

Mercy It's Not Just For The Weak
Upside Down series
by Chris Famisaran

Let's just give a hand to the praise team, ummm, the drama team and the praise team. Thank you so, so, so much. I hope that was just as impactful for you as it was for me. And I just want to say, please, if you have a passion and desire, whether you want to participate in the drama ministry or any kind of ministry, please let us know. So we can be able to help empower you to be able to do that. Amen. How did this all start? Well, Pilar reached out to me a couple months ago, and said, I have a deep burden for this. So I said, awesome, because it was honestly an answer to prayer. I had been wanting to have a drama ministry be able to help act out the sermons. So, this is not the last that you're going to see them. Alright, so I already have a couple of things in mind. So if you're passionate about ministry, my friends, please reach out. We want to help equip and empower you to do ministry.

Father in heaven. Thank you, Lord, as we just take some time now to open Your Word. Be with us. In Jesus name, amen.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Let's ask a question or two. Let's create some interesting lunch conversations. If this is true, raise your hand. If it's not true, keep your hands lowered. And if you're unsure, just wave your hands. When there is a disagreement, I am the first to try to resolve the issue. Okay, we have a few honest people. All right. How many of you are not the first person or unsure? Many of you are too scared to answer. Probably because somebody is sitting right next to you. When I see somebody in need, I instantly want to help them. Raise your hand. Okay. How many of you don't want to? Don't answer that.

Several years ago, Steve Hartman was reporting for I think it was CBS. I think this was back in 2015. There was a high school basketball team by the name of the Gainesville Tornadoes. And as he was reporting, what was unusual about this team is that they have zero fan base at the time. No fans. One of the players said, Yeah, my mom and dad came once but they really just don't have time. And even their fellow students at Gainesville, couldn't come to the games because they

couldn't leave the high school. Why? The Gainesville Tornadoes are a high school from a juvenile correctional facility. And so when they would travel to other places, their friends couldn't go because they themselves were in juvenile hall, or correctional facility, and their parents rarely could ever come and see them. While they were playing a particular private school Vanguard college prep in Waco. And it was before a matchup took place Hudson Bradley and Ben Martinson didn't seem it was right that one team could have plenty of fans and the other team had none. And so before their home game, Bradley and Martinson asked some Vanguard friends to please do them a big favor. Cheer for the Gainesville Tornadoes instead. And so when the Gainesville Tornado players walked onto the hall, they found that they saw signs of support there, even their own cheerleaders, they had their own fan section. And when they were playing as the game progressed, when they scored, Gainesville had fans cheering and screaming. One Gainesville player said when I'm an old man, I'll be thinking about this Hudson, Bradley also said, I mean, every time they scored, the gym was just lit up and cheering and clapping, and everyone was on their feet. And it showed me the real impact, that encouragement and support for anybody can make. Steve Hartman summarize the story, "We all need someone to believe in us, we all need someone who knows our mistakes and loves us anyway. And for that, the Gainesville players could not thank everyone enough."

Grace, Mercy. When Jesus says, Blessed are those who are merciful, for they will receive mercy. The mercy that Jesus is talking about is one that we can show to others of love for those who are in need. And also the mercy of forgiveness. Cause we are running out of time, just very briefly, I wanted to go over a couple of highlights. One of the things that we all know is that we have all been gifted with grace. And these are just some passages that we're going to try to look at, we're not going to get to all of them, but that I just like the highlight. So for those of you as well, who are maybe watching online, jot these down, or press stop, and then continue on. So these are some of the passages that I want you to eventually maybe perhaps later today, go back. We have all been gifted grace.

Matthew 9:19, sorry, Matthew 9, but verses 9 - 13 talks about when Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew, who was a tax collector. And we all know, tax collectors did not have a high place in society at this point, amen. And so what is he tell him, he says, Follow me and Matthew, he gets up and he

follows Jesus. And later when they're at Matthew's house, Jesus goes into the home of a sinner, similar to a man that we're also familiar with, if you've done our small groups series study, that of who else? Who did we recently talk about? Who was a tax collector? Zacchaeus. Okay. So he goes inside. And when the Pharisees saw this, they asked the disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" And On hearing this, Jesus said, "it's not the healthy who need a doctor," but who? "The sick, but go and learn this. I desire mercy, not sacrifice, for I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." What is Jesus whole plan to come here on Earth is to redeem those who need saved. Do we need saved? Absolutely. Anybody perfect here. Please don't raise your hand. It will be awkward. But it is truly God's great desire, and especially on this particular weekend. Yesterday was Friday, Good Friday today, the Sabbath. And tomorrow, Sunday, Resurrection Day is the greatest day in the world. So we have been gifted grace. And with that we can see, we can learn that Matthew was also, if he was a tax collector, more than likely, he was what he was also a fellow Jew. And yet Jesus has also gone to his house. Eating. And there are some people, the commentators, the ones who love to be on the sidelines to always give their personal opinion, or maybe professional opinion, in some cases. And Jesus knocks that down, it says, it's, I'm not here to save those who already good to go. I'm here to save those who need to be redeemed.

Now also, because we have shown mercy by God, we should be merciful to others. Is that easy? Is it easy to be merciful to others? Let's be honest, it's not. There's some people we just I'm not saying we don't like. But we don't get along with them. Let's go to another passage. Matthew, Matthew 18. Matthew 18. Read a very difficult, challenging passage. Matthew 18. Well there. Let's jump to verse 21. And Peter comes to Jesus with a question. And he says, Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times? Now that seems like a reasonable request seven times if they've harmed you seven times, although my question is after the second or third time, shouldn't you have learned by now? But Jesus answered them, I tell you, not seven times, but 77 times. Now I'm not good with math. That's a lot. 77 times.

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And as he began to settle, a man who owed him 10,000 bags of gold was brought to him since he was not able to pay the master order that he

and his wife and his children all that he had spent be sold to repay the debt. How many? How much gold 10,000 bags of gold. That's a lot of gold. Okay. And that this, the servant fell on his knees before Him and He said, Be patient with me. He begged, and I will repay back everything. And the servant's master took pity on him. And what does he do? He canceled the debt. And he let him go. Now for those of you who be in this person's shoes, how would you feel after that? You would feel ecstatic. You would feel like you are on Mount Everest times 10. You would be thrilled you will be joyful. But what is this person's response? Verse 28, but when the servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him how much 100 silver coins. 10,000 bags of gold -- 100 silver coins? Is this even? No! He grabbed him and he began to what? choke him. He was literally hurting this person, potentially wanting to hurt, if not even kill him, threatened him. Pay back what you owe me. And so instantly, he goes from being forgiven to all of a sudden demanding payment. He should have known he just experienced grace and mercy. Within an instant he forgets and he goes to somebody else and demands. His fellow servant fell to his knees and he begged him as well. Be patient with me, and I will pay it back. But what does he do? He refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown in prison until he could pay off the day. And when the other servants saw what had happened, they were what? Outrage How could he and went and told the master everything that had happened. And then the master called the servant and you wicked servant, I cancelled all of that debt of yours, because you begged me to? Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had I had on you. And in anger the Master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he should pay back all that he owed.

Crazy. The first man I can't even imagine how much 10,000 bags of gold is. Suffice to say, I think he was set for life. If he had that much money, but he didn't he was I mean, if he was forgiven that much money, I would be grateful. But no, it wasn't enough for him. Because as soon as he was forgiven, I wonder was he truly forgiven? I mean, he knew he got away with something. But then he goes and finds one of his friends or colleagues, I don't know, in demands, hey, give me back my 100 silver coins. When we are extending grace, we should be able to pass on and share that grace and mercy with others. And sometimes, though, that can't always be easy, because it can be challenging relationships. Sometimes they're good and healthy. And sometimes, there are things that have been said or done in

the past that we sometimes remember. And we hold those things towards those individuals that have harmed us, or hurt us or angered us. But God says, No, I want you to be merciful to others. And ultimately, when we find that when we extend mercy and grace, we find that forgiveness brings peace and happiness.

For Proverbs 14, verse 21, says, It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who was kind to the needy. For mercy doesn't just talk about forgiveness, but it's also being merciful. In fact, one of the one of my favorite passages of all time is Micah 6:8, he's showing you all mortal what is good. But what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love what? mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Frankly, God treats us better than we deserve Amen. And the same grace that God has extended to us the same grace and mercy that's been shared with us, should also be shared with others. And in our walk with Christ, Jesus has also asked to not only love God with everything, heart, soul, mind and strength, but to love our neighbor as ourselves, being merciful to the ones who are in need. That might mean if he mean driving somebody to the grocery store, or just taking time to sit down and listen, in their time of pain, maybe losing a loved one. Who knows, maybe it's Hey, the person needs their lawn mowed. But mercy, grace, all of these things can bring peace and happiness. There's no greater joy than helping somebody else to serving others.

And then there's a story till I think it was Lee Strobel writes of, of Rick Warren, many of you know he, I believe, I think he recently if not, he's about to retire as a pastor of the Saddleback Church. And he wrote the book, The Purpose Driven Life. And many of you probably know that his son at the age of 27, who had a very difficult life, ended up taking his own life. Can you imagine your own son at the age of 27? And of course, as a parent, you have to ask, I'm sure what could I have done differently? It's probably the most devastating news you could ever receive. And so about a year after this, it was asked, how, what can you take from this? How have you made How can you keep going on even in the immense pain that you have experienced and he replied with the answer is Easter. You see the death and the burial and the resurrection of Jesus happened over three days. Friday was the day of suffering and pain and agony Saturday for the disciples with a day of doubt, and confusion, and Minister misery. But Easter that Sunday was a day of hope, and joy in victory. Here's the fact of life, you will face these three days over and over and over in your lifetime. And when you do, you will find yourself asking

as I did three fundamental questions. Number one, what do I do in my days of pain? To how do I get through my days of pain and view of days of doubt, and confusion? And three? How do I get to the days of joy and victory? The answer is Easter? The answer is Easter. And I'm sure during this time, Rick and his wife Kay had people who walked alongside him during that very difficult period in their life.

And so I just want to plea to all of you as well. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. May we walk together? May we forgive when we have been wrong, and extend forgiveness when it is asked, and may we be merciful to those who are in need. And when we do so, just as we saw a little bit ago, we will be able to find and receive joy, peace, faith, generosity, love, and humility. May God be with you. May God bless you. And as you reflect, especially on today, on Sabbath, I'm sure the disciples were a wreck. Because this was not the story that was supposed to play out. Why did Jesus have to die? But even in the darkness, morning will come. The sun will rise and will rise shining.

Father in heaven, Lord, may we never take you for granted. May we look to you in all things. Lord, there are going to be days where it's going to be cloudy and dark as it was for the disciples on Sabbath. And yeah, what were you doing? You were resting peacefully, may we have the same piece that you had of rest and joy. May we go forth with courage. And just as our friends also shared that in you in the cross we can find joy, peace, faith, generosity, love and humility because you have conquered all things may we go forth with confidence and assurance of our salvation. And more than anything, Lord, give us opportunities and to know what to say about what that means for us, that others to me know what it is to have peace, joy and love through you. And all God's people said, Amen. Amen.

Grace and peace. Everyone have a wonderful Easter.