

In Sync

Micah 6: 6-8, Matthew 5: 1-12

The great teachings of Judaism and of Christianity have a very similar message, that the way to be “in sync” with God is through a transformed inner life that leads to transformed living. Today’s two Bible passages are foundational to both the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Jesus’ Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 1-12) are much more than a challenging ethic for life. They are really a radical statement of what it means to acknowledge God’s sovereignty in life. They reflect a marked contrast to the conventional wisdom of Jesus’ day and of our own as well – that deep joy and blessedness results not from the accumulation of wealth, power, or status. True joy and abundant life come from finding solidarity with people in their poverty, suffering, and grief. It comes from living as one with people on the margins of life. It comes from embracing honestly our own neediness and our own true gifts.

Long before Jesus, a Jewish prophet named Micah criticized the way his own people worshiped God. They brought the required offerings and sacrifices to the Temple, but failed to treat each other humanely. They failed to stop the exploitation of the poor, the widows, and the foreigners among them. There was growing inequity and injustice within Israeli society – the rich getting richer and fewer in number while the growing poor grew more and more desperate. Micah 6: 8 expresses perhaps the most succinct statement of faith we have in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. Micah offers a response to one question that can be phrased different way: “With what shall we come before the Lord,? What worship is genuine to be given to God?” “What does the Lord require of us but this: to live justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God.”

Crossroads Church has several small groups. Some are primarily task-oriented and we call them work groups. Some primarily focus on care and share ministry. Still others are oriented to study and/or prayer. JustFaith is a small group. We have spent the past year meeting, reading, studying, sharing, praying, and being involved in community ministries. We have put a lot of effort into building a sense of community together. We gathered around the thematic idea of living faith with justice and love.

We are blessed to have Crossroads’ JustFaith group lead the teaching time by sharing reflections on today’s scripture. The biblical passages reflect the basic truths of the shared faith experiences of JustFaith. (sharing by the JustFaith group)

Journey outward is a way of describing doing justice, giving mercy, and loving tenderly on life’s journey of faith. Journey inward is a way of describing being grounded and letting the Spirit transform us into just merciful and loving people. These twin journeys shape and give meaning to our worship and our living. The question is “how will we live *in sync* with these teachings? How will you and how will I live in sync with the words of Micah and with the words of Jesus? The answer lies on the journey, on your life journey and in our life together. So, bring your questions, your confusion, and your wisdom on our journey together in the Spirit toward a just and meaningful faith.