



SHARING SCRIPTURE

Discover • Jesus • Together

To Serve and to Save

For use: February 21 - 27

Texts: Isaiah 41; Isaiah 42:1-7; Isaiah 44:26-45:6; Isaiah 49:1-12

Jim "Mattress Mack" McIngvale is already a local folk hero in Houston, and he is adding to his legacy. During Hurricane Harvey in 2017, Jim sent his employees out to find people stranded by the flooding and bring them into his Gallery Furniture stores for shelter and safety. Now, during this year's historic winter storm in Texas, he opened his doors again to those without power and heat. Once there, the refugees found food, coffee, hot chocolate, blankets and sweatshirts in the comfort of brand-new furniture displays.

There are different levels of need, but the first question he asks is, "What can we do to help?" His philosophy is, "Rather than complain about what should have been done, let's just do things that are good for the community." He adds, "Whether they want to stay for two hours until their power gets back on, or they want to stay for two days, we're here for the community." [1]

Just as Mattress Mack demonstrates that true service brings practical, tangible help, God intended that the nation of Israel would use their blessings to serve the poor and disadvantaged. Even though they often failed in that calling, God did not abandon them. Isaiah reminded them of God's promise that, "You (Israel) are my servant; I have chosen you and have not rejected you." (Isaiah 41:9) Then God gives one of the most powerful promises in Scripture: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

God initially identified the fulfillment of that promise as an unnamed individual servant. This person, filled with God's Holy Spirit, will bring justice to all, open

the eyes of the blind, and release captives from the darkest dungeons. We see some of the other clues as to the identity of this person in Isaiah 42:1-7: He works quietly and gently, he is a teacher, and he opens up opportunities for the Gentiles to receive God's light. From our 21st century vantage point, we know that this servant is Jesus of Nazareth, the Savior of the world.

Jesus reached out to people by meeting practical, tangible needs first. He healed the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, and fed the hungry. Once He'd taken care of people's immediate, physical needs, then they were willing to hear Him address their spiritual needs. He then healed the emotionally and traumatically sick, opened the eyes of the spiritually blind, and fed those hungry for spiritual truth.

We have the privilege of partnering with God in this hands-on ministry. We don't need to travel to Palestine to walk in the steps of Jesus; rather, we walk in Jesus' steps when we minister to those in need—whether they are without heat and food in Texas, or needing a word of hope and encouragement in our own neighborhoods.

~Chuck Burkeen

[1] <https://abc13.com/mattress-mack-gallery-furniture-store-opens-jim-mcingvale-winter-storm/10344483/>

For Reflection

Connecting: Have you ever been in a desperate situation, where you were helpless to escape the situation on your own? If so, who stepped up to help you? Please share whatever details you feel comfortable revealing with your group, through your online connection if you are not meeting in-person.

Sharing: If God sent a message to a prophet today, what do you think would be the immediate, critical need addressed in that prophecy?

1. Healing the COVID virus
2. Providing financial help to those affected by the virus shutdowns
3. Warming shelters for those who are freezing due to this winter's storms
4. Encouraging those who have been slammed with an unrelenting stream of unfortunate circumstances over the past several months
5. An understanding of where we are in the timeline of this earth's history, and the Biblical truth of Christ's imminent return
6. Other:

Applying: If your church was to plan a seminar for your community, what are some ideas you have to follow Jesus' strategy of caring for their practical, immediate needs first? Rather than just providing a quick, superficial program, how much time do you think it will take to make a real, tangible difference?

Valuing: Sometimes as individuals, we can feel helpless to make a real difference in the face of so many overwhelming challenges. What is one thing you'd really like to do to help others? Contact one other member of your group and share your thoughts with each other. Pray that God will direct you and empower you both to follow through with your brainstorming to make a

difference in your world.

Other Helpful Resources

[Creative Ministry's website](#) equips you with [friendship evangelism](#), [small group](#), [community outreach](#), and [healing ministry](#) tools right at your fingertips. Our website also features [Adventist research conducted by Monte Sahlin](#), as well as [Sharing Scripture archives](#), [ScripShots](#), and [more](#). And if you're tired of staring at a screen, digital files are available for download as PDFs and to print.

We believe [CreativeMinistry.org](#) is an online library you'll want to be a part of. We'll see you there!

If you appreciate using Sharing Scripture as a resource, and you know others who may be interested, please share these newsletters with your friends. Better yet, have them personally sign up for this free resource. They can do that by calling 800.272.4664 or by emailing us at creativeministryinfo@gmail.com.

Three decades ago, we created this resource for small groups and Sabbath school classes, and it continues to bless so many people worldwide. Thank you for your continued interest in these biblical themes and what they mean to your life and those people with whom you share it.

Paul Richardson
Executive Director

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