaning there is progress, a pace, there is movement. Sometimes we get it right and sometimes we don't. Sometimes slow, sometimes, fast. **Walk humbly with God**. Abandon self-sufficiency and live in God's reality. We can't do this without God, without the power of Christ within us. You and I are not alone in our struggles with injustice. Never alone! **Walk humbly with your God**. Not just "a God," or "the God." Your God. A personal relationship with the living Christ. The Christ who took on evil, who turned over the moneychangers' tables of price gouging and selfishness. The Christ who confronted a corrupt church and state. A Christ who conquered evil on the Cross and in resurrection.