

## **SERMON: "LIVE JUSTLY: It's Who We Are"**

Rev. Geoff Ross, Sunday, May 16, 2021, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

*[So far/we've been hearing from a lot from the OT Prophets – Micah/Isaiah/Jeremiah/Malachi, and now we hear from a Patriarch:Moses. Prophets:Cranky/Critical/Crazy? Definitely not clean.... But they had a hard/difficult job:To call the People of God to account for their failure to faithfully follow/obey God's ways. It was 24/7/365 job! Tasked by a hurt God, their words are angry/harsh/judgmental – saying things the People/we don't want to hear:but that's not all they said; they also offered hope/truth that God isn't yet finished with/loves you/me/world.]*

The prophets remind us that as the People of God/God's children/Creation, we're really/truly meant to be/live different/differently:we're created/called/commissioned to reflect God/God's love/grace/justice/mercy of God in all we say and do. As I said last week, God knows we aren't perfect – that we make mistakes/mess up/do wrong things/sin – but God calls for us to become/transform into Christ, one act of faith/justice/kindness at a time. And, transformed, we're to become Christ/Christ's ambassadors/witnesses/Body – not for our own glory/good, but for the sake of being Christ – to give life/purpose/hope others/neighbours. Like the Prophets who remind us of our purpose: it's because it's who we are.

*[Faith is an action/it's a verb/verbs are words that show an action(sing)/occurrence(process/develop) – or state of being(exist). To live/do/love/walk are actions that not only describe what we're doing/define us: we're defined by our actions – we are known/identified/recognized by what we do/when we do it. GN:God built/designed us this way – wants us to “do it”/live up to our created purpose/potential.]*

Leading up to our theme verse, Micah how, through our sinfulness/disobedience/willfulness (the cause of God's complaint) – we've reduced our relationship with God to meaningless contractual duties to fulfil rather than a loving response freely offered. Micah(Prophets) wants us to know that God longs for us to remember/respond to His saving/gracious actions toward/for us/me/you. But, this 'remembering'/response isn't an intellectual exercise; we're to do so in kind to God's actions for/toward us. God's calling us out goes all the way back to the giving of the law of God in Deuteronomy(Reading), “So now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you? Only to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD your God” (10:12). This is the same Law that Jesus offers as the “greatest commandment”: (adding “And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”(Matthew 22:34-40) For both, action/humility, are essential.

*[In Micah 6:8:God's saying:“I want your worship/you to trust me/you to give the best of what you have to give/first/willingly – not a worship that is empty/fake/meaningless. God wants you/me/us to be honest/open/authentic – they way we were born to be: God want us to be who we are. And that is People of an active/loving God – and to do so humbly.]*

So far in our “LIVE JUSTLY” series, we've heard how, to “do justice”, is much more than simply treating everyone equally: it is to actively show deference towards others – especially those weaker/poorer/more vulnerable than you. This justice requires us to act for the welfare of powerless/sick/elderly/homeless/neighbours/'others' who need to experience God's grace

in/through us as we received it in/through Jesus. To “love kindness/mercy” is a double imperative: we’re to love/love not just God but others:we’re to freely pay forward the same unconditional love God freely to us – above/beyond/always. And to “walk humbly with your God” means we are to live in/by faith/devoted submission/obedience in/of/for God. humility isn’t thinking less of yourself/it’s thinking of yourself less by giving yourself to/for others.

*[Interesting:God’s positive commands/decrees/charges sound simple/often harder in the doing than the “Thou shalt nots....” How hard is walking? Hard:balance/constant adjustments/takes over a year to learn... Walking is falling/we catch ourselves as we fall forward – it’s an intentional act/accidental reaction – something that requires intentional action: get up to and walk – easy?/Right? – but walking humbly? Hebrew word “tsana”-meaning “to walk in humility.”Not so natural!]*

The key to the call to “**LIVE JUSTLY**” – and to ‘walking humbly’ – is to remember whose we are/who we are following: We are not in charge; we’re followers of the One who not only sacrificed Himself for us: it’s to know that we live/exist by God’s grace alone and not by anything we can do. This requirement is not about us – it’s about realizing that without God we have no hope, and that we’re saved to help save others by ‘be-ing’ Christ to our neighbours in all that we say and do. It is the foundation of a life of love for God and for our neighbour. As such, Micah’s challenge for us to LIVE JUSTLY is to be lived out in community/action. We’ve been blessed to be a blessing to our neighbours/community/Church – daily/always, aware that we are God’s to do God’s will. Let us take up the challenge: let us humbly rely upon God to give us the strength/patience/abilities to serve/put our faith into action, and to LIVE JUSTLY. It takes a conscious effort; it is work to walk humbly – but it’s who we are. Amen.