

Sermon Notes on Micah 6:8b, Deuteronomy 10 : 12 – 15
‘A close walk with God’

Why did God create people? We know from the creation story that God made people in his own image, as a partnership with him and each other. Our purpose is to know God and be known by him. But this isn't "know" as in knowing a fact, like we might know that a spider has 8 legs, or the sky is blue. Instead, it's used in an old-fashioned sense, one that points to intimacy and union.

The Bible is a love story. From the first verses of Genesis to the last words of Revelation it tells the story of God's love for the people he created. It tells how God created all good things for our enjoyment. It tells how people turned their backs on God, and how he never stopped pursuing them. It tells how God's love is so great that he sent his own son to live among us, to experience life as we live it, and ultimately to die a brutal death so we can know eternal life. And woven through that love story are guidelines for how we can know God, to live our lives in union with him.

Our reading this morning is just one example of this.

What does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord's commands...? We are invited to walk with God, being obedient to his commands. We are to listen for God's voice, to hear what he has to say to us, to go where we are sent and to do as we are asked. We are to love God, with all that we are and all that we do. Our whole lives should become an act of worship. We are to serve God, through our worship, but also in how we treat others. In Micah, as we heard at the beginning of our service, we should "act justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." We are to act justly; to treat people fairly, recognising that they too are created by and chosen by God. We are to treat people with dignity. We are to recognise inequality, discrimination and other forms of injustice, and we are to speak out against them. We are to love mercy; to show kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. In doing so, we demonstrate God's love for his people and reflect the mercy he shows to us. We are to walk humbly; to remember that all of us are created equal by God, that no one is more important than anyone else. And we are to be humble before God, recognising that we need to depend on him on our journey through life.

This is no small task, but the more we try, the easier it becomes. The Bible tells a love story, of how much God loves the people he has created. It also

tells the story of people who loved God and walked with him; Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, Ruth, Samuel, David, Esther, Mary, Peter, Paul... All these stories and more are written down for us to learn from. They weren't perfect people, they were human as we are. They got it wrong as we do. But when they got it right, they were transformed, and so were those around them.

In his first letter, John writes, "We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands." There are two forms of "know" in that sentence. We should understand it as, "We know, as a fact, that we are in intimate union with God when we keep his commands." John goes on to explain "if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did."

It's both a challenge and a promise. We are part of the love story between God and his people. Now we have to choose to walk with him.