

SUNDAY February 1, 2026 “What are We Called to do?”

Micah 6:1-8 I Corinthians 1:18-31 Matthew 5:1-12

Have you ever had a morning that when you wake up you ask yourself, “what am I going to do today?” that is, once my morning routine is completed, what will I do? Usually it does not take too long to get a plan together--whether it is laundry or cleaning, or shopping. The plan for the day unfolds and even changes from your first thoughts. But what if you woke one morning and asked, “What does God want me to do today?” Would it be different from your other tasks? Should it? Or merely is there to be found a balance between the two paths-- what you need to accomplish and what God calls you to do?

What does God the Lord require of us? This is a prophetic question recorded and asked by Micah hundreds of years ago. This was asked by Micah as the people of Israel were newly settled into the Promised Land and are wondering what is to happen next. That is, what does God want them and need them to do. For generations, they wandered in the desert and now they have a home land. They were a people delivered from slavery and now live in freedom and they are just not sure what it is God wants them to do. That is, they wonder what their new life balance should be!

Micah reminds them of what they have endured in last years and even offers suggestions of different ways they might honour God. Burnt offerings of year-old calves, thousands of rams, 10,000s of river of oil, giving of firstborn, and even oneself. But then Micah says no: God has told you what God requires: do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. This sounds so much easier than raising cattle for sacrifice, or even giving to God the children. But is it?

In these last weeks we have focused on the beginning of Jesus' ministry and how he called the first disciples who listened, learned and then told others about him. Word spread very quickly and people wanted to hear him and be healed by him or they believed He is the Son of God. Jesus was attracting more and more people to hear him speak of a different way to live and love. Crowds that gathered grew larger. And as we read from Matthew 5-- the crowds were larger, so much so Jesus went up the mountainside and sat down. Those who followed him, listened and he taught them words of hope and blessing. Words which have guided disciples and Christ followers for over 2000 years. These are the words which we call the Beatitudes are Jesus' teaching about what it means to live as a child of God's kingdom. These statements express the call of Christians and the challenge of bringing about God's reign. They are the ultimate goal and end of human activity and highlight the faith belief that true joy and happiness is found in God. This is because of moral choices and one's heart connection with Jesus himself.

Those listening to Jesus' words were focused on what they were called to do--as they sought to be blessed by God. But what about you? Do you seek God's blessings in all that you do? Or are you searching for God's purpose for you? This is a tough question for there is much uncertainty in this world and even churches today. But what is essential is that spiritual need to know God. This is something in our human nature for down deep we are each conscious of the need for righteousness. For if this is ignored, there will only be unhappiness and pain.

Just what are these blessings which seem so counter cultural to the time when Jesus lived on Earth? These statements flip worldly values upside down and blessings are upon those who are poor in spirit, the mourning, the meek and the persecuted. But they also reveal Jesus and what he calls all followers to be and do. These statements are promises of present blessings those who follow Jesus have received and future blessings. And these statements serve as invitations to the crowds to whom Jesus spoke and as foundational for the church to live out its purpose in the world.

The Eight Beatitudes

- 1) Poor in spirit: Recognition of spiritual need.
- 2) Those who mourn: Grief over sin and the brokenness of the world.
- 3) The meek: Gentle strength under control.
- 4) Hunger and thirst for righteousness: A deep desire for God's justice.
- 5) The merciful: Extending grace to others.
- 6) Pure in heart: Undivided devotion to God.
- 7) Peacemakers: Actively reconciling, reflecting God's character.
- 8) Persecuted for righteousness: Suffering for doing what is right.

These statements are significant for the church because they identify the church and its mission. They act as a roadmap for spiritual growth, directing believers to live with humility and to act with justice. And they call Christians to be transformed by the Holy Spirit, allowing Christ's light to shine. These statements contrast with the world's pursuit of power, wealth and selfishness and promote a new world order. And if we focus on these statements, this is what the church is called to do in 2026. Just like we are called to let *Christ's Light Guide us to Grow in Faith Together-- today and always.* This is our Vision for 2026. To reflect Christ's light as we grow in faith together-- today and always. But we need to know what the church's full purposes include.

In 1996, Rick Warren wrote "The Purpose Driven Church" which focuses on the answer to the prophet Micah's questions, 'What are we called to do?' Warren states that for the church to fulfill their purpose those in the community of faith are called to worship, share in fellowship, share in discipleship, minister or share pastoral to others and to reach out in mission. These

purposes are derived from the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37–40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20). Warren writes that every church is driven by something and this something is Christ alone!

The church does several other things including telling the good news (evangelism), teaching and engaging all ages God's Word-the Bible; sharing in the sacraments of Baptism and The Lord's Supper and equipping others in the process of training, strengthening, and encouraging others to fulfill their purpose and to minister to others, we have many tasks to do! Jesus gave many gifts- for some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, and what was this for? So that all may be equipped as believers to do ministry, and build up the body of Christ. This is so that we come to be one in faith and one with each other in faith and in the knowledge of Jesus. (*Ephesians 4:11-16*) We are the body of Christ in this time, place and generation. It is our calling to fulfill and to live out in faith and with the hope that others will be like those on the mountainside and hear the Good News in Jesus Christ. All may be blessed-- but one has to have faith and trust in the Teacher, the Rabbi, the One who taught, healed and then died for our sakes. This is the message of Christ. What are we called to do? It goes back to what we talked about in the fall, Belong, believe and be a bridge.

It also means knowing that what occurred in Bethlehem on the night Jesus was born still has an impact on people's lives today-- through faith and hope. This is what we are called to do-- tell the story, your story and then tell it again. involves providing the tools, knowledge, and spiritual nurturing necessary for personal growth and collective, active service in building the body of Christ.