

THE GOOD LIFE  
Micah 6:8

Intro: An expression that we have heard often in recent years is, the good life. As far as I know, it is an American term, and expresses what every American should be seeking: the good life. The sooner you can get it, the better; but if you cannot get it earlier, you should certainly be working toward it in your years of retirement.

What is THE GOOD LIFE?

Well, it the life which enables you to do all of the things that you have always wanted to do. It is the life when you can have all of the things that you have always wanted to have. It is the life when you can go to all of the places you have always wanted to go. It is a life of fun, a life when you can be satisfied with possessions and pleasure, and really not have a care or burden or responsibility that you do not want to have. To some it may mean night life, drinking, profligacy. You see, you are the one who determines what the good life is because it is whatever it takes to make you happy.

Some might have higher standards. They may look forward to the time when they will be able to do things for their family, or for others, but whatever it is, the term is man-centered and is for everyone to decide for himself.

But is this THE GOOD LIFE? Do we find that people who live like this enjoy it as much as they thought that they would? And what about the people who work toward that, but who die before they experience it? What about young people who just live for Friday when for the next couple of days they will be able to do what they want to do?

Does the Word of God help us?

The answer is, Yes! We could turn to many texts which would point us in the right direction, but tonight I want to call your attention to MICAH 6:8.

What do we know about the times in which Micah lived?

We know that he was a contemporary of Isaiah. He prophesied concerning Samaria and Jerusalem--in other words, concerning the two kingdoms of the nation Israel. Captivity was certain. The people of these nations were ritualists, i.e., they were still going through outwardly the things required of them by the Law of God, but it was mere formality. There was no love for God in their hearts. They did not want the prophets to preach to them. They wanted to do what they wanted to do, and still they wanted the Lord to bless them. To them, being able

to do what you wanted to do and to have all that you could get was THE GOOD LIFE. So the emphasis which we find in our country today is not new. People have always felt like this.

But the point of Micah's prophecy is that the people of God should know better. The world may stumble blindly on, but it should not be so with the people of God. But let us look at our verse.

Note that a knowledge of THE GOOD LIFE is . . .

- I. A SUBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good . . ."

Notice the verb, "hath shewed." It means that God had told them. He had clearly and openly declared it. It was no hidden mystery, but had been proclaimed for all of the people of God to know.

More than that, the expression means that God had caused them to know this particular truth. They were not in a state of ignorance. "He hath shewed thee, O man, . . ."

What does the word "good" mean?

It means that which is right, that which really brings happiness and pleasure, that which really satisfies.

Whenever men interpret the good life in their own terms they find that it does not satisfy them, it leaves them empty, and usually filled with terrible regrets which haunt them for the rest of their lives. But here, said Micah, is the answer. Here is THE GOOD LIFE.

But before we get to that, notice the second part of the verse: "And what doth the Lord require of thee?" This means that living the good life is . . .

- II. A MATTER OF HUMAN OBLIGATION.

God did not make revelations of truth just to satisfy the curiosity of His people, nor to give them something to accept or reject. When people hear the Word of God they are immediately under obligation to that Word. It is the authoritative Word of a sovereign Lord. Notice the question again: "And what doth the Lord require of thee?" That Word might come through a Micah, or through an Isaiah, but it was the Word of the Lord--the living, eternal, unchanging, holy, and sovereign LORD!

"Require" means that He has given His Word, and He expects the obedience of His people in return. More than that the

form of the word "require" suggests that the people of God should eagerly pursue that which God has made known as the good life. Some grammarians even feel that the word suggests that there is power from God available to do what he requires. What He requires, He enable His people to do.

~ Now we come to the Lord's revelation of THE GOOD LIFE. It is . .

### III. A LIFE OF PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

There are three parts:

- 1) To do justly.
- 2) To love mercy.
- 3) To walk humbly with thy God.

Why not memorize this verse if you do not already know it? It is a verse that we should never forget.

Now, thinking about THE GOOD LIFE, will you notice that there is no age limitation put on THE GOOD LIFE OF GOD? It does not say that this is for the retirement years. Nor does it say that this is for older people, but not for young people. This is for all of the people of God of all ages, and the truth does not change from one generation to the next. The Bible is never out-of-date.

Let us make sure that we understand each one.

As you first look at them, notice that the Lord did not say anything about what people have, nor about where they can go-- nothing about money. But it all has to do with what you do and obviously, what you have spiritually.

#### A. To do justly.

Specifically means to do that which is right, as opposed to doing that which is wrong.

The word indicates that there is a right and there is a wrong--always! Things are absolutely right, or absolutely wrong.

But where do we find what is right and what is wrong?

Basically in one place--in the Word of God! It was not something that God had kept to Himself until Micah's day. From the time that God created man (in his conscience) and from the time that God first began to make divine revelations of His will through His Word, He has made it clear as to what His will is.

So the first thing to remember about "the good life" is

that it is a life in which we seek to please God! And if we are going to please God, it means that we must be obedient to the Word of God.

This is where even the people of God can go wrong. We must learn that **WHATEVER IS NOT PLEASING TO GOD WILL NEVER BRING REAL HAPPINESS AND SATISFACTION TO US.** We may have a brief happiness from it, but it is so short-lived that it is not worth it.

Therefore, if you are seeking true happiness, then seek above everything else and in everything to please God. Let the Word be your guide.

Secondly . . .

B. And to love mercy.

Do you remember what the Lord Jesus said about mercy? "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

"Mercy" is a wonderful word. It combines the ideas in grace and love. The Hebrew word for stork is formed from this word because the stork is so remarkable for its kindness to its young.

It is the word which best describes the way the Lord treats us as His people. Notice the words in Psalm 103, verses 4, 5, 8, 11, 13, 17.

The word that hangs above the whole history of Israel is the word, mercy.

If there had been no mercy, there would have been no salvation. If God had not exercised mercy toward us again and again as His people, we would not be as we are today. Oh, how wonderful is the mercy of God!

This is an attribute of God, a communicable attribute. And so it has to be observed in the lives of the people of God.

But how does God manifest His mercy--reluctantly? Or because He feels obligated to do it? No, He delights in mercy. And so should we! Notice the expression--"and to love mercy." DO WE?

This is GOD'S GOOD LIFE!

So the first statement had to do with the Word of God. The second has to do with the way we treat other people.

Now for the third part.

C. And to walk humbly with thy God.

How different this is from the world! Humility is not a trait that the world admires. Listen to the way our athletes talk about themselves. Listen to the way our politicians talk about themselves.

Now look at this last expression.

To "walk" does not mean that we can be satisfied with occasional acts of humility, but we must live humble lives.

"To walk humbly" is to be modest, lowly, and it is to act submissively to God and to His will. It means that the child of God has learned something about himself that most people do not know about themselves, and he lives his life accordingly. He knows that he is sinful and corrupt and vile, that he has often displeased God and is utterly unworthy of the blessing of God. He is not hurt if he is unnoticed, even if others get the credit for good things that he has done. He is not out to make himself known; he only wants to please God.

It would have been one thing if Micah has said, "To treat men humbly." But instead he said, "To walk humbly with thy God." There is no room for hypocrisy here. The Lord knows our hearts, and He knows what comes from our hearts.

Pride leads men to seek money and pleasure, but it never leads to the real good life.

Concl: Who would you use in Scripture as an illustration of God's good life?

There are many we could choose, both from the NT as well as the OT. But let me select Joseph. He was away from home and had every excuse to be on the lookout for himself. But instead he sought to please God.

- 1) He did justly -- in his work; with Potiphar's wife.
- 2) He loved mercy -- in the treatment of his brothers.
- 3) He walked humbly with his God -- when he could have boasted that he was able to interpret the dreams of the butler and the baker, as well as those of Pharaoh!

May the Lord help us to understand what the good life really is that we may glorify Him, and that we may not be deceived like so many other people are.