

SUNDAY Scriptures, JAN 19TH Epiphany 4 A

Micah 6:1-8 Psalm 15 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 Matthew 5:1-12

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/> link for the NRSV version of all texts

For Reflection: This week we have another feast for feeding our lives, with images and examples of what comes from trying to pay attention to God. One thing about attention is that we can only pay attention well to one thing at a time. And here, that could mean paying attention to something that we can use, as it fits where we are in our lives.

The feast aspect of these lessons comes in the form of “delicious questions”. Not the kind of questions with some simple, short answer, but rather more jaw-dropping questions, that we probably know we don’t know how to answer. Questions meant to chew upon rather than check off as done. And, when we do answer, it becomes very clear that there is so much more going on than any short answer will deal with. Nevertheless, even that asking can become a feast because it points us toward God in the midst of our lives.

Try Micah if you are “chewing” on what it means “to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk with God.

Try the Psalm if you are “chewing” on dealing with difficult people.

Try I Corinthians if you are “chewing” on cultural clashes, for descriptions of useful qualities of attention towards those with whom we disagree.

Try the Gospel if you are “chewing” on the perplexing matter of bad things happening to good people.

A Suggestion – read it aloud, slowly, trying out different tones of voice, and see what you hear. Once you have listened, and chewed, then write a brief prayer from what you have “eaten.”

Micah 6:1-8 Common English Bible

Hear what the Lord is saying:

Arise, lay out the lawsuit before the mountains; let the hills hear your voice!

2 **Hear**, mountains, the lawsuit of the Lord! **Hear**, eternal foundations of the earth! The Lord has a lawsuit against his people; with Israel he will argue.

3 “My people, what did I ever do to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me!

4 I brought you up out of the land of Egypt; I redeemed you from the house of slavery. I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam before you.

5 **My people, remember** what Moab's King Balak had planned, and how Balaam, Beor's son, answered him!

Remember everything from Shittim to Gilgal, that you might learn to

recognize the righteous acts of the Lord!"

6 With what should I approach the Lord and bow down before God on high? Should I come before him with entirely burned offerings, with year-old calves? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with many torrents of oil?

Should I give my oldest child for my crime; the fruit of my body for the sin of my spirit?

8 [God] has told you, human one, what is good and what the Lord requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God.

Psalm 15 The Saint Helena Psalter

1 O God, who may dwell in your tabernacle; * who may abide upon your holy hill?

2 Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, * who speak truthfully from the heart.

3 There is no guile upon their tongues; they do no evil to their friends; * they do not heap contempt upon their neighbors;

4 In their sight the wicked are rejected, * but they honor those who fear God.

5 They have sworn to do no wrong * and do not take back their word.

6 They do not give their money in hope of gain, * nor do they take a bribe against the innocent.

7 Whoever does these things * shall never be overthrown.

1 Corinthians 1:18-31 J. B. Phillips

18 The preaching of the cross is, I know, nonsense to those who are involved in this dying world, but to us who are being saved from that death it is nothing less than the power of God. 19 It is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent'.

20-25 For consider, what have the philosopher, the writer, and the critic of this world to show for all their wisdom? Has not God made the wisdom of this world look foolish? for it was after the world in its wisdom failed to know God, that [God] in his wisdom chose to save all who would believe by the "simple-mindedness" of the Gospel message. For the Jews asks for miraculous proofs and the Greeks an intellectual panacea, but all we preach is Christ crucified—a stumbling block to the Jews and sheer nonsense to the Gentiles, but for those who are called, whether Jews or Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. And this is really only natural, for God's foolishness" is wiser than men, and his "weakness" is stronger than men.

26-31 For look at your own calling as Christians, my brothers [and sisters]. You don't see among you many of the wise (according to this world's judgment) nor many of the ruling class, nor many from the noblest families. But God has chosen what the world calls foolish to shame the wise; ... chosen what the world calls weak to shame the strong. [God] has chosen things of little strength and small repute, yes and even things which have no real existence to explode the pretensions of the things that are—that no [one] may boast in

the presence of God. Yet from this same God you have received your standing in Jesus Christ, and [Jesus] has become for us the true wisdom, a matter, in practice, of being made righteous and holy, in fact, of being redeemed. And this makes us see the truth of scripture: '[Those] who glory, let them glory in the Lord.

Matthew 5 :1-12 La Biblia de las Américas

Y cuando vio las multitudes, subió al monte; y después de sentarse, sus discípulos se acercaron a Él.

2 Y abriendo su boca, les enseñaba, diciendo:

3 Bienaventurados* los pobres en espíritu, pues de ellos es el reino de los cielos.

4 Bienaventurados los que lloran, pues ellos serán consolados.

5 Bienaventurados los humildes, pues ellos heredarán la tierra.

6 Bienaventurados los que tienen hambre y sed de justicia, pues ellos serán saciados.

7 Bienaventurados los misericordiosos, pues ellos recibirán misericordia.

8 Bienaventurados los de limpio corazón, pues ellos verán a Dios.

9 Bienaventurados los que procuran la paz, pues ellos serán llamados hijos de Dios.

10 Bienaventurados aquellos que han sido perseguidos por causa de la justicia, pues de ellos es el reino de los cielos.

11 Bienaventurados seréis cuando os insulten y persigan, y digan todo género de mal contra vosotros falsamente, por causa de mí. 12 Regocijaos y alegraos, porque vuestra recompensa en los cielos es grande, porque así persiguieron a los profetas que fueron antes que vosotros.

* There seems to be some interesting differences between what we mean in English by "blessed" and the "fortunate, or happy" or enjoying God in heaven, as this word is heard in Spanish.... i.e. adj. *Que goza de Dios en el cielo.* U. t. c. s.

2. adj. afortunado (ll feliz). <https://dle.rae.es/bienaventurado> Real Academia Española