

The background is a light blue gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

# THE GOD IMPULSE VII

LUKE 6:36 BE MERCIFUL, JUST AS YOUR FATHER IS  
MERCIFUL. NIV



- STEPS TO FOLLOW MERCY:

- WE SEE

- WE GO

- WE DO

- WE ENDURE - **LUKE 10:35** 'TAKE CARE OF HIM, AND WHATEVER MORE YOU SPEND, I WILL REPAY YOU **WHEN I COME BACK.**' ESV

- THE GOOD SAMARITAN KNEW THE TRAVELER'S WOUNDS WOULDN'T HEAL UP OVERNIGHT.

- MERCY IS ABOUT BEING FAITHFUL, BOTH TO THE PROCESS AND TO THE PEOPLE INVOLVED!

- FAITHFULNESS REQUIRES TIME, PERSEVERANCE, AND DEDICATION.

- WE ARE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL.

- PROVERBS 20:6 MANY WILL SAY THEY ARE LOYAL FRIENDS, BUT WHO CAN FIND ONE WHO IS TRULY RELIABLE? NLT



# GOD REVEALS HIMSELF!

- EXODUS 34:6-7 THE LORD PASSED BEFORE HIM AND PROCLAIMED, "THE LORD, THE LORD, A GOD MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER, AND ABOUNDING IN STEADFAST LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS, 7 KEEPING STEADFAST LOVE FOR THOUSANDS, FORGIVING INIQUITY AND TRANSGRESSION AND SIN, BUT WHO WILL BY NO MEANS CLEAR THE GUILTY, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN AND THE CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, TO THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH GENERATION." ESV
- THIS PHRASE IS THE TRANSLATION FOR A SINGLE HEBREW WORD, HESED.
  - OT:2617 CHECED (KHEH'-SED); FROM OT:2616; KINDNESS; BY IMPLICATION (TOWARDS GOD) PIETY: RARELY (BY OPPOSITION) REPROOF, OR (SUBJECT.) BEAUTY:
  - KJV - FAVOUR, GOOD DEED (-LINESS, -NESS), KINDLY, (LOVING-) KINDNESS, MERCIFUL (KINDNESS), MERCY, PITY, REPROACH, WICKED THING.
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- IT IS A NOTORIOUSLY DIFFICULT TERM FOR TRANSLATORS TO HANDLE SINCE IT HAS NO PRECISE ENGLISH EQUIVALENT, AND IT IS VARIOUSLY TRANSLATED AS “LOVING-KINDNESS,” “MERCY,” “STEADFAST LOVE,” AND “GOODNESS.”
- HESED APPEARS SOME SIXTY-SIX TIMES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ALONE, WHICH SUGGESTS ITS IMPORTANCE.
- HESED LOVE CONNOTES COVENANT FIDELITY, STEADFASTNESS, AND PERSISTENCE— ALL CHARACTERISTICS THAT MARK GOD’S ABIDING LOVE FOR HIS PEOPLE.
  - AS SCHOLAR NORMAN SNAITH DESCRIBES, “GOD’S LOVING-KINDNESS IS THAT SURE LOVE WHICH WILL NOT LET ISRAEL GO. NOT ALL ISRAEL’S PERSISTENT WAYWARDNESS COULD EVER DESTROY IT. THOUGH ISRAEL BE FAITHLESS, YET GOD REMAINS FAITHFUL STILL.”
  - GOD’S ENDURING ALLEGIANCE TO ISRAEL IS FULL OF MERCY BECAUSE THIS HESED LOVE OF HIS IS SO OFTEN “ONE-WAY.”
  - GOD SHOWERS HIS LOVE ON HIS PEOPLE, BUT SO OFTEN WE DO NOT RETURN IT IN KIND.

- THIS TRUTH IS WORTH PONDERING ON FOR A BIT.
  - THIS FAITHFUL LOVING-KINDNESS THAT PURSUES US EVEN IN THE FACE OF INDIFFERENCE, INGRATITUDE, OR REJECTION IS TRULY OTHERWORLDLY.
  - IT'S SUPERNATURAL. IT'S DIVINE.
  - THIS IS THE LOVE GOD HAS SHOWN TO US IN THE GOSPEL OF OUR SALVATION. IT'S THE GENEROUS LOVE THAT COST JESUS HIS LIFE.
- HESED LOVE INVOLVES DEEP, PERSONAL COMMITMENT—EVEN THOUGH THAT COMMITMENT TYPICALLY NARROWS THE GIVER'S PERSONAL FREEDOM.
- WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT FOR US TO “GET IT”
  - LUKE 6:36 BE MERCIFUL, JUST AS YOUR FATHER IS MERCIFUL. NIV
  - IF WE ARE GOING TO BE LIKE GOD WOULD WANT US TO BE, WE NEED UNDERSTAND AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHO AND HOW HE FUNCTIONS!

- IT'S NEVER ABSTRACT OR NEGLECTS THE PEOPLE IMMEDIATELY PRESENT IN OUR LIVES.
- IT'S COMMITTED TO RELATIONSHIP—REAL, HONEST-TO-GOODNESS CONNECTION WITH THOSE AROUND US THAT GOES WELL BEYOND A WRITTEN CHECK.
- EVEN MORE STUNNINGLY, HESED LOVE “DOES NOT LOOK AT THE FAIRNESS OF LOVE; ITS COMMITMENT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HOW THE OTHER PERSON TREATS YOU.”
- HESED, AUTHOR PAUL E. MILLER EXPLAINS, “LOVES REGARDLESS OF THE RESPONSE. IT DOES NOT DEMAND RECOGNITION OR EQUALITY. IT IS UNEVEN.”
- HESED IS DETERMINED LOVE, RESOLVED TO DO GOOD TO ANOTHER REGARDLESS OF THE COST.
- HESED IS THE NEARLY UNBELIEVABLE, TOTALLY UNDESERVED, AND ALMOST INCONCEIVABLY GENEROUS LOVE OF GOD TOWARD US—THE LOVE THAT REACHED ITS PINNACLE IN THE CROSS OF JESUS.
- HESED IS THE LOVE THAT COMPELLED JESUS TO CALVARY; THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE ATONEMENT. WHEN WE TRULY BEHOLD THIS GREAT LOVE—WHEN WE INTENTIONALLY MEDITATE ON IT—IT CAN CHANGE US.
  - IF WE CAN REALLY BEGIN TO TAKE IN OR COMPREHEND THE BREADTH, DEPTH, LENGTH, AND WIDTH OF GOD'S GENEROUS LOVE TOWARD US, WE BEGIN TO FIND POWER AND MOTIVATION TO LOVE OTHERS.
  - IT'S HOW WE SHOULD—HOW, IN THE END, WE WANT TO—RESPOND TO THAT MATCHLESS GENEROSITY.

- IT'S LIKE THE OLD HYMN BY THOMAS CHISHOLM: "GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS. . . . THY COMPASSIONS, THEY FAIL NOT. AS THOU HAST BEEN THOU FOREVER WILT BE."
- AS GOD ASKS US TO BE EVER MORE LIKE HIM, HE ASKS US TO LOOK AT HIS ENDURING FAITHFULNESS AND SHOW IT TO OTHERS.
  - TO BE STRONG AND ENDURING WHEN THE WORLD IS WEAK AND FICKLE.
  - TO LOVE WHEN IT'D BE SO MUCH EASIER TO HATE.
  - SOUND DIFFICULT? YOU BET IT IS.
  - WE MUST UNDERSTAND THIS IS WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US

## FROM THE BEGINNING:

- ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN! GENESIS 3:21 GOD CLOTHED THEM!
- GOD MAKES COVENANTS AS DECLARATIONS TO WHO HE IS!
  - **THE NOAHIC COVENANT** – GENESIS 9:11 YES, I AM CONFIRMING MY COVENANT WITH YOU. NEVER AGAIN WILL FLOODWATERS KILL ALL LIVING CREATURES; NEVER AGAIN WILL A FLOOD DESTROY THE EARTH." NLT
  - **THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT** - GENESIS 12:1-3 THE LORD HAD SAID TO ABRAM, "LEAVE YOUR NATIVE COUNTRY, YOUR RELATIVES, AND YOUR FATHER'S FAMILY, AND GO TO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU. 2 I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION. I WILL BLESS YOU AND MAKE YOU FAMOUS, AND YOU WILL BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS. 3 I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU AND CURSE THOSE WHO TREAT YOU WITH CONTEMPT. ALL THE FAMILIES ON EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOU." NLT
  - **THE MOSAIC COVENANT** – EXODUS 19:5-6 NOW IF YOU WILL OBEY ME AND KEEP MY COVENANT, YOU WILL BE MY OWN SPECIAL TREASURE FROM AMONG ALL THE PEOPLES ON EARTH; FOR ALL THE EARTH BELONGS TO ME. 6 AND YOU WILL BE MY KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, MY HOLY NATION.' THIS IS THE MESSAGE YOU MUST GIVE TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL."



- **THE DAVIDIC COVENANT** - 2 SAMUEL 7:12-16 FOR WHEN YOU DIE AND ARE BURIED WITH YOUR ANCESTORS, I WILL RAISE UP ONE OF YOUR DESCENDANTS, YOUR OWN OFFSPRING, AND I WILL MAKE HIS KINGDOM STRONG. 13 HE IS THE ONE WHO WILL BUILD A HOUSE—A TEMPLE—FOR MY NAME. AND I WILL SECURE HIS ROYAL THRONE FOREVER. 14 I WILL BE HIS FATHER, AND HE WILL BE MY SON. IF HE SINS, I WILL CORRECT AND DISCIPLINE HIM WITH THE ROD, LIKE ANY FATHER WOULD DO. 15 BUT MY FAVOR WILL NOT BE TAKEN FROM HIM AS I TOOK IT FROM SAUL, WHOM I REMOVED FROM YOUR SIGHT. 16 YOUR HOUSE AND YOUR KINGDOM WILL CONTINUE BEFORE ME FOR ALL TIME, AND YOUR THRONE WILL BE SECURE FOREVER."
- **THE NEW COVENANT** - JEREMIAH 31:31-34 "THE DAY IS COMING," SAYS THE LORD, "WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH. 32 THIS COVENANT WILL NOT BE LIKE THE ONE I MADE WITH THEIR ANCESTORS WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND AND BROUGHT THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. THEY BROKE THAT COVENANT, THOUGH I LOVED THEM AS A HUSBAND LOVES HIS WIFE," SAYS THE LORD. 33 "BUT THIS IS THE NEW COVENANT I WILL MAKE WITH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL ON THAT DAY," SAYS THE LORD. "I WILL PUT MY INSTRUCTIONS DEEP WITHIN THEM, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE. 34 AND THEY WILL NOT NEED TO TEACH THEIR NEIGHBORS, NOR WILL THEY NEED TO TEACH THEIR RELATIVES, SAYING, 'YOU SHOULD KNOW THE LORD.' FOR EVERYONE, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST, WILL KNOW ME ALREADY," SAYS THE LORD. "AND I WILL FORGIVE THEIR WICKEDNESS, AND I WILL NEVER AGAIN REMEMBER THEIR SINS." NLT

## • **GOD'S I WILL VS. MAN'S WE WILL**

- LOOK BACK AT THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT - GENESIS 12:1-3 THE LORD HAD SAID TO ABRAM, "LEAVE YOUR NATIVE COUNTRY, YOUR RELATIVES, AND YOUR FATHER'S FAMILY, AND GO TO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU. 2 I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION. I WILL BLESS YOU AND MAKE YOU FAMOUS, AND YOU WILL BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS. 3 I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU AND CURSE THOSE WHO TREAT YOU WITH CONTEMPT. ALL THE FAMILIES ON EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOU." NLT
  - **NOTICE THE NUMBER OF I WILLS!**
- IT IS INTERESTING TO LOOK JUST ONE CHAPTER EARLIER.
  - GENESIS 11:1-4 AT ONE TIME ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD SPOKE THE SAME LANGUAGE AND USED THE SAME WORDS. 2 AS THE PEOPLE MIGRATED TO THE EAST, THEY FOUND A PLAIN IN THE LAND OF BABYLONIA AND SETTLED THERE. 3 THEY BEGAN SAYING TO EACH OTHER, "LET'S MAKE BRICKS AND HARDEN THEM WITH FIRE." (IN THIS REGION BRICKS WERE USED INSTEAD OF STONE, AND TAR WAS USED FOR MORTAR.) 4 THEN THEY SAID, "COME, LET'S BUILD A GREAT CITY FOR OURSELVES WITH A TOWER THAT REACHES INTO THE SKY. THIS WILL MAKE US FAMOUS AND KEEP US FROM BEING SCATTERED ALL OVER THE WORLD." NLT

- THESE PEOPLE WERE BUILDING, OF COURSE, THE TOWER OF BABEL. BABEL IN HEBREW MEANS “GATE OF GOD,” AND IT’S PRETTY CLEAR THAT ITS BUILDERS—HAMITES, WE’RE TOLD, WHO WERE DESCENDANTS OF NOAH’S SON HAM—WERE HOPING TO GET CLOSER TO GOD, BUT ON THEIR TERMS.
- INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING A COVENANT OF GOD’S MAKING, THESE PEOPLE WANTED TO SET THEIR OWN CONDITIONS.
  - THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION—SETTING OUR OWN TERMS IN HOW WE RELATE TO GOD.
  - WE EXCEL AT MAKING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD EXCEEDINGLY COMPLICATED—JUST LIKE THOSE WHO TRIED TO BUILD THE TOWER OF BABEL.
- WE TOO ATTEMPT TO BUILD OUR OWN WAY TO GOD, EVEN THOUGH THE WHOLE POINT OF THE GOSPEL IS THAT IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO DO SO. WE CAN’T WORK OUR WAY TO GOD; THE ALMIGHTY MUST REACH DOWN TO US.
  - JOHN 14:6 JESUS TOLD HIM, “I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. NO ONE CAN COME TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME.

- JUST LOOK AT ALL THE OTHER WAYS BABEL'S TOWER-BUILDERS MISUNDERSTOOD WHO GOD WAS—MANY OF WHICH FEEL PRETTY FAMILIAR TO HOW WE ALSO MISUNDERSTAND GOD:
  - GOD WANTS PEOPLE SCATTERED ALL OVER THE EARTH. THE WORKERS DIDN'T WANT TO BE SCATTERED.
  - IN THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT IN GENESIS 12, GOD SAID HE WOULD MAKE OUR NAME GREAT. THE BUILDERS WANTED TO MAKE NAMES FOR THEMSELVES.
    - GOD'S COVENANT WITH US IS BASED ON HIS PROMISES—THE “I WILLS” IN THE PACT.
  - THE WORKERS CUT GOD OUT OF THEIR PLANS ENTIRELY, EVEN AS THEY TRIED TO BUILD A TOWER TO HIM.
  - EVEN IN THEIR SELECTION OF BUILDING MATERIALS, THE BUILDERS SEEMED TO FORSAKE GOD'S LEAD AND FOLLOW THEIR OWN.
    - THEY SPECIFICALLY USED BRICK (THEIR OWN MAN-MADE BUILDING MATERIALS) INSTEAD OF STONE (WHICH GOD MADE).
  - IT'S A TELLING DETAIL IN THE STORY—A WAY TO STRESS THAT IN BUILDING THIS TOWER TO GOD, THEY WOULDN'T RELY ON HIM ONE IOTA.
  - BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT RELIGION ITSELF IS A MAN-MADE CONSTRUCT. GOD SIMPLY DESIRES RELATIONSHIP WITH US.



God, moved by mercy, built a bridge for us.

And we, in turn, must build bridges for others.

Just like real bridges, our merciful bridges can look and feel and operate quite differently from one another, but they all have the same purpose: to get people from one place to another.

Real bridges span rivers and channels and chasms.

Our bridges of mercy cross the span over hurt and destruction, and they provide a way for those in need of mercy to get to a different, better place.

They convey people from need to enough, from danger to safety, from hate to love.

Moreover, our mercy, because it's a reflection of God himself, also brings people closer to him.

But bridges are typically long-term structures, sometimes built over decades and used for centuries or millennia.

Likewise, mercy is a process, and it can be a long, ongoing one. Just as each one of us is always in need of God's mercies, so people will be in need of ours—and sometimes for longer than we'd like.

