



#### Readings for this week:

Monday	Reading 1 Cor 15:12–34 Pray for Michael Okechukwa & family
Tuesday	Reading 1 Cor 15:35–58 Pray for John & Vera Packard
Wednesday	Reading 1 Cor 16 Pray for Sandra & Mike Pitt & Family (Celebrating Golden Wedding Anniversary!)
Thursday	Reading 2 Cor 1:1–2:4 Pray for Grant & Crys Pettitt
Friday	Reading 2 Cor 2:5–3:18 Pray for Fay Powell
Saturday	Reading: Catch up Pray for Matthew, Charlotte and Joshua Purves
Sunday	Reading 2 Cor 4 Pray for Adriana, Philip, David, Joseph, Pete & Rebecca Richmond

#### Prayer requests:

- We pray for Vivienne Best's dad, Eric, who is on palliative care
- We pray for those returning to school, university, and students to NTC
- Pray for Katie and Scott who recently moved into college accommodation
- We continue to remember those in our fellowship who continue to work at the frontline of NHS services
- We give thanks for answered prayer for John B; the result of his latest CT Scan showed no disease progression due he believes to medication and our prayers. (John passes on thanks 'to those who have committed to pray for me - I am most grateful'.)

Last Sunday we congratulated Tim & Alison on their Ruby wedding Anniversary and today we offer congratulations to Mike & Sandra Pitt on their Golden Wedding Anniversary! These are great occasions, and if there's any one else soon to celebrate a special anniversary, please let us know!

**Regarding the calling of a new pastor** to follow Karl when he retires in February 2021, **we now have a definite plan of action.** First we need to remind ourselves that the Church Board on its own does not have the power to call a fully qualified and experienced minister (such as the Revd Michael Kane) to be Senior Lead Pastor of our church, following Karl's retirement. Even though Mick Kane comes with the Board's **unanimous recommendation**, and has been **fully approved** by the Revd Carl McCann (the District Superintendent, or 'DS'), our governing document, the Nazarene *Manual*, states that such a nominated person may only "... be called to pastor a church by a two-thirds favourable vote by ballot **of the church members** ... present and voting at a duly called ... special meeting of the church". Unfortunately, **the extraordinary circumstances caused by the pandemic prevent us from having a large in-person members' meeting**, so the District Superintendent has kindly given us **a dispensation which allows us to hold a postal ballot** of the church members, where only the members who actually cast a ballot will be counted as being present in the "postal" special meeting.

**On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September**, in our regular streamed service, Mick and his wife Debbie will be introducing themselves and telling us a little about their hopes and aspirations. In our streamed service **on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October** Mick will be preaching and it will be another opportunity to hear his ministry. (Please remember that our church website has at least five video or audio recordings of Mick preaching for us in recent years, including at our Brooklands church at Wendover Road.)

**Later in October** we will contact all church members with further details of how to vote in the postal ballot. Some of you will naturally have questions, so please do contact us with your queries and we will endeavour to answer them (and perhaps pass some on, if appropriate, to either Mick or the DS).

If you are not an "official" church member, please contact Karl if you would like to be one - perhaps, even before the ballot takes place!

Our longing is to love and serve the Lord, ministering by his grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit. We want to do this – together, as the 'body of Christ'.



Grace & Peace!

**Message: The Irreducible Minimum**

**Micah 6: 1-8; Matthew 5: 1-12**

There are some passages in the Bible that just say it like it is. This is one of them. It is plain speaking, no beating around the bush. Micah does not spend time talking around his subject.

Micah was one of the 'Minor Prophets' living in the eighth century BC, in a time of uncertainty politically and nationally.

There were a lot of corrupt leaders, and the Assyrian nation held sway over small nations like Judah. Needless to say, many ordinary folks were now poor and downtrodden. The spirituality of the nation was at a low ebb. Then Micah rises to say what needed to be declared.

***"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*** (Micah 6:8)

Here is ***the Big Three***! We have heard of Jesus summing up 613 Jewish laws in just ***two***; well here is Micah summing up what 'Good' looks like in everyday life. I want to call this '***The irreducible minimum***'. He offers us ***three***, easy to remember necessities in order for humanity to show we are created in the image of God.

Micah has a certain way about him. He showed the people of his generation...

### 1. The Right Way

Rev John Sentamu once made the statement, "***There is no division between the secular and the sacred***". Clement of Alexandria said a similar thing when he wrote, '**The Christian must live as if all life was a sacred assembly**.' I think Micah is saying exactly that.

When someone does something ***the right way***, they are going God's way. I have met some people who do lots of things that Christians are meant to be doing, yet they are not Christians by commitment. Perhaps you know a few people like that.

Similarly, over the years I have met people claiming to be thoroughly Christian who do things that are *not right*, even by average standards. I think it is great when people ***come to faith*** in the Lord and commit their way to Him.

This is good and right, but it is also a wonderful thing when people do by nature those things that are '***righteous***' (a really important NT concept for Paul).

If we are to '***care***' for others, which is a pastoral word, we must ***act that out in everyday things***. That is because wherever we as Christians ***go***, or whatever we ***do***, ***the secular becomes sacred***. It is in the everyday things of life that we are to care about others. This is exactly how Jesus lived!

I just love the advice in Micah 8: 1, '***Listen to what the Lord says...***' It's not only the right way but also...

### 2. The Way of Mercy

It is often summed up in that OT phrase, '***Loving-kindness***'. I think that 'the way of mercy' often reveals itself in non-orthodox ways. Let me explain what I mean by that.

We know that the Pharisees and Jesus often clashed. Jesus was often criticized - not for His miracles of compassion and healing, not for His capacity to touch people's lives in such a way that they came alive, but because ***He did not wash His hands the way the Pharisees thought was "right"***.

Surely ***showing mercy*** to a needy person ***must surpass*** showing unbending devotion to a mere 'way of doing something'. This is the weakness of a strict religious ritual - it often puts itself first. One commentator makes the point; '***Micah gave a prophetic warning - not to wayward Israel but to orthodox Judah!***'

Perhaps I can sum up what I have been trying to say so far. ***The Right Way is always the Way of Mercy***. This is where we come to the '***heart***' of what Micah is saying. He ministered at the same time as the great prophet Isaiah. King Hezekiah also brought about a mini-revival, trusting that God was superior over all threats.

***Hezekiah had responded*** to Micah's preaching and Jer. 26: 19 confirms that it was in response to Micah that the King '***in fear***' sought the Lord.

The Assyrians were the dominant world power of the day and ***were about to flatten little Judah***, but God miraculously delivered the whole nation because of the faith of



a few. *I wanted to tell you* that the Way of Mercy can save a whole nation. The Way of Mercy can save the day! The Way of Mercy is the way of blessing.

And I wanted to tell you this morning that the Way of Mercy is ...

### 3. His Way

His way is always *the Right Way*; His way is always *the Way of Mercy* because that is the Kind of God He is. His way was shown clearly in the life Jesus lived – it is the way of a Humble walk of a thirty-three-year glorious duration.

You reap what you sow. This is Harvest Season. We want to see a harvest of Righteousness! Sometimes that harvest comes in lots of good provisions from God's hand. And sometimes it comes in other ways.

Our second reading, from Matthew 5, featured The Beatitudes. One of them speaks of Happiness this way, "**Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.**" (Matthew 5:7)

The first four Beatitudes are primarily about 'a state of mind'. This Beatitude is about conduct. To be blessed you must show '**mercy**'.

It is the hard side of this that we find Jesus doing. Even when you do not receive '**mercy**', your conduct in return should always be to show mercy. And sure enough, this is what we find in the life of Jesus.

In closing I need to say, *the irreducible minimum you get from Jesus is always Mercy!* Jesus is the one who says, '**Come to me!**' When it comes to '**loving kindness**', Jesus has it all! **Justice, Mercy and Humility**, it is all there in Him!

**Justice:** God is right and will always do Right!

**Mercy:** offered free, nothing to do is deserving of it!

**Humility:** God has come to where you are!