

“O For Goodness Sake....!”
Epiphany 4
February 2, 2020

First Reading ~ *Micah 6:1-8*

Hear now what YHWH says:

“Come, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice!

Listen to YHWH’s indictment, you mountains and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the Holy One has a dispute — a controversy — with the people, and is putting Israel on trial.

O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Give me an answer! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and redeemed you from the house of slavery; and I sent Moses to lead you, and Aaron, and Miriam! My people, call to mind the plans devised by the ruler Balak of Moab, and how Balaam ben-Beor answered him! Remember the journey from Shittim to Gilgal, and recall how YHWH brought you justice!”

‘What shall I bring when I come before YHWH and bow down to the Most High?’ you ask. ‘Am I to come before God with burnt offerings? With year old calves? Will YHWH be placated by thousands of rams or rivers of oil? Should I offer my firstborn for my wrongdoings — the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?’

Listen here, mortal:

God has already made abundantly clear what “good” is, and what YHWH requires from you: Simply do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.”

Second Reading ~ *adapted from the Sermons of Rev. Dr. Fred B. Craddock*

You are to love and to do good and to lend care to people who will have absolutely no thanks to you, no gift in return, no positive response, no love to you, no kindness to you. Why? Because that’s what God does, that’s the way God is. If you want to follow God, to walk with God, you do not let your character become dictated by the people around you. The people who reject you determine your character? No. The people who accept you determine your character? No. The people who hate you, the people who love you, do not create your character. Your character is created by the character of God.

Now, what is the character of God? God is kind to the ungrateful and to the selfish. That’s what God said. God is kind to everybody. You’re to be children of God.