

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 1, 2026

Old Testament Reading

Micah 6:1–8

English Standard Version Scripture Text

¹Hear what the LORD says: Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. ² ^rHear, you mountains, ^sthe indictment of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the LORD has an indictment against his people, and he will contend with Israel. ³ “O my people, ^twhat have I done to you? ^uHow have I wearied you? Answer me! ⁴ For ^vI brought you up from the land of Egypt and ^wredeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and ^xMiriam. ⁵ O my people, remember ^ywhat Balak king of Moab devised, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, and what happened from ^zShittim to Gilgal, that you may know ^athe righteous acts of the LORD.” What Does the Lord Require? ⁶ ^b“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before ^cGod on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ ^dWill the LORD be pleased with ¹thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? ^eShall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” ⁸ He has told you, O man, what is good; and ^fwhat does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness,² and to ^gwalk humbly with your God?

Historical Context

Micah prophesied in the eighth century BC during a period of social injustice and religious corruption in Judah. Chapter 6 presents a covenant lawsuit in which the LORD calls His people to account, reminding them of His saving acts and confronting superficial religiosity.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verses 1–2 – The LORD summons creation as witness in a covenant lawsuit against Israel.

Verses 3–5 – God recounts His redeeming acts, grounding His case in covenant faithfulness.

Verses 6–7 – The people propose extravagant sacrifices, revealing misunderstanding of true obedience.

Verse 8 – The prophetic summary: to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Theological Themes

- Covenant accountability
- Divine faithfulness versus human hypocrisy
- Justice, mercy, and humility
- Worship expressed through ethical obedience

Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 1:18–31

English Standard Version Scripture Text

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is ^bfolly to ^cthose who are perishing, but to us ^dwho are being saved it is ^ethe power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

^f“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ ^gWhere is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? ^hHas 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, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach² to save those who believe. ²² For ⁱJews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ ⁱcrucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ ^kthe power of God and ^lthe wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: ^mnot many of you were wise according to worldly standards,³ not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But ⁿGod chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; ^oGod chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even ^pthings that are not, to ^qbring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so ^rthat no human being⁴ might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him⁵ you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us ^swisdom from God, ^trighteousness and ^usanctification and ^vredemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, ^w“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Historical Context

In the opening chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul addresses divisions within the church. He centers the community on the message of the cross, emphasizing that God's wisdom contradicts worldly standards of power and prestige.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verse 18 – The word of the cross divides humanity: folly to the perishing, power to the saved.

Verses 19–20 – God overturns worldly wisdom, fulfilling prophetic expectation.

Verses 21–25 – Divine wisdom is revealed in what appears weak and foolish—the crucified Christ.

Verses 26–29 – God chooses the lowly to nullify human boasting.

Verses 30–31 – Christ becomes wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; boasting belongs to the Lord.

Theological Themes

- The scandal and power of the cross
- Divine wisdom versus worldly wisdom
- Grace that excludes boasting
- Christ as righteousness and redemption

Concluding Reflection

On the Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, the Church is reminded that true faith is not measured by outward display but by covenant faithfulness and humble obedience. Micah calls for justice, mercy, and humility. Paul proclaims a crucified Messiah who redefines wisdom and power. Together these readings reveal that God's glory shines most clearly through humility and the cross.