



Sunday, July 12th

Preacher: Pastor Howard-John Wesley

Sermon Title: 'Birth of a Nation Part 2

Scripture: Micah 6:1-8

Listen to what the Lord says:

“Stand up, plead my case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say. “Hear, you mountains, the Lord’s accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the Lord has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel. “My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me. I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam. My people, remember what Balak king of Moab plotted and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the Lord.” 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? 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? 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.”

Sermon Summary:

Pastor Wesley argued that COVID-19 has exposed the racial depravity of America. This country has failed in regards to the issues of equality and justice. Just as Micah spoke to the failing nation of Israel, his prophetic words speak to America’s failures as a nation as well.

Micah 6:8 essentially offers a simplified reduction of all 613 laws of Israel. God expects us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Walking with God who is able to do the impossible will allow us to change this nation. But it will require three things:

- 1) **Cultivate Vision** - It is critical for you to be in the storm and to see yourself coming out better on the other side. America needs people of faith who can envision this country as being equitable and just. Vision also allows the following:

- a) Vision keeps you from giving into the despair of the present moment
 - b) Without vision you will miss the sign that things are changing
- 2) **Cast Vote** - There is a power in and necessity of voting. If you choose not to vote, you are doing more damage than any President, legislation or hate group. Not voting:
- a) Disrespects the sacrifices of our ancestors
 - b) Jeopardizes our future
- 3) **Challenge Racism with Our Voice** - This year has given us an opportunity to raise our voices which in turn helps to change people's minds. Effectively using our voices will allow us to change this land.

Life Application Questions:

1. This series has challenged us to think about the conception of America and what this nation was truly built on. Consider your own "birth narrative." What ideas of your own story and beginnings have you had to reconsider, reevaluate, and challenge in recent years?
2. How nimble are you? Walking humbly with God may require you to pivot when you least expect it. What scriptures help you to use your faith and overcome sight to follow God's promptings?
3. How has God revealed areas of opportunity in your vision for this year? Many of us started 2020 with a vision board with goals for spiritual development. How has the pandemic exposed spaces of potential growth where you need to hear from God?
4. Pastor Wesley mentioned the, "sacrifices of our ancestors." While it is important to remember the sacrifices of prominent historical figures, it is also helpful to remember the sacrifices of the elders in our own families. Which of your own ancestors do you celebrate and how are you sharing their stories with future generations?
5. This weekend's sermon encouraged us to take responsibility for our future. How can you encourage voting and political awareness amongst your friends, family, and others in your community?

Spirit Work:

1. Pastor Wesley called us to "envision a land" and listed out his dreams for America. Take some time to think about what issues you would add to the list. Make your vision come alive by creating a painting or drawing. Or consider writing a letter to a child articulating the better world you see them entering.
2. Vision is a by-product of our faith. Scripture provides a plethora of lessons to strengthen our faith. Consider the following passages and add some of your own. Each day this week write out one passage on the top of a journal entry and let your vision flow from there:
 - a. Matthew 17:20
 - b. Hebrews 11:1
 - c. Mark 11:24
 - d. John 7:38
 - e. 2 Corinthians 4:18

3. We serve a God of abundance who does not operate in a limited good economy. Reflecting on the past month, write out a timeline of instances, big and small, when God exceeded your expectations. This week, review Psalm 40:5, and meditate on God's wonderful works (the impossible God made possible) in your life in your devotional time.