

Monday, June 8, 2020

What does the Lord require of you...?

- Pastor Hank French

*He has told you what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8).*

Anyone who knows me knows that I consider this Old Testament text from Micah 6:8 to be the most concise and profound description of the Christian life of faith to be found in the Bible. And in this troubled time, when our country is facing two crises—a pandemic that has killed over 110,000 Americans and counting and devastated our economy, and nationwide protests over America’s “original sin,” systemic racism—it is a text that should speak to anyone who claims to be a person of Christian faith.

Cries of “No Justice—No Peace” echo throughout the streets of America’s great cities and have reached small rural towns across the country. What does the Lord require of us? To do justice.

Strangers hand out water to protesters, hand out food, clean up the streets, care for one another, encourage one another. What does the Lord require of us? To love kindness.

Churches provide spiritual comfort and guidance through online worship, while members keep in touch with each other, pray for each other and render practical assistance to each other when there is a need for such assistance. What does the Lord require of us? To walk humbly with our God.

It is heartening to witness the current focus on justice and loving kindness in our nation. It is heartening to see communities of faith continuing to worship even though the doors are still closed, continuing to proclaim the Gospel of God’s love, continuing to live the Gospel of God’s love.

We are living in a time of uncertainty and turmoil. On Sunday, a new NBC/Wall Street Journal poll noted that fully 80% of American voters say that “things are out of control in the U.S.” Clearly, things could go from bad to worse, but things could also change for the better.

The Japanese word for “crisis” (危機 pronounced kiki) is formed by two characters. The first can be translated as “danger,” the second can be translated as “opportunity.” Which is to say that a crisis presents us with both danger and opportunity, and perhaps the biggest danger in a crisis is that we will miss opportunity it places before us.

The twin crises we face now—the pandemic and social unrest over racism—present us with opportunities for transformational change on many levels. I passionately believe that if enough Americans keep the focus on justice and loving kindness, and if people of faith add to that a focus on walking humbly with God, this nation has an unprecedented opportunity to truly become that shining city built on a hill that cannot be hid (Matthew 5:14).

Prayer: God of justice and loving kindness, may we avoid the danger and seize the opportunities presented to us in this time of crises. Amen.