

Title: **WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF ME?**

Text: Micah 6:6-8

Subject: *God's Requirements*

Date: Tuesday Evening — March 27, 2012

Tape: *Micah #22*

Readings: *Larry Brown and Don Raneri*

Introduction:

WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF ME? — That is my subject. That is the question I want to answer in this message. — **WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF ME?** — If we would know this answer to this question, we must find it in the Word of God alone. What does God require of me? What does the Bible say? What does God say in his Word? What does God require of me?

This is a question that every man, woman, and child in the world sooner or later asks. — **WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF ME?** When a sinner is made aware of his guilt and sin, before being taught of God the Holy Ghost, before being convinced of sin, and righteousness, and of judgment, **the guilty sinner first seeks mercy by merit.** He wants to know what

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he must do to make amends to God, what he must do to atone for sin, what he must do to make peace with God. — “*Sirs, What must I do to be saved?*”

The fact is, we are all legalists by nature. We all presume that we must and can do something by which we can turn away God’s wrath, appease his justice, and make ourselves acceptable with the holy Lord God. Sinful man has been trying to save himself by good works ever since Adam’s fall in the Garden. He wants to know — **WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF ME?** “Tell me what God requires, and I will do it.” That is the vain, arrogant presumption of proud, self-righteous man.

- Adam in the Garden
- Romanism
- All Works Religions
- Reformed Religion and Works Holiness
- Progressive Sanctification
- Degrees of Reward in Heaven

Even after we have been saved by God’s free grace in Christ, even after God gives us faith in

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Christ, our flesh loves works religion. It clings to us like a cobweb! It seems utterly impossible to shake it off.

- Nothing more assuredly promotes licentiousness than works religion.
- Nothing makes men more proud, self-righteous, and mean-spirited than works religion.
- Nothing is so utter deadly as works religion.
- Yet, all men and women, by nature, love works religion.

MICAH 6:1-5

Open your Bibles with me to Micah chapter 6. In this passage of Scripture (vv. 1-4) God's prophet Micah declares God's controversy with Israel.

(Micah 6:1-4) "Hear ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. 2 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

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plead with Israel. 3 O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. 4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.”

BALAK AND BALAAM

Then, in verse 5, the Lord God calls for us to remember what Balak, the king of Moab, asked of Balaam, when he sought God’s blessings upon himself and sought God’s curse upon Israel (Numbers 22:5; 23:7; 24:10-11; 25:1).

(Micah 6:5) “O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.”

The Lord here commands us, by his prophet Micah, to go back to Balak and Balaam, “**that ye may know**

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the righteousness of the LORD.” Then, in verses 6-8, using Balak and Balaam as examples, he raises the question I want to answer in this message— **WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF ME?** — and shows us the answer.

(Micah 6:6-8) “Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, [and] bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? 7 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? 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?”

Proposition: This is the thing I want you to see: — Salvation is altogether the work and gift of God’s free grace in Christ Jesus. — Nothing depends upon

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or is in any way dependent upon our works. — That means that whatever God requires God gives.

Divisions: I will give you my message under two heads, two points...

1. Man's Presumption
2. God's Revelation

MAN'S PRESUMPTION

First, in Micah 6:6-7, we see man's presumption, every man's proud, vain presumption that he can and must do something to save himself.

“Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, [and] bow myself before the high God?” (v. 6) — *“What shall we do that we might work the works of God?”* (John 6:28) — That's the question all men ask, presuming that they can meet the demand, whatever it might be! This is the guise of graceless men. They would pacify God and work themselves into his grace and favor. **Fallen man could not steal heaven by rebellion, so he tries to buy it by righteousness.**

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He is willing to bow himself in ceremonies and rituals, in the bodily exercise of religion, with fastings and ashes, as if bowing the head and doing penances and pilgrimages will ingratiate the Almighty!

“Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?” (v. 6) — Shall I propitiate God with burnt offerings? Shall I meet God marching against me, with burnt offerings, and thus make my peace with him? **Men weary God with sacrifices and prayers. But they are nothing more than religious Sodomites** (Isaiah 1:1-115).

(Isaiah 1:10-15) “Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. 11 To what purpose [is] the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. 12 When ye come to appear

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before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? 13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; [it is] iniquity, even the solemn meeting. 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear [them]. 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.”

“Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, [or] with ten thousands of rivers of oil?” (v. 7) — It is universally understood by proud, fallen man that none dare come before God empty handed. — But, the fact is, **the only way you can come to God is empty handed!**

“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling!
Naked, come to Thee for dress;

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Helpless, look to Thee for grace!
Foul, I to Thy fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die!”

The famous (infamous) papist theologian, **Robert Bellarmine** wrote, “Good works are the price and purchase of heaven.” What would not men give, what will they not suffer, that they may be saved? I once read, in some of Thomas Brooks works, of a man who said, “I would swim through a sea of brimstone that I might come to heaven at last.” But those who would buy heaven and offer, as these here in Micah 6:7, a bribe for a pardon, shall perish with their sacrifices. Those who seek to be saved by their works **Martin Luther** fitly calls the devil’s martyrs, because they suffer much and take great pains to go to hell. They buy their damnation by their gifts

“Shall I give my firstborn [for] my transgression, the fruit of my body [for] the sin of my soul?” (v. 7)
— The Jews, corrupted by idolatry, sacrificed their sons and daughters to Moloch (Saturn) and burned their children in fire (2 Kings 17:15-17, 31; 21:5-7;

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23:10). Nothing is more absurd than works religion! Nothing is more debasing to man! Yet, nothing is more precious to man than his foolish idolatry!

I know very few who would assert that salvation is by works, few who would even dare to assert that salvation is by grace and works. **Almost everyone I know would state, as you and I do, that salvation is by the grace of God through faith in Christ. But almost everyone, when talking about their hope, when describing their religion, very quickly display what they really believe.** They really believe that God requires something from them, some works of righteousness on their part.

- Works Salvation!
- Works Security!
- Works Sanctification!
- Works Assurance!
- Works Rewards!

Yet, the Word of God everywhere denies that salvation is by the works of the flesh. Our good works have nothing to do with God's salvation.

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- Christ + Anything = Eternal Damnation!
- Christ + Nothing = Everything!

(Romans 4:2) “For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God.”

(Romans 9:11-13) “(For [the children] being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

(Galatians 2:16) “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

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(Galatians 2:20-21) “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness [come] by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

(Galatians 3:1-3) “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

(Ephesians 2:8-10) “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which

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God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) “Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

(Titus 3:5-7) “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Man’s foolish and damning presumption is that salvation is by his good works, that there is

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something he can and must do to win God's favor. But, in Micah 6:8, we see...

GOD'S REVELATION

Here is God's marvelous revelation of his grace in the Gospel. That is my *second* point. — God's Revelation. This is what God requires; and this is what God gives.

(Micah 6:8) "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?"

Sadly, almost every commentator I have read on this verse of Scripture and every sermon I have been able to find on it interpret the text to mean — God requires men and women, in every department of life, to behave justly, honestly, and uprightly; to be merciful and charitable to his fellow man; and to live in humiliation before God. They tell us that this is the sum and substance of real religion and true godliness

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“But ye have not so learned Christ” (Ephesians 4:20). — How I thank God that I have not so learned Christ! Notice what the text says. **There is not a word in this verse about how we are to live before men, or about what we are to do to and with men.** God requires us to *“do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly **WITH** thy God.”* What does this mean?

“DO JUSTLY”

What is this requirement that we *“do justly with God”*? This is not talking about treating all men justly, though we certainly should try to do that at all times.

- Pay your bills.
- Live honestly with all men.
- Treat all people right.

This is talking about doing justly with God! How can I do justly with God?

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To “do justly” is to confess that in ourselves, by reason of sin, we justly deserve his wrath and indignation, having broken all his righteous laws.

- To do just is to confess our sin.
- To do justly is to take sides with God against ourselves (Psalms 32:5; 51:4-5; 1 John 1:9).

(Psalms 32:5) “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.”

(Psalms 51:4-5) “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done [this] evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, [and] be clear when thou judgest. 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

(1 John 1:9) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

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To “do justly” is to exercise that repentance toward God that only God himself gives, that only God himself can produce in a man by his grace.

“LOVE MERCY”

Who does not love mercy? Everyone I know loves mercy, especially when he needs it. But anyone who has not been blinded to the Word of God by his own love of works religion must surely realize that Micah is not here telling us that salvation is to be had by loving mercy in that sense!

- Let us love to show mercy and exercise mercy!
- Let us love to see mercy exercised!
- But you are a fool, if you imagine that you can win God’s favor by being merciful!

If you will turn to Luke 1:72, you will see that the mercy we must love is our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God’s salvation by him. — Here Zacharias is speaking of John the Baptist and his ministry as the forerunner of Christ, our Redeemer.

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(Luke 1:67-75) “And his father **Zacharias** **was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied,** saying, 68 **Blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel;** **for he hath visited and redeemed his people,** 69 And **hath raised up an horn of salvation for us** in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; 72 **TO PERFORM THE MERCY** [promised] to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”

Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ is the performance of God’s mercy; and all who are born of God love that mercy!

- Performed by Christ’s Obedience in Life — Righteousness!

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- Performed by Christ's Obedience in Death — Satisfaction!
- Performed by Christ's Power in Grace — The New Birth!

“WALK HUMBLY”

Next, we are told that we must walk humbly with God. — *“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?”* — **To “walk humbly with thy God” is to walk before God in the conscious awareness of your sin, trusting Christ alone as your Savior, as you are taught by God the Holy Spirit for the everlasting comfort of your soul** (John 16:7-11; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:6).

(John 16:7-11) “7Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the **Comforter** will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto

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you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 **Of sin**, because they believe not on me; 10 **Of righteousness**, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 **Of judgment**, because the prince of this world is judged.”

(1 Corinthians 1:30-31) “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

(Philippians 3:1-3) “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed [is] not grievous, but for you [it is] safe. 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

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(Colossians 2:6) “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, [so] walk ye in him.”

“Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.

When He from His lofty throne
Stooped to do and die,
Everything was fully done:
Hearken to His cry: —

‘It is finished!’ Yes, indeed,
Finished every jot:
Sinner, this is all you need,
Tell me, is it not?

Weary, working, plodding one,
Why toil you so?
Cease your doing: all was done,
Long, long ago.

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Till to Jesus' work you cling
By a simple faith,
Doing is a deadly thing,
Doing ends in death.

Cast your deadly doing down,
Down at Jesus' feet,
Stand in Him, in Him alone,
Gloriously complete!"

Do you remember what the Lord God told us in verse 5 by his servant Micah? He told us to remember what Balaam told Balak, "*that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.*"

(Micah 6:5) "O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD."

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This is what God told Balak and tells his people by that deceiver, Balaam. Hear it and learn the righteousness of God! It is exactly what Paul told the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:30-31.

(Micah 6:8) “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?”

(Numbers 23:20-21) “Behold, I have received [commandment] to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. 21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God [is] with him, and the shout of a king [is] among them.”

(Numbers 23:23) “Surely [there is] no enchantment against Jacob, neither [is there] any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!”

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Amen.