

GOD CAN USE ANYBODY

The Miracle of Mercy – Rick Warren Parts 1-3

"Give vourselves completely to God—every part of you—because you've been brought from death to life, and now you want to be used by God for good, and for his righteous purposes." Romans 6:13 (TLB/GNT)

PAUL'S SECRETS OF STAYING USABLE

2 Corinthians 4:1-18

1.

1. "God <u>IN HIS MERCY</u> has given us this ministry and work to do. That's why we do not become discouraged and never give up!" 2 Corinthians 4:1

MERCY: undeserved forgiveness & unearned kindness

"You know what I was like . . . how I violently persecuted Christians. I did my best to get rid of them! . . . But then something happened! For it pleased God in his kindness to choose me and call me, even before I was born! What UNDESERVED MERCY!" Galatians 1:13, 15 (NLT)

"It is God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus; and long ages ago he planned that we should spend these lives in helping others." Ephesians 2:10 (TLB)

2.

"We don't try to trick anyone, and we don't twist the word of God. Instead we teach the truth plainly, showing everyone WHO WE REALLY ARE. Then they can know in their hearts what kind of people we are in God's sight." 2 Corinthians 4:2 (NLT/NCV)

"The Spirit we receive does not make us slaves again to fear; it makes us children of God!" Romans 8:15 (NCV)

3. "Our message is not about ourselves. It is about Jesus Christ as the Lord. We are merely your servants for Jesus' sake." 2 Corinthians 4:5 (GW)

"We are like clay jars in which this treasure is stored. The real power comes from God and not from us." 2 Corinthians 4:7 (CEV)

4.

"We often suffer, but we are never crushed. Even when we don't know what to do. we never give up. In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we are knocked down, we get up again." 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (CEV)

"All of these sufferings of ours are for your benefit. And the more of you who are won to Christ, the more there are to thank Him for his great mercy, and the more God gets glory!" 2 Corinthians 4:15 (TLB)

"This is why we never give up! Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are guite small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever!" 2 Corinthians 4:16-17 (NLT)

5.

"These little troubles are getting us ready for an eternal glory that will make all our troubles seem like nothing." 2 Corinthians 4:17 (CEV)

"So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now: rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever." 2 Corinthians 4:18 (NLT)

THE KEY TO STAYING FOCUSED:

"A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand backto-back and conquer. And three people are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NLT)

Jesus: "For wherever two or three come together in my name, I will be there with them." Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

Do you want your life to be used by God? Are you ready to experience the Miracle of Mercy?

Next Steps

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GOD'S MERCY AND MY FAILURES

The Miracle of Mercy – Rick Warren Parts 1-4

WHAT CAUSES OUR PERSONAL FAILURES?

3 Things Peter Did Wrong

1.

1. "Jesus said '<u>Tonight every one of you will desert me</u>. For the Scripture says that when the shepherd is killed, the sheep will be scattered. BUT after I've been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there.' Then Peter boasted, 'But Lord, even if everyone else fails you, I will NEVER deny you!' Jesus replied, 'Peter, the truth is that before this night is over, and before the rooster crows at dawn, you will deny knowing me three times.' Peter insisted, 'But Lord. I would NEVER do that! Even if I have to die with you I'll never deny knowing you!' And all the other disciples vowed the same thing." Matthew 26:31-35

"If you think, 'I am strong! I can handle this. I'd never fall for that temptation,' then be careful! For you could easily fall too!" 1 Corinthians 10:12

2. "Peter <u>followed Jesus at a distance</u> to the courtyard of the high priest's palace. He went in and sat down with the guards to see what was going to happen to Jesus . . . As he was sitting in the courtyard, a servant girl came up to him and said, 'You were with Jesus of Galilee, weren't you?' But standing there in front of everyone Peter denied it. 'I don't even know what you're talking about!' he said." Matthew 26:58, 69-70

"It is a dangerous trap to be concerned with what others think of you, but if you trust the Lord, you'll be safe." Proverbs 29:25

3.

"Then Peter went out to the entrance of the courtyard and there another woman saw him and said to those standing there. 'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.' Again Peter denied it, and this time he swore an oath and said 'I don't even know that man!' But after a while, the men who has been standing there came over to Peter and said 'We KNOW that you are one of them because your Galilean accent gives you away.' Peter lost his temper and started cursing and swearing. He shouted 'I don't know the man!' Immediately he heard a rooster crow."

Matthew 26:71-74

"The tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do! Just as a tiny spark can burn up a great forest, the tongue is a flame of fire. That part of your body is full of wickedness and can poison everything else in your life. It is set on fire by hell itself and can turn our whole lives into a blazing flame of destruction and disaster." James 3:5-6

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN I FAIL?

3 Things Peter Did Right

1. "When Peter heard the rooster crow, he remembered that Jesus had said, 'Before the rooster crows, you'll deny me three times.' Then Peter went outside and WEPT BITTERLY." Matthew 26:75

"The sacrifice God wants is a broken and contrite spirit, God will not reject a humble and repentant heart." Psalm 51:17

2. (Easter morning) *"Mary Magdalene went and found <u>the disciples together, grieving</u>* and weeping." Mark 16:10

(Easter night) "That evening the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in the middle of the group, and said 'Peace be with you!' . . . The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!" John 20:19-20

"A week later the disciples were together again meeting in a home." John 20:26

3. <u>"Because of his great mercy</u> God has given us <u>a new life</u> by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope." 1 Peter 1:3

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7

WHAT DOES JESUS DO WITH OUR FAILURES?

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned back to me again, strengthen and build up your brothers." Luke 22:31-32

^{1.} "God certainly knows what we are made of. He bears in mind that we are dust." Psalm 103:14 (GW)

2.

"Jesus is able to save us completely because (in heaven) he <u>lives to intercede on</u> our behalf. He is always talking to the Father, asking him to help us." Hebrews 7:25

3.

"So <u>WHEN</u> you have repented and turned back to me again." Luke 22:32

"For even though a righteous man falls seven times, he will rise again!" Proverbs 24:16

The Angel said, *"I know you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.* But he is not here—he's risen from the dead . . . Now go tell his disciples, <u>AND tell</u> <u>Peter</u>, that he's going ahead of you to Galilee and he'll see you there, just as he promised!" Mark 16:6-7

4.

(Two weeks later) "Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. Seven of the disciples were there and Simon Peter said, 'I'm going fishing.' 'We'll come, too' they all said. So they went out in the boat, but even though the fished all night, they caught nothing. At dawn the disciples saw a man standing on the shore but they couldn't see it was Jesus. He called out, 'Friends, have you caught any fish?' 'Not a thing!' they replied.' Then Jesus said. 'Throw out your net on the righthand side of the boat, and you'll get plenty of fish!' So they did what Jesus said to do, and they instantly caught so many fish, they couldn't even draw in the net because it was so full of fish! Then John said to Peter, 'IT'S THE LORD!' When Peter realized that he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and swam ashore, leaving the others in the boat to pull the loaded net to the shore, for they were only out about three hundred feet. When they got to shore they saw that Jesus was cooking fish and bread over a charcoal fire. Jesus said, 'Bring some of the fish you just caught.' So Peter went back aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was filled with a 153 large fish, and yet the net had not torn. Now come and have some breakfast!' Jesus said. Now they were sure it really was the Lord! Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead." John 21:1-14

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; <u>his mercies never come to an end</u>; they are new every morning; <u>great is your faithfulness</u>." Lamentations 3:22-23

5.

"When you have turned back to me, <u>strengthen and build up your brothers</u>." Luke 22:32

"After breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord, you know I love you,' Peter replied. '<u>Then FEED my</u> <u>lambs</u>,' Jesus said. Then Jesus repeated the question: 'Peter, do you love me?' Peter said, 'Yes, Lord! You KNOW I love you!' '<u>Then TAKE CARE of my sheep</u>,' Jesus said. Then Jesus asked the same question one more time: 'Peter, do you love me?' Now Peter was grieved that Jesus asked the question a third time, so he said, 'Lord, you know everything! You know I love you!' And Jesus replied 'Then feed my sheep!''' John 21:15-17

Jesus: "Now I say to you that you are <u>Peter</u>, and upon this <u>rock</u> I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it!" Matthew 16:18

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HOW MUCH YOU MATTER TO GOD

The Miracle of Mercy – Rick Warren Parts 1-3

"Jesus saved us, not because of the good things we did, but BECAUSE OF HIS MERCY. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:5

Jesus: "I have come to SEEK and to SAVE those who are LOST." Luke 19:10

Jesus told 3 stories to explain what he meant:

"The Lost Sheep" (Luke 15:1-7) "The Lost Coin" (Luke 15:8-10) "The Lost Son" (Luke 15:11-31)

'LOSTNESS'

WHAT DO I LOSE WHEN I'M SPIRITUALLY "LOST"?

Like a lost sheep . . .

1. I LOSE

"All of us have strayed away just like lost sheep. We've all left God's path to follow our own wavs." Isaiah 53:6

2. ILOSE *"My people are wandering like lost sheep, without a shepherd <u>to protect</u> and guide"* them." Zechariah 10:2

Like a lost coin . . .

3. I LOSE

prepared and arranged for those who love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9

Like a lost son . . .

4. ILOSE "The younger son wasted all he'd been given and eventually he became miserable and lonely." Luke 15:14

> Our wandering nature separates us from God Our circumstances can separate us from God Our choices separate us from God

5. I LOSE *"What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, if he <u>loses his soul?</u>" Luke 9:25*

BUT I DON'T LOSE MY VALUE!

"God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life." John 3:16

HOW DOES GOD'S MERCY "SAVE" ME?

1. "Jesus is the only one who can bring us to God. He became a human and gave himself to rescue all of us." 1 Timothy 2:5

"Trust me in your times of trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory." Psalm 50:15

2. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and worn out from carrying too much. Learn to trust and rest in me and you'll recover your life." Matthew 11:28

"I will give you back what you lost in the years when the locusts ate all your crops." Joel 2:25

3. "Anyone who connects to Christ becomes a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything becomes new. God has done it all! He sent Christ to make peace between himself and us." 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (CEV)

HOW DO I CONNECT WITH GOD'S MERCY?

1.

1. "He wasted it all . . . he had nothing left . . . he got <u>desperate and hungry</u> . . . then he finally came to his senses." Luke 15:13-17

GOD: "You'll find me when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else." Jeremiah 29:13 (The Message)

2. "When he <u>came to his senses</u>, he said . . . <u>'I have sinned</u> against God and you."" Luke 15:17-18

3.

The son drifted away saving "GIVE ME MY share." Luke 15:12

He returned to the Father saying "MAKE ME a servant." Luke 15:19

THE FATHER'S RESPONSE

"While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; HE RAN OUT to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." Luke 15:20

Next Step



SHOWING MERCY TO YOUR FAMILY

The Miracle of Mercy – Rick Warren Parts 1-2

"Lord. I want to live a blameless life, but how I need your help Lord. especially in my own home, where I long to act as I should." Psalm 101:2 (TLB)

QUIZ: HOW MERCIFUL AM I WITH MY FAMILY?

When my spouse or sibling or another family member ...

o Gets some details wrong while telling a story, do I

- ___ Interrupt them and correct them publicly?
- Say nothing and let it go, knowing I've done the same?

o Keeps making the same mistake over and over. do I . . .

___ Become irritated & angry at them?

Graciously forgive them and pray for them?

o Is getting more attention than I think they deserve, do I . . .

___ Feel resentful and feel the need to bring them down a notch?

___ Celebrate with them?

o Says or does something I don't understand, do I . . .

- ____Assume they have the best motivation for doing it?
- ____ Question their motivation or think the worst?

o Am I more polite with . . .

___ Strangers?

___ My own familv?

MERCY IS LOVE IN ACTION

"Love is patient. Love is kind. Love does not envy. Love is not boastful or proud. Love is not rude. Love is not self-seeking. Love is not irritable or easily angered. Love keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil. Love rejoices with the truth. Love is always supportive. Love always trusts. Love is always hopeful. Love always perseveres and never gives up. Love never fails. It never ends." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

4 WAYS TO SHOW MERCY AT HOME

1.

1. "Love is not irritable or easily angered." 1 Corinthians 13:5

"Love forgets mistakes; nagging about them separates even close friends." Proverbs 17:9

"It is to your glory to overlook an offense." Proverbs 19:11

"Be careful that when you get on each other's nerves you don't snap at each other. Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out." 1 Thessalonians 5:15 (The Message)

1 Corinthians 13:4, 7

"Whenever you are able, do good to people who need help." Proverbs 3:27 (NCV)

"Don't be hateful to people, just because they are hateful to you. Rather, be good to each other and to everyone else." 1 Thessalonians 5:15 (CEV)

3. *"Love keeps no record of wrongs."* 1 Corinthians 13:5

"Love is not rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges." 1 Corinthians 13:5 (TLB)

4.

4. "Love always trusts, love is always hopeful, and love always perseveres through whatever comes." 1 Corinthians 13:7

"Lord, hear my prayer for mercy when I call to you for help, when I lift my hands toward your most holy place." Psalm 28:2 (GW)

"I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The unfailing love of the Lord never ends! By his mercies we have been kept from complete destruction. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day." Lamentations 3:20-23

THESE ARE THE SAME WAYS GOD SHOWS YOU MERCY!

Next Step



BEING AN AGENT OF MERCY IN THE WORLD

The Miracle of Mercy – Rick Warren

Parts 1-2

"You will be my witnesses." –Jesus, Acts 1:8 (NIV)

IN A MEAN WORLD, OUR GREATEST WITNESS IS

"Show mercy to others, just as your Father shows mercy to you!" Luke 6:36

PRINCIPLES OF MERCY

How can I be more merciful?

1.

"LOOK OUT for one another's interests, not just for your own." Philippians 2:4 (GNT)

"Jesus looked at him and loved him." Mark 10:21 (NIV)

2.

Show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. There are still others to whom you need to show mercy, but be careful that you aren't contaminated by their sins." Jude 1:22-23 (NLT)

"Most importantly, love each other deeply. Love has a way of not looking at others" sins." 1 Peter 4:8 (ICB)

"Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love." Ephesians 4:2 (TLB)

Principle: Don't expect unbelievers to act like believers

"That night Matthew invited Jesus to dinner with his fellow tax collectors and many other 'notorious sinners.' The Pharisees were indignant. 'Why does your Teacher eat with such scum?' they asked. When Jesus heard this, he said. 'Healthy people don't need a doctor-sick people do!' Then he added, 'Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: "I want you to be merciful, not offer sacrifices!" For I've come to invite sinners to me, not those who think they are righteous." Matthew 9:10-13

3.

"When you talk, you should always be kind and pleasant so you will be able to answer everyone in the way you should." Colossians 4:6 (NCV)

"The wisdom that comes from heaven is pure, peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to vield to others. Wisdom is full of mercy." James 3:17 (NLT)

4.

Jesus defended his disciples eating grain on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8)

"You Pharisees are careful to tithe 10% of every part of your income, but then you ignore other important matters of God's Law—justice, and showing mercy, and faith. Yes, you should tithe! But you also shouldn't neglect the more important things!" Matthew 23:23

PLACES TO BE AN AGENT OF MERCY

1. LOOK FOR PEOPLE

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 (NIV)

2. LOOK FOR PEOPLE

"Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, 'How can I help?' That's exactly what Jesus did. He didn't make it easy for himself by avoiding people's troubles, but he waded right in and helped out." Romans 15:2-3 (The Message)

3. LOOK FOR PEOPLE

"God comforts us in our troubles, so that we can comfort others who are in trouble with the same comfort that we ourselves received from God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

4. LOOK FOR PEOPLE

"Look for opportunities to be hospitable." Romans 12:13 (NJB)

"I was alone and you welcomed me and showed me hospitality." Matthew 25:31-46

5. LOOK FOR PEOPLE

despair." 2 Corinthians 2:7 (CEV)

6. LOOK FOR PEOPLE

"Don't repay evil for evil. Never retaliate when people insult you or say unkind things about you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God wants you to do, and he will bless you for it!" 1 Peter 3:9 (NLT)

"God will not forget the work you've done and the love you've shown him by caring for and helping other people." Hebrews 6:10

Next Step



EASTER MEANS IT'S A NEW DAY OF MERCY

The Miracle of Mercy - Rick Warren Parts 1-3

"Early on Sunday morning, as the NEW DAY was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to see the tomb . . . The angel said 'He is risen!'" Matthew 28:1-10

"A NEW DAY will dawn on us BECAUSE our God is LOVING AND MERCIFUL." Luke 1:78 (GW)

MERCY: undeserved forgiveness and unearned kindness

WHEN DO I NEED GOD'S MERCY? WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ACCEPT IT?

1.

A HUMILIATED WOMAN: JOHN 8:2-11

"One day Jesus was teaching a crowd outside the Temple, and some Pharisees brought a woman who was CAUGHT in adultery. They put her on display in front of the crowd, then said to Jesus. 'This woman has been CAUGHT in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. So what do YOU say?' They were trying to TRAP Jesus into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and started writing in the dirt with his finger. They kept badgering Jesus, demanding an answer. Finally, Jesus stood up and said, 'Here's my answer: If any one of you has never sinned, then you may throw the first stone.' Then he stooped down again and continued writing in the dirt! When the accusers heard this, they began to slip away, one by one, beginning with the oldest, until it was just Jesus and the woman. At that point, Jesus stood back up and quietly said to her, 'Where are your accusers? Is there no one left to condemn you?' 'No, one Lord,' she said. Then Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you! Now go on, and leave your sinful wavs.""

GOD'S MERCY

"I was sent to announce freedom to all held captive and forgiveness to all who've been imprisoned." Isaiah 61:1

(Jesus) "I have come to save the world and not to judge it." John 12:47 (TLB)

"O Lord, you are so good and kind, so ready to forgive, so full of mercy for all who ask your aid." Psalm 86:5 (TLB)

"Jesus understands every weakness of ours, because he was tempted in every way that we are. But he did not sin. So whenever we are in need, we should come bravely before the throne of our merciful God. There we will receive mercy and find the grace to help us in our time of need." Hebrews 4:15-16 (CEV)

2.

A DISAPPOINTED MAN: JOHN 5:2-9

"In Jerusalem, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, which was surrounded by five covered porches. A large crowd of all sorts of disabled people would lie by the pool, waiting for a miracle. There was a legend that every once in a while an angel would stir up the water, and whoever was the first to get in the water while it was still moving would get what they needed and be made whole. One poor man had been waiting by the pool for 38 years. When Jesus saw this man and heard that he'd been lying there for such a long time, he asked the man 'Do you want to get well?' 'Sir,' the man replied, 'I have no one to help me get into the pool when the water is stirred! While I'm trying to get there, somebody else always get ahead of me!' Then Jesus simply said, 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and start walking!' When the man trusted Jesus, he was immediately able to walk again."

GOD'S MERCY

"What is impossible with men is possible with God." Luke 18:27 (NIV)

"As you get to know Jesus better, he will give you, through his great power, everything you need for living a truly good life." 2 Peter 1:3 (TLB)

3.

A DYING MAN: LUKE 23:39-43

"One of the criminals being executed on a cross beside Jesus ridiculed him saying, 'If you're supposed to be the Messiah, why don't you save yourself . . . and us too!' But the second criminal rebuked him. 'Man. don't vou even fear God when vou're dying? We deserve to die for our evil deeds, but this man hasn't done anything wrong!' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.' And Jesus replied, 'I guarantee you that today you will be with me in paradise."

GOD'S MERCY

he dies, will live again!" John 11:25

"Anyone who asks for mercy from the Lord shall have it and shall be saved." Acts 2:21 (TLB)

"The Lord God is waiting to show you how kind he is and to have mercy on you. The Lord always does what's right and he blesses those who trust him!" Isaiah 30:18 (CEV)

Next Step