

God's Heart for Justice

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[0 : 00] The scripture reading comes from Micah chapter 6. Please follow along your bulletin or on the screen. Hear what the Lord says.

Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the indictment of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth.

For the Lord has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel. O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me.

For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and sent before you Moses, Aram, and Miriam.

O my people, remember what Balaam, king of Moab, devised, and what Balaam, the son of Beor, answered him, and what happened to Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord.

[1 : 04] With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

Would the Lord be pleased with the thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn to my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He has told you, O man, 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.

This is the word of God. Thank you. Sylvie? We're not going to have an extended pastoral prayer today, but let's just pray briefly as we come to God's word.

Heavenly Father, as we look at the scripture this morning, as we've said so many times, we are not here merely to be inspired, or merely encouraged, or entertained.

[2 : 03] We are here to meet with you, the living God, and we want to do that in your word. And so, we pray, O God, that you will speak to us from your word. We pray, Holy Spirit, take your words that are from your scripture, and apply it to our hearts and our lives.

God, as we look at this topic this morning, this theme of your love for justice and mercy, we pray, God, that you transform our own hearts, that we will become more like you. And so, help us, we pray, that your word come alive to us, God.

We pray that this won't just be the opinions of man, but that really, God, we'll encounter you today in your word. Come and lead and guide us, we pray. In your powerful and your majestic name.

Amen. If you've been coming to Watermark for a while, you'll know we are working through this series called Watermark Essentials, and we're coming to the end, and we've been looking at our values as a church, the foundations upon which we as a church are built.

And so, for four weeks, we looked at the gospel. What is the gospel? And the gospel really is the heart of Watermark Church. You take away the gospel, or if we start to drift from the gospel, let's close the doors.

[3 : 14] It's the reason why we exist. It's the heart of our church. And then we said, okay, but the gospel makes us a kind of community. And so, we looked at community for a couple of weeks, and how the gospel shapes us as a community.

And then, over the last couple of weeks, we've been saying, yes, but God also calls us to be on mission with Him. That part of being part of the people of God is to be part of the mission of God. To be someone who follows Jesus is to join Him in His redemption plan, and what God is doing in the world. And so, we've been saying that mission is not something that the super Christians do. It's not an optional extra. It's not something that the pastors and the elders do. It is part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus is to join His redemption plan in the world.

But then the question is, okay, but what does that mean? What does it actually look like? And so, last week, we answered that question one way by saying, to be part of God's plan for the world, His redemption plan, is to be agents of reconciliation.

[4 : 18] And so, we said, we are reconciled to bring reconciliation. Today, I want to look at part two of that question. What does it mean to be part of God's mission in the world?

And not only are we agents of reconciliation, we are also God's agents of mercy and justice. Okay? So, that's where we're going today. To be part of God's people is to be part of His mission. What does that look like? It's to be His agents for mercy and justice in the world. And we're going to do that by looking at this very famous passage in Micah chapter 6. Now, the background is this. The book of Micah is written by this prophet called Micah. You would never have guessed. And he writes to the nation of Israel around 740 BC. Now, at the time, Israel is not in a very good way. Okay? They've lost their way. The nation is actually divided into two. There's a northern kingdom and a southern kingdom, and they don't really get along so well. There is rampant wickedness and idolatry.

[5 : 21] There's all sorts of craziness that is going on in the nation of Israel. And God is bringing His judgment on the nation of Israel. And the way that Micah is written, it's written like a lawsuit.

God is bringing His charge or His indictment against His people. And so, look at how it starts off. He starts off in verse 1, and He's calling His witnesses.

Okay? So, it starts off, and His witnesses is creation. Look at what it says. Arise. Okay? Remember, you've seen those scenes in the movies, All Rise, the court is in session.

Okay? He says, Arise. God, arise. Plead your case before the mountains. Let the hills hear your complaints. Listen to the Lord's lawsuit, you mountains and enduring foundations of the earth, because the Lord has a case against His people, and He will argue it against Israel.

And so, God says, I'm coming to bring my case and my lawsuit against you, and He calls His witnesses to listen to His case. Except, He doesn't, in the next verse, lay out His case.

[6 : 28] You think He's now going to say what the problem is, but He doesn't actually read from the charge sheet, as it were. And the reason is, because He's done that previously in the book of Micah, chapter 2 and chapter 3.

God details the charges that He's bringing against His people. And so, look at what He says here in chapter 3. He says, This is what the Lord says, concerning the prophets, those who lead my people astray.

Those who proclaim peace, peace, when they have food to sink their teeth into, but declare war against anyone who puts nothing in their mouths.

Okay, so what's going on here? The leaders of Israel, when their bellies are full, when their bank accounts are full, when people are being generous and kind to them, ah, peace, peace, everything's fine.

God bless you, brother. Go on your way, as you were. All's fine. But as soon as things don't turn out the way that they want, as soon as their bank accounts are getting a little empty, or maybe somebody in the congregation doesn't do what they want, war!

[7 : 33] God's not going to bless you. If you don't do what I say, well, you've got to be under God's judgment, right? So when the people are doing what they want, ah, peace, God bless you. Go on your way. But if not, oh, well, God's going to be displeased with you.

Likewise, He goes on, verse 9. Listen to this, leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, you who abhor justice, or pervert justice, and make crooked everything that's meant to be straight.

Her leaders issue rulings for a bribe. Her priests teach for payment. Her prophets practice divination for money and silver. Okay, so corruption, perversion of justice is taking place.

Maybe there's a dispute that's taking place in Israel. Two people aren't getting along. And they come to the leaders and say, how should we deal with this? And who do you think is going to get the favorable outcome?

The one that's going to pay the higher bribe, right? Or maybe two friends, or there's disagreement, they come to the leaders, and the leaders are always favorable towards their friends, or to those that give the most money.

[8 : 38] And so what happens in Israel is the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer. Those that have access to opportunities get more access to opportunities. Those that are

disadvantaged get more disadvantaged.

Those that are being tread on or become more downtrodden, because of the injustice that's happening in Israel. Now, how should God's people respond?

God is saying there's a problem. We've got to do something about it. What should God's people do? Well, God's people have some ideas. Look at verse 6.

They say, What shall we bring before the Lord when I come and bow before the God on high? What can I do to appease God or to win back His favor? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings and year-old calves?

In the Old Testament, a year-old calf is the choice offering. So should I come with a choice offering? That'll really please God. Verse 7. Would the Lord be pleased with a thousand rams, ten thousand streams of oil?

[9 : 42] So pure olive oil, very expensive, but very important to the offering. Is that what God wants? Maybe I should bring ten thousand streams of pure olive oil.

God will be pleased with me then. Maybe rams and sheep, a hundred rams, a thousand rams. Should I give my firstborn son for my transgression, the offspring of my body?

God, is that what you want? God, what do you want from us? Name what you want and God will do it. We'll bring it. Will that earn your favor, O God? Well, look what God's going to say.

What is it that God wants from His people? Look at verse 8. He says, He has told you, O mankind, what is good. What does the Lord require of you?

To do justice, to love mercy or kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. See, for the Israelites, they knew that things weren't good.

[10 : 47] God's bringing His charge against them. And their response is, Okay, fine. God, name your price. What is it that you want? Do you want money? We can give you money. You want offerings? We can give you offerings.

Let me write a check. I can do that. God, you want sacrifice? How much do you want? A hundred sheep? A thousand sheep? Ten thousand sheep? God, what do you want from us? And God's response is, I don't want your stuff.

I don't want your religious piety. I want your hearts. I want your hearts. Imagine a married couple. Imagine a couple are married, and the husband, let's just say, is, something goes wrong.

And he is unfaithful to his wife. And he comes back and he says, Honey, I'm so sorry this has happened. How can I put this right? I'll tell you what, I'll buy you a diamond ring. You want an overseas holiday?

Let's go on an overseas holiday together. Well, I don't know. I'll buy you a new car. Will that make you happy? What's the wife going to say? She says, I don't want your stuff. I want your heart. Friends, this is what God says to his people.

[11 : 51] He has told you, a man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? Now, why is it that God requires this of them?

Of all the things that God could ask for his people, why does he want this? Why is this one of the pinnacle descriptions of what it means to love and trust and follow God? Throughout the scriptures, these two things of loving and serving God and loving and serving people are always come together.

These two things of acting with justice and mercy towards people and walking with God are always found together. As we work our way through scripture, these two things are almost married to one another.

It's almost as if God says, it's impossible for you to say, you love me, and yet have no regard for the people that I'm concerned about. And so that's why I remember Jesus.

One day somebody comes to him, says, Jesus, what is the greatest commandment? Out of all the laws in the Old Testament, the hundreds of them, narrow it down. What's the greatest thing that we should do?

[13 : 02] And what does Jesus say? I want you to love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength. But then, he quickly adds the second one. But don't forget the second one, which is just like it.

To love your neighbor as yourself. Now remember, nobody comes to Jesus and says, Jesus, what are the two greatest commandments? Just, look, I know there's 600, just give us the top two.

Nobody does that. They come to him and say, Jesus, what's the greatest thing? And he says, to love God. But, there's another one, which is just like it. To love God, and to love your neighbor. For on these two things, hang all the law, and the prophets. Friends, to love God, and to love others. To serve God, and to serve others.

To walk humbly with God, and to walk righteously with others. These two things, are actually two sides, of the same coin. Do you know that phrase? Two sides of the same coin. You've got a coin, and you look at, you can't say, well, I like this side, but the other side, I think I'm just going to throw it away.

[14:03] Right? If you've got a coin, it's got two sides, but they join together, they married. And what God has joined together, let no man separate. Right? Jesus says, to love God, and to love others, is what he's all about.

And so that's why God says to his Israelites, mankind, he has told you what is good, and what does the Lord require of you? Now you might say, but when did God say this? When did he tell them? I mean, what verse is there, that he told them, this is what he requires of you?

Friends, this is what God has always said. This is what the entire scriptures are all about. In many ways, this is what the entire Old Testament is about. Remember the Ten Commandments, we're going to look at them in a few weeks time, we're going to, in two weeks time, we're going to start preaching through the Ten Commandments.

The first four commandments are all about what it means to walk humbly with God, to have no other gods, no other idols, to honor God's name, and honor his Sabbath. The next six are what it means to do justice, and righteousness, and mercy in the world, to honor your wedding vows, to honor your parents, to honor your words from your mouth, to not take from others.

This has always been God's instruction to his people. This is what it means to be part of the people of God. And so in Jeremiah chapter 9, God says this, listen to this amazing verse.

[15:22] He says, this is what the Lord says, let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the strong man boast in his strength, let not the rich person boast in his riches, but if you're going to boast in something, boast in this, that you understand and know me.

And what does that mean? Who am I? That I am the Lord who practices mercy, and justice, and righteousness on the earth. For in these things I delight.

He has told you a man what is good, and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. Now, we need to define our terms here.

What does that actually mean? What is justice and mercy? What does it mean to do these things? Well, are you getting ready? This is going to be a little theoretical for a few seconds, okay? You're going to have to have your game on.

In the Bible, the word justice is the Hebrew word mishpat. And mishpat is a very common word in the Old Testament. It's translated in many different ways. But the broader sense is for things that are wrong or out of sync with God's order, for those things to be put right again.

[16:37] Or it can mean for things to operate as God intended in His created order. Now, of course, one of the ways that things can be put right is through punitive justice.

So, somebody does something wrong and they commit a crime and they've got to pay for their crime. Things are put right that way. But in the Bible, justice, mishpat, often means more than that. It means restorative justice. It means to go out and seek things that are wrong in the world and to restore them or to put them right as God originally intended.

It means specifically looking out for people that are disadvantaged, that are vulnerable, people that are powerless, those that are taken advantage of, those that are pushed on the outskirts or the margins of society, and to restore them to a place of dignity and equity and fairness.

And so, that's why the Bible so often talks about these four things, the widows, the orphans, the immigrants, or the fatherless. These people that are most likely to be taken advantage of, God says, go out and find them, go and seek them and restore them to a place of dignity and equity and equality in society.

[17:51] And so, for instance, in Zechariah 7, God says this, this is what the Lord Almighty says, administer justice, okay, there's our word, mishpat, show mercy and compassion to one another.

Do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the immigrant, or the poor. This is what God calls His people to do, to pursue justice, to pursue mishpat, to go out and seek those that are treated less than image bearers of God and to restore them to things that are right.

Okay? So, that's our first word. Second word is the word mercy or loving kindness and it's the Hebrew word *chesed*. Is that right, Eric? Eric Amir is going to correct my Hebrew later on. And in the Bible, this word mercy or loving justice doesn't speak so much about our actions, what we do, it talks about our hard attitudes. It's an attitude of having compassion and kindness towards those around us.

It's actually the word that most often describes God's steadfast love to His people. And so, in Micah 6 verse 8, it talks about this. It says, I want you to do justice, I want you to go out and find those that are oppressed, but I want you to do it with an attitude of compassion and kindness in your hearts.

[19:06] So, Tim Keller says it like this. At first, we may think acting justly and loving mercy are two different things, but they're actually not. Acting justly is the action what we must do, but being full of mercy and compassion describes the attitude or the motive behind that action.

So, think about this. You can say, okay, yes, yes, I must do justice, right? We must go out to the marginalized and the poor, and you can go and do that, but you can do it with an attitude of arrogance or superiority like, oh, these guys, they're so lucky to have me in their life.

They're so lucky that I'm such a kind person. I'm giving of my time. All we can do is with a savior complex, right? Like, I will come and save the world.

Thank goodness that Hong Kong has a church like Watermark. Here we are. Welcome us. No, no, no, no. Friends, God says, I want you to do justice, but do it with mercy, do it with compassion, with steadfast love in your hearts.

Then there's a third word that the Bible uses to describe God's heart, and it's the word *tzedekah*, or in English, righteousness. When you think of someone being righteous, we can often think of someone who is morally superior or very religious, right?

[20:30] But in the Bible, the word righteous actually has to do with the way we handle our relationships, both with God and with one another. Alec Mottier is an Old Testament scholar, and he said that those that are righteous are those who are right with God and therefore committed to putting all other relationships in life right as well.

And so, according to scriptures, to be righteous is not a private standard of morality like being honest and not being greedy and being sexually pure.

Okay? According to scriptures, being righteous is inherently social. It's communal. It's the way that we treat other people with dignity and equity and respect.

And so, look at God's call to his people to practice righteousness and justice. It's all over the Bible. Look at Proverbs 31. He says this, Speak up, judge righteously. Now, what does that mean?

What does it mean to be those that judge righteously? He says, Speak up for those that have no voice. Pursue justice for the oppressed and the dispossessed. Defend the cause of the oppressed and the needy.

[21:40] Or, Jeremiah 22, this is what the Lord says. Administer justice and righteousness. Rescue the victim of robbery from his oppressor. Don't exploit or brutalize the immigrant, the orphan, or the widow.

And so, throughout the scripture, God constantly says, this is what it means to be the people of God, is to love and practice justice, to find those that are oppressed and to raise them up, to do so with mercy and compassion in our hearts and to practice righteousness towards those around us. Old Testament scholar, Jane Oswald, says it like this, When God called the rulers of his people to do justice and righteousness for his people, this didn't mean enforcing some abstract law code or to ensure the rights of his subjects.

Rather, it meant to be so in tune with the sovereign God of creation, to walk with the author of life, so in tune with his character and his desires and his wishes, that his rightness, his order for life, would be made to prevail in the nation with the inevitable result that the good, which is inherent in the creation of the good God, will be unleashed upon the earth.

See what he's saying there? He's saying the people of God are meant to so walk with God that God's heart of compassion for the poor and the marginalized becomes our heart. That God's desire for those that are oppressed becomes our desire.

[23:13] That we so walk with God that becoming like him changes the world and the city in which we live. And so that's why Jesus gets so upset with the religious leaders of his day.

Remember at one point he says to religious leaders, he says, you guys have got the technicalities down. You tithe on everything, even your pot plants in your garden.

You know, you've got a mint bush in your garden and you work out, okay, nine leaves for me, one leaf for God. You've got some herbs and spices, you've got, okay, nine pots for me, one pot for God.

You've worked it out technically, but you've forgotten and what God's really concerned about is justice and mercy and righteousness.

These, Jesus says, you should have abandoned, you should have pursued without abandoning the first things. Friends, God's call for his people to be those who practice righteousness and justice and mercy is all over the Bible.

[24 : 15] almost every book in the Old Testament, there's this call to be his people that administer justice, to pursue righteousness and mercy. And it's all over the place and God's call for his people is not just to be nice people, it's not just to be kind-hearted and certainly not just to write a check to ease our conscience.

God calls us to be those that seek out the vulnerable, that pursue the disadvantaged, who go after those that are susceptible to abuse and to stand with them, to speak up for those that have no voice in society because they've got no authority in society, to come alongside those that are downtrodden or forgotten and to give them dignity and honor where society gives them no dignity and honor because they are made in the image of God, because they inherently have dignity as his people.

Now, as we come to a close, let's ask the question, why? Why should we do this? Friends, why is it that as a church we must be those that are agents not only of reconciliation but agents of justice and mercy in our city?

There are about 2,700 reasons and we'll just look at a bunch of them. Okay? It's all over the scripture. Let me just give us a couple. One of the first reasons is this.

Because God identifies with the poor and the vulnerable. Do you know what I mean when I say, when I talk about name dropping? Do you know that phrase? Name dropping is when you are in a conversation with your friends and you drop the name in the conversation of somebody really important or famous so that other people will associate you with that famous person.

[26 : 05] Right? So for instance, you may be with your friends and you just casually say, I was talking to my friend Jack Ma this week and we were just talking about investment stuff and suddenly people say, you know Jack Ma?

And your status in their eyes gets increased. Okay? Or you say, I was just emailing this guy John Piper and we were just discussing Micah 6 and talking about it and suddenly people say, you know John Piper?

Wow, okay, you must be really somebody. Well, you know, I was talking to my friend Brett Iliad and you know Brett? Wow, okay, something like that. In the Bible, God constantly stands with or associates with a certain group of people.

But it's not the kind of people you'd think he does. God constantly identifies or takes his stand with the outcasts and the marginalized and the poor of society.

The downtrodden and those that society don't look very well upon. In Psalm 68, God says this, he introduces himself, think about this, think about how you introduce yourself.

[27 : 21] Maybe you're going to give a talk at an evening and someone says, this is, you know, Reverend Dr. Chris Thornton. Okay? Or this is Dr.

Samson, you know, whatever it is. Look at how God introduces himself. I am the father to the fatherless, the defender of the widows. Some killer comments on this and he says, this is one of the main things that God is doing in the world.

He identifies with the powerless and he takes up their cause. In the ancient world, this was absolutely scandalous. The gods and the deities of the day were always associated with society's elites, with the captains and the commanders of armies, with the leaders and the generals, with the kings and the rulers of the world.

The priests were always those that were associated with cultural elites. But here God, the God of the Bible, chooses to associate, to identify, to name drop the outcasts and the vulnerable and the abused and the poor of society.

God takes a stand with the widows and the orphans and the evangelists and the powerless. Those that are most vulnerable, most likely to be abused, have a special place in God's heart.

[28 : 38] And therefore, dear friends, they must have a special place in our hearts as well. Okay? That's one reason. God identifies with the poor and the vulnerable. Second reason is this.

Every human being is made in the image of God. If you think about it, sometimes in a city like this, we can treat our animals better than we can treat human beings. That wasn't meant to be funny. I'm sorry. It was. We really can, right? But every human being, whether they are mentally challenged, whether they are crippled, whether they live in a cage home, whether they are multi-billionaires, every human being was knit together in their mother's womb. And inherently has a dignity and an equality and something beautiful about them because they are made in the image of God. Every human being Jesus Christ hung on the cross for and said, it is finished.

Every human being Jesus poured out his life for. And therefore, there is no human being on the planet that does not deserve the dignity and the respect and the equality that every other human being deserves and is expected of.

[29 : 49] fundamentally, our dignity and our identity as people is not found in our bank accounts or where we live but in the fact that we are made in the image of God and carry his fingerprint, his thumbprint upon us.

Here is one last reason. Why is it imperative that as a church we become agents of mercy and justice in our city? One of the reasons is because it will show us the gospel.

about 200 years ago there was this Scottish preacher called Robert Murray McShane. It is a strange name. He died as a young man.

He was 29 years old when he died. He was only a pastor for 8 years and yet God used him really powerfully in Scotland. He was trying to urge his congregation to be those that give generously of their finances to the marginalized and the vulnerable in their city.

But as he did this he found that people were coming back to him and saying but the people are not thankful or the people in our city they don't deserve it or when we give of our money to the poor and the marginalized they are just going to abuse it.

[30 : 59] They are going to go and buy alcohol or they are not going to take care of themselves.

When we are generous people abuse our kindness and they are not even thankful. Why should we do this?

Listen to how Robert Murray McShane answered them. He says some of us might say but my money is mine. I worked hard for it. I studied hard for it.

I labored for it. It's my money. Friends might not Jesus Christ have said the same thing. My blood is my own. My life is my own. Friends if Jesus had said that to us where would we have been?

Some of us might say yeah but the poor and the destitute they are undeserving. Friends might not Christ have said that about us. Jesus might have looked at us and said but they're wicked.

They rebel against my father. Shall I lay down my life for these undeserving sinners? No I'll give my life for the good angels. Dear friends he gave his blood for the undeserving for you and for me.

[32 : 02] Some of us might say but the poor will abuse our kindness. They'll take advantage of our generosity. Dear friend might not Christ have said the same of us and with far greater truth.

Christ knew that thousands would trample his blood under their feet. That most of us would despise his death on the cross and that many of us would use his mercy and his grace as an excuse to sin even more.

And yet he went to the cross for us still. Oh dear brother if you would be like Christ give much give often give freely to the outcasts to the poor to the thankless to those who seem undeserving Christ is glorious and he's happy and so will you be.

It's not your money I want it's your happiness. Remember Christ's own words it is more blessed to give than to receive. Friends as we come to a close I want us to look at one last verse in Micah chapter 6.

I wonder if you picked up on it when we read it earlier. The people of Israel they are convinced that they are in the wrong. Things have not they are wicked they are unjust things are going wrong and they are saying what should we do?

[33 : 16] How can we put this right again? Should we bring an offering? Should we bring gold and silver? Should we bring a thousand rams? What should we do? And then in verse 7 there is this amazing line should we offer up our offspring?

Should we give our own son to please the gods? Friends in the ancient world that's what you did. If you wanted to please the gods you burnt your children in the fire as an offering to the gods to earn their favor.

Friends in the gospel we have a God who doesn't require that of us but he did that himself. Friends in the gospel we have a God who knew that we were lost who knew the wickedness in our hearts that knew that we deserved his judgment and rather than requiring that of us he gave of himself. He sent his own son. He sent Jesus to die on the cross in our place rather than saying what will you give of me to be reconciled? Here we have a God that came to the outcasts to the unjust to the undeserving to the lost and the broken and he said I will give you my son that you can be included in my family.

Friends in the gospel we have a God that doesn't require that of us but he gave of himself. Friends as we be those that go out to be agents of mercy and justice as we join God what he's doing in the world friends let us never forget that the basis for any mercy and justice any grace that we give to our city is the great mercy and grace that we have received in God.

[34 : 54] Friends let us remember that we were dead in our sins and God sent his son. He came to find us he came to hang on the cross to pour out his life for us to give us new lives that we can be reconciled.

Friends if God had left us where we were where would we be? Friends if God had treated us as we deserve what would our future look like? Friends if God had only loved and served the worthy who of us would be saved?

No dear friends Christ came from the lost and the broken he came to pour out his life as an offering he came to rescue and to save us that we might have hope in him out of the overflow of the mercy and the justice we have received let us be agents of mercy and justice in our world.

He has shown you a man what is good and what is it that the Lord requires of us? To act justly to love mercy and kindness and to walk humbly with our God.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father good and gracious God God when we look at your word Father God what should we say?

[36 : 09] God when we read your word we like the nation of Israel have to get on our knees and say guilty as charged. Father we are not that different from them.

We are not that different from the Pharisees God. In our lives we come and we do our religious thing but God in our hearts so often we are living for ourselves. Oh Father be gracious towards us. Father be merciful towards us. Oh great God do not give us what we deserve we pray. Father we pray that as your gospel gets into our hearts that you will not only save us but you will transform us. And we pray that we as a church will be those that are so moved by the gospel so changed by your incredible faithfulness to us that God it will soften our hearts towards our brothers and sisters in the city and in this world.

God we pray that you really will use us as a church. God use us disproportionately. Help us God to be those that do love and act justly in our city God.

[37 : 22] that do so with mercy and compassion and steadfast love in our hearts because we are those that are walking humbly with you. Father we give you permission to wreck our lives God where our lives are comfortable and convenient God where our lives are tame we pray God come and help us to walk with you and God that will mean changes we acknowledge that Christ come and have your way in our life.

come and have your way God. Christ come and have your way in our church Lord. Christ come and have your way in our city. Lord we pray that it will be in Hong Kong as it is in heaven.

Use us we pray in your powerful and majestic name. Amen. Amen.