



ENTER God's presence

Psalm 103:6-13

- ⁶The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.
- ⁷He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:
- ⁸The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.
- ⁹He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;
- ¹⁰he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;
- ¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
- ¹³As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;

Pray: Gracious Father, we praise you because you are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Thank you for the mercy you have shown us in Christ. As we open your Word tonight, help us to remember the depth of the debt you have forgiven. Teach us to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with you. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



SHARE life together

1. **What are your highs and lows since you last met?**
2. **Since you last met, has there been a moment when you felt strongly that something wasn't fair? How did you respond?**
3. **Can you think of a time recently when someone showed you unexpected kindness or patience? What impact did it have on you at the time? What impact is it having now as you reflect on it?**

Week beginning:
Monday 23rd February 2026

Worship series:
Closer to Jesus
#3 From Justice To Mercy



VERSE for the week

“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.””

Matthew 18:21-22



REMEMBER this week

God has shown you what is good, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with him.

Most of us, whether we realise it or not, carry around an invisible ledger. In our minds, we keep accounts — who owes us, who hurt us, who hasn't apologised yet, who still needs to "make things right." We don't always say it out loud, but we keep score. Justice, in our natural way of thinking, means balancing the books. But when we come to Scripture — especially Micah 6 and Jesus' parable in Matthew 18 — we discover that God does something very different. Instead of demanding payment from us, He absorbs the debt Himself. Instead of keeping score, He cancels the ledger. The journey from justice to mercy begins when we realise that the biggest debt in the room was ours — and it has already been wiped clean. The question that follows is: what do we now do with the ledgers we're still holding?

Read **Micah 6:6-8** and **Matthew 18:21-35** [HERE](#) or in your own Bible.

4. **Try to summarise the main idea of these passages.**
5. **What verse/concept/teaching in these readings caught your attention and what was challenging/confronting/comforting about them for you?**
6. **In Micah 6:6-8, what kinds of things do the people assume God wants from them? How is it different from what Micah tells us he actually desires?**
7. **In the parable from Matthew 18, what stands out to you about the size of the two debts? Why do you think Jesus exaggerates the difference so dramatically?**
8. **If you were asked to offer a definition of justice and mercy on the basis of just these two passages what would you say? Are they opposed to one another or working together?**



GROW deeper

It's one thing to see the injustice of the first servant in Jesus' parable — it's much harder to recognise ourselves in him. It's easy to talk about justice and mercy in theory; it's far more confronting when the spotlight shifts from "them" to "us." If Micah calls us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, then the question becomes deeply personal: *How has God's mercy toward me shaped the way I respond to others?* And perhaps even more searching: *Am I more aware of what others owe me — or of what I may owe them?*

9. **When you think about the 'ledger' idea, are you more aware of what others owe you — or what you may 'owe' to others? Why do you think that is?**
10. **Micah calls us to "act justly". Where might acting justly mean taking responsibility, apologising, or making restitution — rather than insisting on being repaid by others?**
11. **In Matthew 18, the servant's behaviour shows that the mercy he had been shown had not truly reshaped his heart. What does it look like when God's forgiveness actually changes the way we treat others?**
12. **How could accurately assessing the size of the debt God has forgiven you affect your willingness to forgive or to make things right with someone else?**



LIVE purposefully

MAKE IT REAL: Micah doesn't say *feel* justly or *argue* justly — he says **act justly**. Justice, in God's economy, is not about demanding what we are owed, but about taking responsibility for what we owe. It is active, outward-facing, and often costly. It may mean apologising. It may mean making restitution. It may mean repairing something we would rather leave alone. Justice begins not by asking, "How have I been wronged?" but, "Where might I need to make things right?"

And then Micah says we are to **love mercy**. Not merely practice it reluctantly, but love it — to see forgiveness not as weakness but as freedom. To delight in releasing the debts others owe us because we know the weight of the debt God has released from us. Yet loving mercy does not mean abandoning wisdom or safety. There are times when boundaries must remain, when consequences are necessary, when mercy cannot mean access or restoration of trust. But even then, mercy means relinquishing vengeance and entrusting judgment to God.

And through all of this — acting justly and loving mercy — we are invited to **walk humbly with our God**. These actions are not self-improvement projects. They are steps taken alongside the One who first acted justly and loved mercy toward us in Christ. Justice and mercy are not burdens we carry alone; they are the fruit of walking closely with Him.

13. **Is there a relationship in your life at the moment where acting justly might mean taking responsibility rather than demanding repayment? What would one small step in that direction look like?**
14. **Are you currently holding a debt ledger against anyone you can think of – even if the debt seems small and insignificant? What would it look like -practically and prayerfully- to begin releasing that to God this week?**
15. **Is there a habit or practice that you could adopt to help you remain aware of the mercy God has shown you so that it shapes the way you treat and react to others?**

[Plan your weekly devotions](#) or [download the Church Central app](#) for the daily [LifeWay Devotions](#)



PRAY intentionally

You might like to pray together the following prayer, or spend time sharing together your prayer needs and praying for one another.

Merciful Father, thank you that you have not treated us as our sins deserve, but in Christ have cancelled a debt we could never repay. Thank you that your justice was satisfied and your mercy poured out at the cross. Remind us again that we live each day as forgiven people.

As we go from here, teach us to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with you. Give us courage where we need to make things right, softness of heart where we need to release what we are holding, and wisdom where boundaries are necessary. Above all, keep us close to Jesus, so that your mercy toward us overflows into the way we treat others. In His name we pray, Amen.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross on their forehead or on the palm of their hand as you say...

[Name], In Christ, you are freed to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with him. Amen.