

4th SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY**ST PETERS ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 2nd February 2026****Fr. Stephen Monsiegnur****Readings:**¹ Micah 6:1-8 / Psalm 15 / 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 / Matthew 5:1-12**Theme:** *The Shape of God's Love in a Christ-Formed Life***Micah 6:1-8**

6 Hear what the Lord says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

² Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the Lord has a case against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

³ "O my people, what have I done to you?
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

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

⁵ O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the Lord."

What God Requires

⁶ "With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow myself before God on high?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

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Psalm 15

A Psalm of David.

¹ O Lord, who may abide in your tent?
 Who may dwell on your holy hill?
² Those who walk blamelessly and do what is right
 and speak the truth from their heart;
³ who do not slander with their tongue
 and do no evil to their friends
 nor heap shame upon their neighbors;
⁴ in whose eyes the wicked are despised
 but who honor those who fear the Lord;
 who stand by their oath even to their hurt;
⁵ who do not lend money at interest
 and do not take a bribe against the innocent.
 Those who do these things shall never be moved.

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."
²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.
²⁶ Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, ²⁹ so that no one might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Matthew 5:1-12

⁵ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he began to speak and taught them, saying:
³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

SERMON.

Today's scriptures form a single, compelling invitation that, if accepted, will make Christ's love, hope and promise truly known to the world. They call us not simply to believe in God's love, but to embody it. They show us that God's love is not an idea or an emotion. It is a way of life. And that way is revealed most fully in Jesus Christ, the ultimate expression of God's self-giving love.

Micah begins with a question that echoes through every generation: “What does the Lord require of us”? The people imagine dramatic offerings—thousands of rams, rivers of oil, even the sacrifice of their firstborn. But God's answer is startling in its simplicity: The people are “to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God”². God is not interested in spectacle. God desires lives shaped by justice, mercy, and humility—lives that reflect God's own heart.

Psalms 15 deepens this vision. The psalmist asks who may dwell in God's presence, and the answer is not about ritual performance but moral integrity. The one who speaks truth, refuses slander, honours the righteous, and keeps promises even when it hurts is the one who stands secure. Love, in this psalm, is expressed through steadfastness and truthfulness. It is a love that protects community and honours the dignity of others.³

Paul then turns everything upside down. Writing to a divided Corinthian church, he reminds them that God's love is revealed not in power as the world understands it, but in the “foolishness” of the cross.⁴ In Jesus crucified, God enters human suffering, absorbs violence, and responds with forgiveness. The cross is not simply a doctrine; it is the shape of divine love. It reveals a God who chooses solidarity over superiority, self-giving over self-protection. And Paul insists that this love is not merely to be admired—it is to be lived.

Then Jesus, on the hillside, opens his mouth and blesses the very people the world overlooks. The poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers—these are the ones who reflect the kingdom of God.⁵ The Beatitudes are not a list of moral achievements. They are a portrait of the life that grows in those who follow Jesus. They show us what justice, kindness, and humility look like when embodied in human form.

² Micah 6:8

³ Psalm 15:1–5

⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:18–25

⁵ Matthew 5:1–12

So how do our lives speak to this call? How do we live the justice, kindness, and humility that Jesus embodies?

We do justice when we refuse to benefit from systems that harm others, when we speak truth, even when it costs us, and when we advocate for those whose voices are ignored. Justice is not only public action; it is the quiet integrity of our daily choices. Every time we refuse gossip, pay fairly, or stand with the vulnerable, we echo the justice of Christ.

We love kindness when we allow compassion to shape our instincts. Kindness is generosity without calculation, forgiveness without resentment, hospitality without expectation. Jesus' ministry is full of interruptions—people tugging at his cloak, crying out from the roadside. He never treats these interruptions as burdens. He treats them as opportunities for love. When we respond with patience, gentleness, and mercy, our lives begin to resemble his.

And we walk humbly with God when we recognise that we are not the centre of the story. Humility is not self-diminishment; it is right relationship—with God, with others, and with ourselves. We walk humbly when we pray to listen rather than impress, when we admit our limitations, when we serve without seeking recognition, and when we remain teachable. Humility is the posture that makes justice and kindness possible.

Taken together, these passages reveal a single truth: God's love is meant to be lived. Jesus does not simply teach this love; he embodies it. And he invites us to follow him—not perfectly, not all at once, but faithfully, step by step.

Every act of justice, every gesture of kindness, every moment of humility we share becomes a small echo of Christ's love in the world. And through these echoes, God's kingdom draws near.

Let us pray,

Gracious and loving God, shape our hearts in the way of Christ, to do justice with courage, to love kindness with generosity, and to walk humbly in your presence. Strengthen our witness, deepen our compassion, and guide our steps so that your transforming love may shine through all we do. Amen.