

Eaglehawk Uniting Church
Sunday 2nd February 2014
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EASY TO BE A CHRISTIAN ??

Bible Readings
Matthew 5: 1-12; Psalm 15; Micah 6: 1-8

World that's fast paced and more 'on-edge' than ever,
more are looking to the extreme for challenges

ex·treme

1. of a character farthest removed from the ordinary
2. exceedingly great in degree
3. farthest from the center or middle
4. very far in any direction
5. exceeding the bounds of moderation

Intro: Extreme Jobs	}	
Extreme Sports	}	our choices
Extreme Weather	}	out of our control

What does extreme discipleship look like?

Is it within our control or not??

How will we measure up when we're called to account??

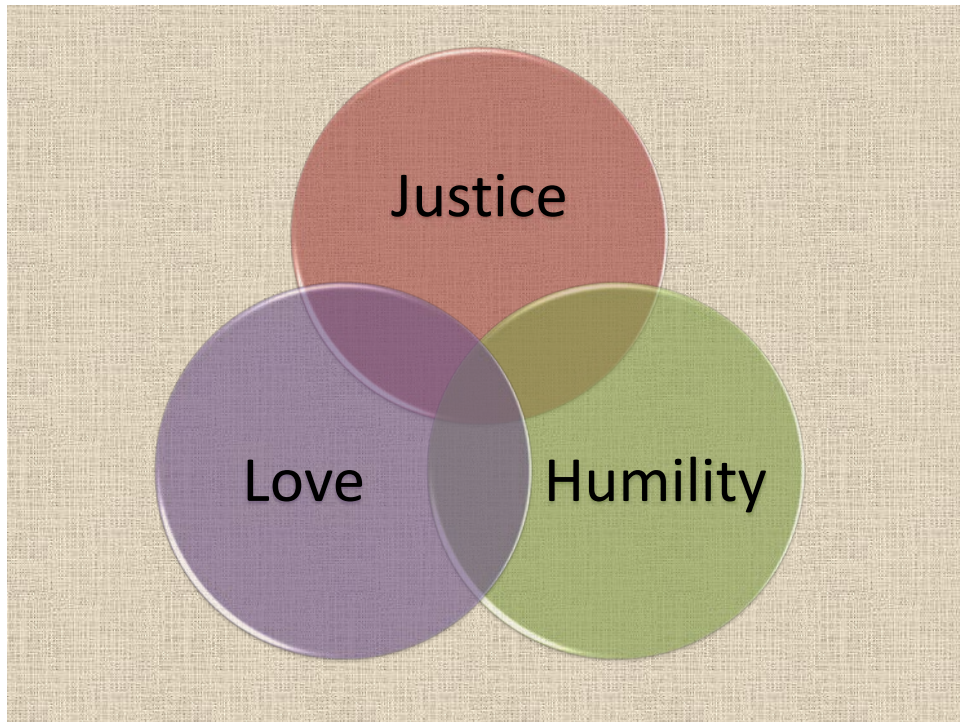
EXTREME DISCIPLESHIP

- *Justice*
- *Steadfast Love*
- *Humility*

This passage was written long before Jesus (approx 750 BCE)
During massive economic and religious changes, and under threat of invasion.
Points out three virtues of discipleship ch 6:8
Not much more extreme than that???

Extreme Virtues that are '*requirements*' of God's People:

- Justice - Justice for the poor involves our social, professional, and economic relationships, as well as our personal relationships.
- Steadfast Love - loving-kindness in all of our relationships, with strangers, friends, loved ones, and God, despite "the changeableness of religious feelings" or of our emotions toward other people.
- Humility - True humility makes justice and mercy possible. When we oppress and mistreat others, we act as though we are superior to them in a fundamental way. In truth, we are utterly dependent; "our talents, our opportunities, our material resources, our loved ones, are all gifts from God."



All these are inter-twined, cannot and should not be separated
We cannot be loving without humility
We cannot be Just without humility
And we cannot be humble while we lack integrity or hate others
These together make a Divine Life that's not attainable unless we are committed to God

How does this fit with The Beatitudes in Matthew reading?
Is this just a re-telling of Micah 6:8 in more detail? Or possibly a bit more guidance to explain how each fits
Look at 'Blessed' (some translations are 'Joy') - this means an **active** involvement of being happy in the 'right thing' that you are doing
"Happiness cannot be grasped – but it can be found, it can be received, it can be lived" Rev Jock Stein, retired Minister, Church of Scotland
Look at the blessings in V3-9

- ***poor in spirit***
- ***mourn the hurt***
- ***meek***
- ***passion for righteousness***
- ***merciful***
- ***pure in heart***
- ***peacemakers***

These are the Qualities and Experiences combined in the ideal character (JD Douglas & MC Tenney, 1989)

See how they fit with the 3 virtues in Micah

<i>poor in spirit</i>	Acknowledge our own helplessness, rely on God not ourselves	humility
<i>mourn the hurt</i>	Sharing the hurt and sin of the world, rejection of Christ	Love / humility
<i>meek</i>	Acceptance of our lowly position	humility
<i>passion for righteousness</i>	Honesty, integrity, justice in society, practical application of 'holiness'	justice
<i>merciful</i>	Actively compassionate	love
<i>pure in heart</i>	Motives are un-mixed, thoughts are holy, conscience is clear	Justice / love
<i>peacemakers</i>	Actively intervene to make peace, positive action to create peace	Justice / love

This is often not what the world view is - business/profit; career/promotion; problem/blame

Not the 'look after yourself' approach

Does take practice - lots of it

Change the 'what's in it for me' and see the 'what's in it for everyone'

It's not Rocket Science, but often seems more difficult just to do the 'right thing'

And we will be despised and ridiculed for this
But the rewards are enormous
JOY / HAPPINESS / SECURITY
(read psalm 15 again)

I had an email forwarded some time ago - it reminds us that we are part of the whole picture and we need to look out for each other.

THE BRICK



A young and successful Executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door! He slammed on the brakes and backed the Jag back to the spot where the brick had been thrown.

The angry Driver then jumped out of the car, grabbed the nearest kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, 'What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing? That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money... Why did you do it?'

The young boy was apologetic.

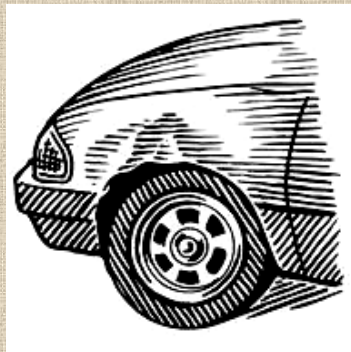
'Please, mister....please, I'm sorry but I didn't know what else to do,' He pleaded.

'I threw the Brick because no one else would stop...'

With tears dripping down his face and off his chin, the youth Pointed to a spot just around a parked car. 'It's my Brother, 'he said 'He rolled off the curb and fell Out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up.' Now sobbing, the boy asked the stunned executive, 'Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me.'

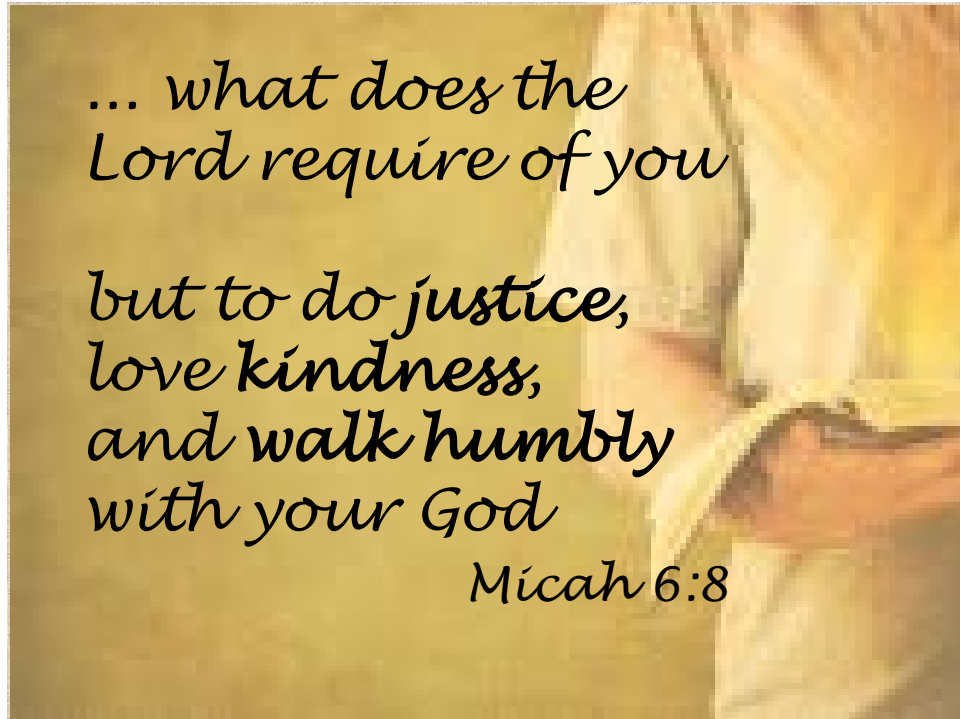
Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat... He hurriedly lifted the Handicapped boy back into the wheelchair, then took out a linen handkerchief and dabbed at the fresh scrapes and cuts... A quick look told him everything was going to be okay.

'Thank you and May God bless you,' the grateful child told the stranger. Too Shook up for words, the man simply watched the boy! Push his wheelchair-bound brother down the sidewalk toward their home... It was a long, slow Walk back to the Jaguar.



***'Don't go through
life so fast that
someone has to
throw a brick at
you to get your
attention!'***

The damage was very Noticeable, but the driver never bothered to repair the dented side door. He kept the dent there to remind him of this message: 'Don't go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention!' God whispers in our souls and speaks to our hearts. Sometimes when we don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at us. It's our choice to listen --- or not.



God didn't promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, sun without rain, but He did promise strength for the day, comfort for the tears, and light for the journey.

If God brings you to It, He will bring you through it.

Remember your dents, and let God be the panel beater to re-shape our living.

Amen

RESOURCES

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