

SERMON SERIES COMPANION STUDIES  
FOR SMALL GROUPS



# LET'S REBUILD!

A SERIES FROM THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

REBUILDING LIFE, CHURCH, AND COMMUNITY

STUDY 5

## God's Welcome to the World, Part 1: Mercy and Justice

SERMON TEXT: NEHEMIAH 5:1-19  
COMPANION STUDY TEXT: MICAH 6:6-8

## Getting Started

If you haven't done so already, share this PDF, or the link to this study, with other members of your group.

After greeting one another, spend a minute or two in silence and offer an opening prayer. Go around the room and have each person share one thing that makes him or her unique or unusual.

## Opening Question

Invite group members to share briefly about a relationship in their life that had to be rebuilt. What did it require to help rebuild that relationship?

## Purpose of This Week's Study

To inspire believers to consider stepping into or re-engaging in practical justice work and service to the oppressed and vulnerable.

### INTRODUCTION TO THIS WEEK'S STUDY

After a year like 2020, with its deadly pandemic, political divisiveness, and racial hostility, the idea of "rebuilding" can seem wildly overwhelming. Historically racist and oppressive systems and institutions in our nation must be rebuilt, but how? For some of us, to even consider restoring relationship with those who vote differently than we do may cause us to churn with anger or anxiety and leave us almost paralyzed.

In our study this week, we encounter a text that speaks directly to the heart of the issues we face today. In the midst of injustice, division, and violence in 8th century BC Judean society, the prophet Micah asks his people a crucial question: "What does the Lord require of you?" He follows with the answer, one that is not at all complicated: do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.

This is also the question we must ask ourselves today: "What does the Lord require of you?" What does the Lord require of you? As Micah invites the people of Israel, so too are we invited on a journey of rebuilding our relationship with God and with our neighbor.

## Scripture Reading

Invite two people from your group to take turns reading the following verses from Micah 6 aloud:

### MICAH 6:6-8 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup> With what shall I come before the Lord  
and bow down before the exalted God?  
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?  
<sup>7</sup> Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?  
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,  
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?  
<sup>8</sup> He has shown you, O mortal, 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.

## For Reflection & Discussion

1. In Micah Chapter 6, the prophet pictures a court of law with Israel on trial before the Lord. The Lord has just made a complaint against his people about their idolatry and disobedience. In verses 6-7, the prophet Micah asks a series of rhetorical questions to God's people to invite them to consider how to make things right with God. What is the attitude or posture behind these questions?
2. Since God was the one who required the Israelites to sacrifice in worship, why does God seem to be so against it? Can you think of modern-day equivalents where our acts of worship are rendered worthless by either our improper motives or glaringly obvious hypocrisy and injustice?
3. Micah 6:8 is well known for a reason – it succinctly captures what the Lord truly requires of us. What does it mean to act justly? So many people think acting justly is just punishing the bad guy. Beyond merely punishing wrongdoers, what does it mean to be just? In what ways does acting justly reflect who God is and how he has treated us?
4. Why do you think the Lord requires us to love mercy and not just do merciful things? How might we cultivate in ourselves not only merciful deeds but also merciful hearts? What are some practical ways to make loving mercy a pattern in your daily life and a part of your worship to God?
5. What does it mean to walk humbly with God? Do you think it's possible to walk in humility without God? Where in your life are you tempted toward pride, arrogance, self-centeredness, or inordinate self-sufficiency? What can you do to stay humble when walking with God through years like 2020?

6. The name Micah means “who is like Yahweh.” How have you been like Yahweh over the past year? Many people claiming to defend or represent the Lord are merely defending their own personal values. How has your behavior been truly representative of the Lord and his character over the past year?
7. As Christians we can sometimes feel the burden of what is required of us only to end up feeling guilty or condemned when we fall short. Is that the point of Micah 6:8? What do you think the Lord wants you to do with any burden you may feel?

## For Prayer Ministry

Begin this time of prayer by sitting quietly before the Lord. Wait on the Lord for at least 2-3 minutes. What is he stirring in you after today’s study? A call to battle systemic injustice? A call to reconcile a personal relationship? To practice humility or offer mercy toward someone?

After a time of waiting, invite people to share aloud anything they are sensing from God. Then break into groups of three or four, or if your group is small, remain together in one group and pray for power and blessing over each person’s pursuit of justice, mercy, and humility.

## For Further Reflection & Action Outside of Group

- Spend 5-10 minutes a day over the next week sitting with the Lord about today’s lesson. Ask the Lord how you might act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with him; and record your thoughts or impressions in a journal. At the end of the week, reread your prayers and reflections. Do you notice any patterns? What stands out to you?
- Consider signing up for one or more of the service opportunities in our mercy and justice ministries at this link: [First Serve – Vineyard Columbus](#).