

First Presbyterian Church of Santa Rosa
Sunday, June 7, 2020
Scripture Reading: Micah 6:8 (NIV) & James 2.1-13 (CEB)

First reading: Micah 6:8

God has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy

and to walk humbly with your God.

Second reading: James 2:1-13

My brothers and sisters, when you show favoritism you deny the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been resurrected in glory.

Imagine two people coming into your meeting. One has a gold ring and fine clothes, while the other is poor, dressed in filthy rags. Then suppose that you were to take special notice of the one wearing fine clothes, saying, *“Here’s an excellent place. Sit here.”* But to the poor person you say, *“Stand over there”*; or, *“Here, sit at my feet.”* Wouldn’t you have shown favoritism among yourselves and become evil-minded judges?

My dear brothers and sisters, listen! Hasn’t God chosen those who are poor by worldly standards to be rich in terms of faith? Hasn’t God chosen the poor as heirs of the kingdom he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Don’t the wealthy make life difficult for you? Aren’t they the ones who drag you into court? Aren’t they the ones who insult the good name spoken over you at your baptism?

You do well when you really fulfill the royal law found in scripture, *Love your neighbor as yourself*. But when you show favoritism, you are committing a sin, and by that same law you are exposed as a lawbreaker.

Anyone who tries to keep all of the Law but fails at one point is guilty of failing to keep all of it. The one who said, *Don't commit adultery*, also said, *Don't commit murder*. So if you don't commit adultery but do commit murder, you are a lawbreaker. In every way, then, speak and act as people who will be judged by the law of freedom. There will be no mercy in judgment for anyone who hasn't shown mercy. Mercy overrules judgment.

The Word of the Lord!