

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK: MARCH 1-6, 2026

SERIES INFO

Upside Down

Most of us already know what the good life looks like in our culture... success, comfort, confidence, control. We don't have to be taught what to chase; we're already running. In the opening lines of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus disrupts all of it. He blesses weakness, grief, humility, mercy, purity, peacemaking, and faithfulness under pressure... qualities we usually avoid, ignore, or see as setbacks. This series slows us down long enough to notice the gap between what we chase and what Jesus calls blessed. Not to pressure people. Not to shame people. But to help people see clearly. Each week, we'll unpack one of Jesus' statements and let it confront our assumptions about the good life... one attitude at a time.

PERSONAL FUN FACTS

- What is a small thing someone did recently that annoyed you more than it probably should have?

TAKEAWAYS

What were the greatest "takeaways" you had from the message this week on "those who are merciful will receive mercy?"

DISCUSSION

1. The Mercy Jesus Describes

Scripture: Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36

At first glance of this beatitude, you might think this to be good moral advice. It's like Jesus is saying, "Show more compassion." "Be more forgiving." But we remember that the Beatitudes are not behavior commands. They describe identity traits. Jesus is not describing what Christians should try to do to become ... He is describing what people formed by the Kingdom of God already are becoming. "Blessed are the merciful," is identity language. Being merciful, like all the other beatitudes, is a character trait that is formed in you by living under God's rule and His reign (His Kingdom). If you want to know what a person looks like when God is truly shaping their heart ... one of the clearest identification markers is mercy.

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DISCUSSION CONTINUED

1) How does understanding the Beatitudes as identity markers or statements rather than behaviors or actions change how you read them?

2) How does remembering God's mercy toward you change the way you interpret someone else's failure?

2. Are You Offended? Why Offense Can Destroy Mercy **Scripture: Matthew 18: 21-35; Proverbs 4:23**

Kyle Idelman in his book, "Every Thought Captive," explains that being offended has a pattern to it. Someone hurts you, you assign a motive, you replay the moment, anger grows, you feel like you are a victim, and then mercy becomes impossible. The actual offense rarely destroys relationships; it is the story that we keep replaying over again in our minds that does. Offense and mercy cannot coexist. Offense says, "They owe me." Mercy says, "I release the debt." If mercy is indeed part of your identity, then you will live from the reality that you yourself have received mercy. We can understand grace intellectually. We can even teach mercy theologically. But we can also still rehearse the offenses that have come into our lives emotionally to the point that mercy slowly drains from our identity. When we feel the need to "keep score," this kind of attitude is opposite of kingdom living.

1) Why is it easier to remember offenses done to us than mercy shown to us? Why does replaying the offense over in our minds make forgiveness harder?

2) What does the king's response reveal about God's character?

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3. They Will Receive Mercy

Scripture: Luke 6:37-38; Psalm 103:8-12

It is important to see that giving mercy and receiving mercy is not like a transaction. Jesus is not describing a spiritual deal. Merciful people receive mercy because they are living inside the flow of mercy. They inhale God's mercy and exhale mercy to others. When God's Kingdom shapes you from the inside out, your life will resemble a person who is merciful. Mercy is proof that your life has been transformed. When Jesus says, "They will receive mercy," He is describing people living in alignment with God's kingdom.

1) Why do you think mercy often benefits the giver as much as the receiver?

2) Which is more difficult for you: believing God shows you mercy, or extending mercy to others? Why do you think that is?

3) How have you experienced freedom or relief when you chose mercy instead of holding onto the pain or the offense?

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PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Is there any place in my life where I am holding on to an offense? What is that doing to my overall spiritual life?
- Where do I feel tempted to act as judge rather than a recipient of mercy?
- How does this statement change me today: "I stand every day because God has been merciful to me?"

PRAYER

Father,

You have not treated me as my sins deserve. Thank you for Your endless mercy through Jesus. Soften my heart where I have grown bitter. Help me to remember how deeply we have been forgiven. Teach me to see people through Your eyes, and to move toward suffering, and to reflect Your compassion in a hurting world. Make me a merciful person so that Your mercy may be evidenced through me. In Jesus' name. Amen.