

Our first reading from the prophet Micah opens with God calling the mountains & hills to bear witness, to remember who God is & what he has done. Not because the mountains & hills can speak, but because they have endured. They have watched the long story unfold. They have seen God's people wander & return, then slip & fall & get back to begin again.

Then, turning to Israel, God asks a simple, searching question: *"My people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you?"*

These words are rooted in their relationship. God invites his people to look back honestly, to remember where he has been faithful, & to say so. And then, directing the people *how* to respond, God asks the gentle, searching question: "What does the Lord require of you?"

Unsure how to answer, the people wonder, *What will be enough? What offering will satisfy God?* And, as if faithfulness can be measured by scale or sacrifice, they imagine increasingly costly gifts. But Micah answers with confidence & clarity: *"He has told you, O mortal, what is good."* Only this: do justice, love kindness, & walk humbly with your God.

Since these words are directed to us as well, we can all take a great big sigh of relief. God does not require a list of achievements. He does not set an impossible standard for us. God does the heavy lifting.

*Walk humbly.* These words suggest a faith that moves at a human pace: a faith shaped over time, attentive to relationship rather than to performance. It's not about

arriving, it's about *remaining on the path* — day after day, step by step, in the company of our ever-faithful God.

That path leads us, in Matthew's Gospel, to a hillside where Jesus sits & looks out at those who have gathered around him. They are not introduced as strong or successful. If any luminaries of Israel were present, they are not mentioned. What matters is simply that the people gather there around Christ.

Some are grieving. Some are weary. Some are quietly carrying burdens that do not show on the surface. Jesus does not begin by telling them what to do. He simply blesses them.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*

*Blessed are those who mourn.*

*Blessed are the meek.*

The Beatitudes are not a recipe how to become blessed. They name where blessing is already breaking in. Jesus speaks to people as they are & assures them that God has not overlooked them. The kingdom of heaven is near, even here — wherever there are faithful souls.

For a small parish like this one, these words feel close to home. Many of you have lived the Christian life long enough to know that faithfulness is rarely dramatic. It is built out of ordinary days — showing up, praying on the days prayer comes easy & also on the days when it does not, caring for one another, trusting God across the many seasons of life.

You have walked humbly with your God. Sometimes confidently, sometimes with uncertainty, sometimes aware of your own limits. You have done justice in small, persistent ways. You have loved kindness even when it asked something of you. Much of this has happened quietly, without notice. But it matters. God sees you. And God is pleased every time you carry on being faithful.

As Vestry members, your calling grows out of that same steady faithfulness. You are not being asked to carry the church by your own strength. You are being asked only to attend to it with care — to listen well, to discern patiently, & to act with humility & kindness.

Justice in this setting may look like fairness & honesty in how decisions are made. Kindness may look like patience, gentleness, & generosity of spirit. Humility may look like remembering that this church belongs to God before it belongs to us, & that we are stewards, not owners.

There is comfort in that. God has been faithful to this parish across many years, & God remains faithful today. The work before you does not require certainty or grand ambitions. It simply requires trust — trust that God is already at work & will continue at work. What God asks is not more than we have to give. Only this: that we walk with Him. Amen.