



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Micah 6:6-8

"What Does God Require?"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we turn to the exposition of the word of God with thanksgiving and praise for the Lord Jesus Christ of whom the Scriptures speak. We thank Thee for the way in which the prophets of old anticipated the ministry that he would ultimately perform. We thank Thee for the progress of divine revelation and for the way in which Thou hast in sovereign providence guided the affairs of the earth to the end that they glorify Thy name, the name of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And then, Lord, we ask that tonight as we turn to the Prophet Micah, that the Holy Spirit may again be our teacher and guide us and instruct us in the things concerning Thy word. May we leave, Lord, with a deeper knowledge of Thee, and a deeper sense of reverence and devotion to Thee. May, Lord, our thought concerning the teaching of the word of God issue in a different kind of life. With that in mind, Lord, we commit each one present to Thee and pray that the Holy Spirit may work in their hearts and minds the things that will please Thee. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Well, it was about five and half years ago that one of our public officials, being inaugurated into office as the President of the United States. On that occasion put his hand on the Bible, which is the customary thing in order to take the oath

of office, and do you remember which passage that our Georgia friend turned to when he was inaugurated into office? Well, I know that probably some of you have forgotten. I confess I probably would have forgotten myself, except I saw reference to it as I was thinking about Micah chapter 6. He put his hand on Micah chapter 6, and read Micah chapter 6, and verse 8. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" And then proceeded to misinterpret it by referring it to his quest for human rights.

Now, there is a remote application that this passage has to politics and human rights, but it is a remote application. The prophet was not so much thinking of that as he was the right relationship with the Lord. So we turn to Micah chapter 6, verse 6 through verse 8. The subject for tonight is the question "What Doth God Require?" This question, in various forms, has been asked very frequently. For example, the lawyer who came to the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The rich young ruler, later on in the ministry of the Lord, came to him and he too said, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life." The nation Israel on the Day of Pentecost, when Peter was preaching his great sermon at the conclusion of the message said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And of course, probably best known to us is the question that the Philippian jailer asked of the Apostle Paul and his companions. "Sirs, what must I do in order to be saved?"

This is one of the fundamental questions of the faith. What does the sinner do to restore the relationship that ought to exist between him and the Lord God? Well, that is something of what Micah has in mind. The answer, we know, as we study the Bible is not found in human invention, but in divine revelation. True religion is not a new design, displaying each man's own individual taste, but a copy from a plan, which was formed and fixed by the Lord himself. We are not children who cry out in the dark after an unknown father, whom we seek by ways of our own. We are babes, and I speak particularly of Christians, we are babes who hold the warm hand of love and concern.

Now, we read in this passage, "He hath shown thee, O man." So when that has been done, we abstain from any further invention. We want no religion of our own. In fact, when God reveals the truth to men, it's a form of treason to debate with him. That is, however, the response of many people. He has revealed his truth, and we tend to want to debate the question with him. That's very human, but it's very wrong.

Remember the context of Micah chapter 6 has to do with God's complaint against Israel. The prophet began the chapter by saying, "Hear ye now what the Lord saith." And then he called upon the nation Israel to arise and contend before the mountains, and let the hills hear her voice. And then he himself turned to the mountains and said, "Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel." We said that this was a lawsuit, a covenant lawsuit, and the summons is given in verses 1 and 2 to the nation, and also to nature about, because in the figurative language God speaks of the mountains as participating in this lawsuit. He seeks to bring home the fact that all of man's activities have been carried on in the presence of the everlasting hills that are about us, so that they form a kind of a witness of the deeds and misdeeds of man. So in typical poetic figurative speech, he calls upon the mountains and the foundations of the earth to take part in the lawsuit, thus bringing home to the nation Israel that God has had his eyes upon Israel down through the centuries, and he's going to bring them into the court, and he's going to demand that they seek to defend themselves against his controversy.

Now then we looked, after the Lord had called the nation, called the mountains, and after he had said in verse 3, "O my people, what have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me." We said that Lord countered by pointing out what he had done for them. He had, first of all, brought them out of the land of Egypt in the Exodus. He speaks about the wonderful grace of the redemption out of the house of bondage. And then secondly he spoke about how he had guided them through the wilderness. "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." And then also he

spoke of how he protected them from Balak, the King of Moab, who sought to, through Balaam the false prophet, to prophesy against them and destroy them by the prophecies. He spoke about how he had protected them from those prophecies. And remember, we turned to the passage in Numbers to show that really what happened was that when Balaam sought to prophesy, and prophesy a curse, what really came out was a blessing of the nation Israel. And finally, Balak was so peeved at what Balaam had done that he hardly knew how to contain himself. And Balaam, seeing that he was going to be unable to prophesy evil against the nation Israel, because God was controlling his tongue, he finally conceived of the idea of causing them to sin through lusting after the women. And they did, and they failed, and had it not been for God's providence again, further things would have happened.

Well, the prophet is speaking about these things, and he's bringing home to the nation the fact that they are guilty in the light of his wonderful grace shown to them. So now he offers the question of the nation in somewhat perilous tones. So the nation is going to reply now, and they ask in the 6th verse, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God?" In other words, what does this God really desire of me? Now, the basic problem, I think, is set forth in the first clause or so, of verse 6, wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God. This is an interesting style in which Micah writes here. He writes in the style of a layman. By the way, you know what a layman is; a layman is someone who lays in bed Sunday morning instead of going to church. [Laughter] Now, that's a definition that I saw in a joke book not long ago. [Laughter]

Well anyway, Micah the Prophet writes in the style of a layman who asks a priest for instruction. For, remember, the priests in Israel were those who were to teach the word of God. It was their responsibility to have knowledge, and so in verse 6, writing as if he's speaking of a man asking for instruction from a priest, he writes, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD?" If he has a controversy with me, and we will see in a moment

that conviction of sin has been brought to bear. "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God?" So the style then is that of a layman asking a priest for instruction. He knows, of course, one thing, and he knows it very well. And that is, that if we're going to be right with God, there has to be a sacrifice. You notice that he immediately offers some possible answers to the question and they all have to do with sacrifice, so he knows that the only way of approach to God is through sacrifice. Now, of course, he has some wrong ideas about the sacrifice that is to be brought. But nevertheless he does know this fundamental fact, that no man approaches God except through the death of an animal or through sacrifice. Just as we know now, since the Lord Jesus has fulfilled all of the types of the Old Testament, "without shedding of blood there is no remission." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews states that in Hebrews chapter 9 in verse 2.

So he knows that an atoning sacrifice is necessary, but he asks for instruction. "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? In other words, what am I to bring in order to make things right. Now, I saw he has been brought to conviction concerning his sin, because in verse 7 we read, "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" So it's clear that he has come to understand his transgression, and he's come to understand the sin of his soul. So he's asking, and asking in somewhat complaining tones, how can I be right with the Lord?

Now, he speaks of being right as coming before the Lord and bowing myself before the high God. Isn't it interesting: God is really man's problem. That really is the problem. God's the problem. We sometimes look at it from the human standpoint and say the problem is with man. Well of course the problem is with man. Man sinned, but the problem is also with God, because God is a holy God. So in that sense, God is the problem. He cannot forgive sin, just willy nilly. He cannot pass by. He cannot push

aside his requirements. He is a just God and a holy God, and therefore his justice and his holiness must be satisfied. So the problem is really with God. You can see that I think, illustrated in the Apostle Paul's treatment of justification in Romans chapter 3, verse 21 through verse 26. He says that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he," I've skipped over a few phrases, "that he might be just, and the justifier of the one who believes in our Lord." The problem is not so much how to get man to God, as how to get a holy God to men. So the Apostle Paul treats the Godward side of things first, then the manward side, for he must be just before he can be the justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus. So God is the problem, and if anyone is to come before the Lord, if anyone is to bow before the high God, if he's to have acceptance to come before him, and if he's to bow before him in worship, then something must be done about the holiness of God. Otherwise, the holiness of God will destroy us all. So to sum it up, God has first place in the cross, and therefore his holiness is fundamental for our acceptance and for worship.

"Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God?" as a sinner, we might say. Let me just make one sentence of two of application. If you should be in this audience and you have never believed in Jesus Christ, then it is impossible for you to come to God except through Christ who is offered that justifying sacrifice in his blood on Calvary's cross. Now, there are lots answers that a person might give to that. What shall I do? "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God?" But the prophet puts in the mouth of this layman, who's asking the priest for some information, some possible answers, and I gather from reading them and pondering them that they are designed to be somewhat comprehensive and illustrative rather than specific. He does mention specifically the burnt offering, but then he goes on to speak of an offering of an individual. So I take this to be somewhat comprehensively

illustrative, and you'll notice the ascending or increasing intensity in number and value of the offerings that he suggests.

Listen to what he says, "Shall I come before him with burnt offerings," plural, "with calves of a year old?" Now, I confess you have to look up the meaning of that expression "calves of a year old" to catch the point of it. A calf could be offered from the time that it was about seven or eight days old. Specific reference is made in the Mosaic Law that a calf, I think of seven days, I've forgotten whether it's seven or eight, may be offered. But obviously, if the calf is allowed to live for one year, it has become considerably more valuable. And so to offer a sacrifice of a calf that is a year old is a more valuable sacrifice than just an offering of a calf. So when he says "with calves of a year old" he expressing not only a burnt offering, but a burnt offering of an animal that is of some value. Then he says, "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams?" Can you imagine an individual, convinced of his sin, bringing to the court of the tabernacle thousands of rams? So you see he's talking about how the offering that he's going to bring to the Lord, as he puts it in his question, here is a man who is bringing a whole flock, is that sufficient? Is that what we have to do in order to bow before the Lord or in order to come before him in order to worship him.

Then he goes on to say, "Or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" Now, this is not another offering, but this is embellishment of the one offering, because it is customary to pour oil on offerings. So here we have thousands of rams, and we have ten thousands of rivers of oil. And then finally he reaches the climax, and it's a "hysterical ghastly crescendo" someone has said. The acme of religious zeal is to offer someone of myself, "Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" So he has talked about burnt offerings. He has talked about a calf of a year old. He's talked about thousands of rams, ten thousands of rivers of oil, and then at the climax of this, the gift of his own firstborn, the fruit of his body as a sacrifice for his sin. That's astonishing, and it's meant to be. What the prophet is trying to show is that no matter

how you think of sacrifice, no matter how many animals you think about, no matter what the value of the sacrifice may be, it's insufficient alone. So he wants it to be astonishing.

Now, of course, when we read the Old Testament we would know that to offer a human body as a sacrifice, a human being, was specifically prohibited by the Mosaic Law. It is stated in the Mosaic Law that they were not to offer themselves or human beings to Molek, the god. And furthermore, later on in the prophets such as in Jeremiah, this was also condemned. It did take place, however, in the Old Testament. It rarely took place, but nevertheless it took place and in the contexts of those places it is something that is disapproved. Perhaps your mind may have gone back to Abraham and Isaac. It's possible that he did. We should remember, of course, that Abraham offered Isaac before the statements of the Law. And of course, that was something that came directly from the mouth of God. It may have been that the prophet thought of this as he thought of this word that came to him, "My firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul," no not even that.

Now, I want you to notice one other thing before we look at the 8th verse, Jimmy Carter's verse. [Laughter] Verse 7 says, "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams?" Now, I know that most of you in this room don't read Hebrew, so I don't expect you to know something like this. If you learn to use the concordance, however, you may learn these things for yourself. That's one of the reasons why you buy a concordance, incidentally, is to just discover things like this. You don't have to know Hebrew to find out something like this. In the 1st chapter of the Book of Leviticus, when Moses gives us the instruction concerning the burnt offering, he speaks about the various kinds of offerings, and then he gives instructions concerning how they are to be brought. Well, right at the beginning he says in verse 2 of Leviticus 1,

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the

flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will (or at his own pleasure), at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him."

Now notice what is to transpire, the man who wants to bring a burnt offering, which is the offering of the whole of the animal, for the Lord's acceptance. He brings his animal. He brings it to the priest, and he says, "I want to offer a burnt offering to the Lord." And then the ceremony includes the laying on of the hand of the individual on the animal, in which he signified that the animal stands for him. In other words, the animal is his representative. So he puts his hand on the animal. The animal stands for him, and the priest then slays the animal. And Moses said, "It shall be accepted for him to make an atonement for him." In other words, this is representative sacrifice. "It shall be accepted for him," note that word translated here "accepted for him" is the Hebrew word niertsah. That's the niphal form of the word ratsah in Hebrew. That is the same verb that is used here in Micah chapter 6, in verse 7. "Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams?" And there that same form signifies acceptance. So what he is talking about is acceptance, and he's talking about acceptance in the sense of being accepted before the Lord by justification for the forgiveness of sins for the other blessings that belong to an individual who is a believer in the Lord God. So when he says, "Will the LORD be pleased," he means will the Lord accept these things as atoning sacrifices for me?

Well, what does Micah say? The divine answer is given in the 8th verse. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Now, I think this is a most interesting answer, because it ignores the substance and really the desperation of the question that has just been asked. And it is ignored with studied disdain. He said, "What doth the Lord require?" Or "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD?" And the prophet

answers, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" In other words, the anxiety of the person who has come becomes assurance. The uncertainty becomes certainty. The tension is resolved by the words of the prophet.

Now, the vocative "O man" is somewhat indefinite. He's not talking about any particular man. He's just talking about all men, any man. This is what has been showed you. This is what the word of God teaches, in other words. Now, let's try to analyze exactly what he has stated. He says first, "He has showed thee, O man, what is good." One might ask, when did he show me? What is there here that would indicate that he knows? Micah says this principle is known to men. Well, I would think that the way to find the answer to something like this is to go back in the Old Testament and see if there are passages in the Scriptures that give the answer to a question such as has been asked here by this layman of the priest. And one of the answers that comes is one that is very similar to the statement made by Micah the Prophet in 1 Samuel chapter 15, and verse 22.

Now, I'm going to read verse 21, while some of you find verse 22 of 1 Samuel 15. He writes, "But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Look at that again. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Now someone might say, is Micah and is Samuel, too, speaking of justification by works? Is he saying that the way we are to please the Lord God is to obey, rather than to offer sacrifice, sacrifices that pointed forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? No, you'll notice he does not say, "Do not sacrifice." But he simply says "to obey is better than sacrifice." He knows, and they know, that they've been commanded by God to offer the sacrifices. But as is so often the case, they kept on

offering the sacrifices long after they had lost their personal relationship with the Lord God. They kept on going through the motions.

One doesn't have to be much of an applier of Scripture to know exactly how that applies to us. There are people in the Christian church who've gone through all the motions, but have never had a personal relationship to the Lord. And then there are many who are professing believers in Jesus Christ, who ten, fifteen, twenty years ago had a conversion experience that was genuine, valid, but they've lapsed into the everyday Christian activity of attending meetings. In fact, they get with Christians and have "fellowship" in which they discuss the latest in the sports world, the latest in the entertainment world, the latest in the art world, and the latest in the business world, and that's about it. There's no real Christian fellowship in the things of the word of God. Incidentally, there's nothing wrong in discussing those things, it's just what place do they have in our lives? So it's very possible for us to be going through the motions, the things that we ought to do, because remember in the New Testament we read, "Forsake not the assembling of thyself together." So that's perfectly proper, but there is a priority, and the priority rests upon the obedience of faith. So Samuel says, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Well, let's turn to one of the prophets, we turn to Amos; Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah. But Amos, Amos chapter 5, verse 21 through verse 24. Listen to Amos. Now, he's speaking for the Lord God, and he's talking about the feasts which the Israelites love to celebrate, you know, like Christmas, Easter, New Year's, monthly fellowship programs, that kind of thing, all of that kind of thing. He says, "I hate," now God is speaking through the prophet, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies." In other words, when the sacrifices are offered which normally bring a sweet savor to me, because they are offered in faith, I won't even bother to smell them. "Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not

accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs." I don't like to hear your singing. Mark, that's right. If they don't sing out of the heart, he doesn't enjoy it. We can sing loud on Sunday morning, but if it does not arise out of faith, well, "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?"

Well, let's turn back a few pages to Hosea. You know, the prophets, they seem to have some of these little themes that they love to play on with the children of Israel, and the reason is because we human beings so easily fall into these things being sinners. Listen to Hosea in chapter 6 of his prophecy. "O Ephraim," this is verse 4,

"O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth, for I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

Now, it's clear from the context, he's not denying that sacrifice is something that he wished, but not sacrifice in the spirit in which it was given. Well, to use the expression of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "time would fail me" if I turned to Isaiah chapter 1, if I turned to Jeremiah chapter 6, chapter 7, chapter 14, and other passages even in the prophecy of Hosea, which give the same kind of thought. So when we read in Micah chapter 6, and verse 8, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good," I think we can understand what the prophet must have been talking about.

Now, there is another thing that I want you to notice, and that is that the term "good" is almost a technical term. "He has shown thee what is good." Now, that's a

reference to the covenant that God made with the children of Israel. In chapter 8, verse 1 through verse 3 of Hosea we read this, "Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law. Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee. Israel hath cast off the thing that is good." Or literally, "Israel has cast off that which is good, or the good, the enemy shall pursue him." Israel has broken the covenant. So the term "the good" is a technical term for the stipulations of the covenant between the Lord and Israel. And so when he speaks here in Micah, "He has showed thee what is good," he is saying "He has told you the things that enable you to satisfy the stipulations of the covenant that exists between the Lord God and the nation Israel.

Well, what we have is a classic definition that follows of duty to God and duty to one another. Listen, what is good? What does the Lord require of Thee? Well, to do justly, number one; second, to love mercy; and third, to walk humbly with Thy God. What is meant by these expressions? First of all, to do justly; well, I think Amos has told us that in verse 14 and verse 15 of chapter 5. He's talked about this same thing. What is meant is simply the upholding of that which is right or what is accordance with his word in law and in life. In other words, commitment to the Lord God, both as it pertains to the Lord and as it pertains to fellow Israelites. Do you know how Luther translated this? Luther had a happy way of getting right to the point of things, and he often manifested it in some of the ways in which he translated the Bible. He says, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good and what doth the Lord require of thee. But to keep God's word." That doesn't seem to be too good a translation if you know Hebrew. Actually, God's word is not there and keep's not there. But he says, "To do justly," what is to do justly? Well, to do justly is really to keep God's word. That's the way he rendered it, to keep God's word.

Well that means, in effect, that both in what the Bible says with reference to the Lord God, and in what it says with reference to the neighbors, to the Israelites, it is to be

kept. Commitment to the Lord, commitment to the community of the Lord's people, that's what it is to do justly. He's not talking about political human rights, all though there may be a legitimate application to that kind of thing. He's talking about rights and what is just and what is proper within the covenant community of Israel. The application to us would be a reference to the church. In other words, there we should do justly. Our commitment to the Lord is also a commitment to the Lord's people.

Now, the second thing is to love mercy. The Hebrew word *cheded* is a word, it's often translated lovingkindness. It's been translated by some Hebrew scholars as loyal love, for the idea of love is in it, but the idea of fidelity to a covenant is in it, too. So it's loyal love. It's the kind of love that a covenant keeping God would exhibit, faithful in spite of the faithlessness of the covenant people. It suggests the Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, the New covenant, made with the nation Israel, made ultimately with the elect of the nation Israel, and with the elect of the church in the New covenant, and how he is faithful to his word to do what he is going to do even if the nation is disobedient. Now, he doesn't bless impenitent people, he just guarantees by his promises that he will one day make the impenitent penitent in efficacious grace. And therefore his promises will be fulfilled though the fulfillment of them will be postponed by the disobedience of people. That's the second characteristic of what it is to do good. It's to love mercy.

What does God require of you? To love mercy, to love the loyal love of the Lord God, "This is fundamentally," one of the commentators says, "The love that will not let me go," that which George Matheson speaks about in his great hymn, "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go." This is the love with which God has loved his people, it's sovereign unconditional love. Do you love that kind of love? Do you love lovingkindness? That's part of what God requires, to love lovingkindness. Now, of course, he doesn't mean simply to love lovingkindness as it pertains to me, but also as it pertains to others who are also loved by this same lovingkindness. To put it in New Testament terms, this is the new

commandment. "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another." Your commitment to the Lord in the reception of everlasting life is a commitment, my commitment too, I don't want to preach at you, but our commitment when we believe in Jesus Christ is a commitment to the Lord God, but it's also a commitment to the Lord God's people. As he has loved us, that's a magnificent relationship that we have. So to love mercy, that's what the Lord requires.

Well, I tell you, I want to say let's close the meeting, and let's go home and get down on our knees and pray a bit, because what the Lord requires is something that can only be done by the sovereign grace of God, and finally, to walk humbly with thy God. That's a circumspect walk. It's like Ephesians 5:15 where Paul says "Walk circumspectly." That's the test, a test, of a believer's salvation. It's the symptom of spiritual health. When you walk humbly with our God, what's involved in that? Well, first of all a good understanding of what we are before the Lord, sinners. When a man walks humbly before the Lord God, he can only walk humbly when he realizes his relationship to the Lord is one of sovereign grace, that God should love me, that God should take me into his family, with all of my sin, with all of my rebellion, with all of my disobedience, that he should take me, what a wonderful manifestation of grace. No man can walk humbly before the Lord if he doesn't have a right relationship, a right understanding of his own relationship to the Lord. And so when we say this is a test of salvation, it's a test also of what you understand about yourself and what you understand, of course, about the greatness of God in the light of that. Low views of ourselves in divine matters leads to true humility before the Lord God, and that's what the Bible teaches us.

Well, let me sum it up, there's so much more that could be said. Jimmy did pick a good text; I will say that for him. He picked a good one, even if he didn't present very much of an exposition of it that touched me, at least. You can see at a profound level sacrifice is required. What's the sacrifice? What's the kind of sacrifice that enabled a person to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God? Why, it's not a

giving of things to the Lord. You can give all the rams and all of the animals all the calves and even someone from your own body, the firstborn of your own family, but what God's interested in is you. That's what he's interested in, not your things. He has the cattle on a thousand hills, so he's interested in you. That is a sacrifice. That's what he requires.

Well you can see, I think, that covenant living; let me use a modern expression, I don't like it, but it came out of my mouth as I was putting these notes down; covenant living impacts both God and the community, both life and acts. What really Micah was interested in is the linking of piety and duty. He was interested in the linking of theology and ethics, for theology and ethics become one when a man lives his theology. In other words, God wants to be sovereign over all of our lives. And then 1 Samuel 15:22 in the Old Testament leads on to Romans 12:1-2 in the New. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God." That's it, by the mercies of God, "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." May the Lord enable us by his grace to please him by the sacrifice of ourselves. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these marvelous in many way astonishing words from the prophet. We know that no man can do the things that thou dost require in human strength, in human ability. Thou must accomplish all of the things that please Thee through us. O Father, help us to be instruments for the glorification of Thy name. May, by Thy wonderful grace, we do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before Thee. We thank Thee for the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ who has made it possible for us to have the forgiveness of our sins, black as they are. And we thank Thee for his constant presence. Why should we not rejoice, having all of the blessings of heaven poured out so richly upon us? O Father, enable us as individuals and as a

company of believers to measure up in some way at least, to these things that the prophet wrote so many hundreds of years ago. May, in Believers Chapel...