

Let's Mobilize

Micah 6

Dr. Matt Cassidy and Mary Whitehurst – February 20, 2022

Good morning, Grace! We're just getting started. It just gets better!

We just finished a series called *Reboot*, and the idea was that we could each individually restart our lives, and even collectively as a church, maybe for the first time, or kind of restart the thing. But we're going to start thinking and living biblically in a culture that isn't particularly warm to us. And we're not going to leave the culture and isolate ourselves, but rather, we're going to live within the culture courageously.

So, let's just pretend that we're all rebooted. We're better, we're healthier, we're doing the right things, we can hear the voice of God again. Now what do we do? What do we do with the rest of our lives? How do we apply *Reboot* to the culture around us?

Here's my proposal: we bring love and justice and mercy to every person we can find, every person that we touch is in the image of God, and we bring to them that love and justice and mercy to them.

At Grace, we sincerely believe that every believer is a minister. The Bible says that. So, the question before us is actually: How is God leading you to use your gifts and your talents and your influence to bring the Gospel into the lives around you? Individually, what are we supposed to do in this time? "For such a time as this ..."

Well, you won't believe it—or maybe you will—the answer to the question is found in the older Testament. It's from the Book of Micah. And in the context of Israel's history, not too different from today, Micah is a good prophet who comes and gives us the answer to that. He tells us about God Himself, Yahweh, holding a courtroom, high court, where He's putting Israel on trial, and the rocks and the mountains and the stones are the jury. They're the witnesses to the way Israel has left the Lord and ignored Him. How so? He says that Israel's leaders have become wealthy through theft and greed, like insider trading—that sort of thing. And he says that even the religious leaders—the prophet condemns them because they are selling promises in the protection of God for a price. And the political leaders and the religious leaders have worked

together to take over the land—own the land through bribery. They are distributing justice based on your income level—towards the wealthy.

That sounds very familiar, doesn't it? And so, it's in this context where some things never change, that that's why we can go back 2,500 years and say: How do we answer this question? How should we then live?

And so, Micah comes in. He's an honorable prophet at the time. And he comes in and says that he's cut to the quick, he's feeling the condemnation from the accusations of God against Israel. And he says, *What are we to do? I mean, how do we have an audience with You? How can we enjoy You again? How do we reboot? We'll do anything You ask us to do—anything.*

And so, in Micah 6:6-7, he proposes this. He says, **“With what shall I come before Yahweh and bow down and be in the presence of the exalted God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings? Or maybe calves that are one-year old? How about I come before Yahweh with a thousand rams? Or ten thousand rivers of oil?”** And then, **“Shall I even if necessary offer my firstborn?”**

So, you can see this escalation that's taking place and gets all the way to hyperbole, where he says, *A burnt offering, people can do. Most everyone can do that. But then he says, A one-year-old calf? That's kind of for the wealthy. A thousand rams? Maybe a king? But ten thousand rivers of oil and then ultimately, the firstborn child?* He's just saying, *Look, you just name it God, I'll do it. We just don't know what to do, because we're convicted. What do we do?*

And then, Micah's answer here is a beacon of direction for all of mankind; not just for Israel, but for all of mankind. Any man or woman or child who's asking the question, How are we to live in the context of corruption and injustice and violence? How do we live our lives? We're not going to sit and be paralyzed by all of this. We can't just walk around feeling guilty, as though that were to bring us into the presence of God, or that God were to enjoy that.

Micah 6:8

God has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does Yahweh require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Instead, Micah offers one of the more magnificent series of sentences ever declared from human lips. Micah 6:8, here's what he says: That's the answer. **“God has shown you, O mortal, what is good, and what Yahweh requires of you. To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”**

Let's look closer at this. He starts off with **“God has shown you, O mortal ...”** Again, it's not just to Israel, but to all mortal men. And he's saying that man is subservient to God. **“God has shown you, O mortal ...”** He has shown you. There's no mystery here. Don't say that you don't know. Don't act like this hasn't already been placed in your souls as what we would call natural law. This isn't an echo from Eden before. This is not lost in our fall. We know this. We know this intuitively.

Act Justly

And he says we need to do these three things. You know this. This is what the Lord declares. Act justly. The word “justly” there, in the context of the older Testament, is used and applied two different ways. One is in the context of retribution justice. This means punishing wrongdoing. We would say justice is that the punishment needs to fit the crime. In the older Testament, they said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Now that phrase is often misunderstood. It sounds like it's mean. But it's actually saying, Look, the punishment should fit the crime. If you intentionally stole ten dollars from someone, then the punishment should be paying the ten dollars back and maybe a fine so that you might learn your lesson. But paying that back gives dignity to the thief. I've paid my debts.

Injustice is sending that person to jail for two years. The idea here is there's this internal rage I hope that we all feel when we read stories about someone committing a heinous, violent crime against a fellow human being and getting zero time in jail, because, like the old '60s song says, “You're a senator's son.”

Meanwhile you have someone being sentenced to ten years of jail because they are in possession of a small amount of an illegal substance that's legal in four states. But often, because of color of skin, or whatever the circumstance might be, that person gets ten years and this person gets limited time. That rage inside of us is the idea is that we know, "O mortals," what justice looks like. And that's not justice.

There's another kind of justice in the Old Testament, and it means restorative justice. When that's applied, it means that we're the advocates for the oppressed and the vulnerable, when someone steps in to protect those who can't protect themselves. We're to act as the big brother to the little brother that can't help himself. And so, in the Bible again and again, you'll see Yahweh citing these particular groups. He'll talk about the widows and the orphans and the aliens and the poor, because they don't have power.

But the question is, Why does God have to say this? Why do we have to have this restorative justice commanded of us, and how do we know this within us? And here's why. Because in the heart of every son of Adam and daughter of Eve is a bully. Each of us has a bully. And bullies do what bullies do best. We have the tendency of seeking out the weakest or someone who's not like us, and who is for some reason a threat to us, and as bullies we pounce on that vulnerability. And justice is the big brother that bridles the bully within us. And sometimes that has to be someone on the outside. Sometimes that has to be a follower of Yahweh who says, *I'm not going to allow this to happen*. We live in a country and a world, a state, a city, a neighborhood, where injustice takes place, sometimes on a large scale, sometimes in an incidental one. And Micah says, *You do justice. You're an agent of truth and fairness in these things*. We can't sit back and just be overwhelmed by the panoramic view of injustice. He says you need to step in and pray or vote or get involved in your school or your office or your neighborhood or your living room and be the big brother that takes care of the person who can't take care of themselves. He says you are to be the voice of those who don't have a voice. And you are to be the strength for those who are weak. He says that what we're to do.

We can absolutely have a conviction about that. How we do that is probably just a belief, and that's where sometimes we can get into disagreements. But the conviction is this, because it says so, it is written in our hearts. God has told us, "O mortals," to do justice. "**Act justly ...**"

Love Mercy

The second one is to love mercy. And mercy is like a million-dollar word. Actually, there's no price to put on this word "mercy." The word in Hebrew is *hesed*. *Hesed* is a glorious word. It means "kindness, mercy, loyalty." Loyalty is usually attached to this because it is this idea of a mercy that you can count on. Mercy sounds like a gentle word, a polite word. It's the pet mouse in your child's room in a cage. And if this mouse were to roar, it would rattle the foundations of the nation's capital. That's how powerful this word is. "**Love mercy**"—it is a high calling and it is a costly commitment. *Hesed* means costly, selfless, loyal mercy expressed in actions. Mercy, *hesed*, is lending someone else your strength instead of reminding them of their weakness. That's granting mercy.

And mercy has power. It has power to absolutely alter and change an identity. When a person receives *hesed*, when he receives the mercy that we have the ability to give, they're rearranged. They're changed people. We'll say here that grace transforms. *Hesed* and mercy are very close synonyms to grace. It means gift. And has the power of soul change. That's why people will use that Hebrew word, *hesed*, and they'll monogram it on their clothing. They'll wear it as jewelry. They will tattoo it on their bodies, because they are recipients of *hesed* and they are changed. And the penultimate exhibit of *hesed* is the cross. That's mercy. That's the mercy of God given to us. And because of that, people will embroider that onto their clothing—a cross. They will wear jewelry with a cross on it. I have one right here on my ring. Some people will tattoo it on their skin, because the mercy of God literally changed the nature of their soul. That's the power of mercy. "**Love mercy ...**"

I want to tell you a story that I've told before. It's from John Ortberg, but it's worth repeating. It's the story of John Gilbert. He's from the little town of Paradise, California, and when he was five years old he was diagnosed with the worst form of multiple sclerosis. This is a devastating disease that is going to ravage this young boy and be progressively cruel in his life. Each year he would experience some great loss as it attacked every muscle in his body. One year he lost the ability to run and he couldn't play with his friends anymore. Soon after that he lost his ability to even walk, and he would just watch his friends play from the wheelchair. He worked his way down to the place where, in his mid-twenties, all he could move was his right hand. And he used that to write his autobiography, just clicking on a mouse, one letter at a time.

In the story of his life, he talks about how difficult it was for him in junior high. It's difficult for everyone in junior high, but especially John. Because of his disabilities, he was constantly bullied and humiliated. And it got to the point where he begged his mom to not make him go to school, because he was afraid. There was no one there to be his big brother. There was no one there to do justice or to love mercy in his case.

Not all of his life was that way. There was a year when he became the ambassador for multiple sclerosis for the state of California. And that came with some celebrations. He and his mother were flown to the capital and brought into the governor's mansion. It was trick-or-treat for him, unlimited candy, thanks to the governor. And then that night they had a fundraiser, and the NFL (National Football League) was sponsoring that fundraiser. And John and his mother were at the head table. And he got to meet some NFL Super Bowl winners, and they took their giant Super Bowl rings, and they would fit over John's hand and wrist. And he would wear them on his forearm.

When it was time for the auction to get started—they were raising money—there was one particular item that caught John's eye, and it was a basketball that was signed by the Sacramento Kings. John liked basketball. And so, when that item was up for auction, he shot up his hand. And no sooner did his hand go up than his hand went down. The rocket goes up, the rocket crashes. His mom grabbed his hand and said, "We can't bid on this."

But the people in the audience saw that John wanted that ball. He loved that basketball. And so, the bidding just kept going. And it was not the most valuable item that was going to be auctioned, but the amount of the bids was astounding. And then a man stands up and offers an amount that stunned the audience into silence. And then the audience began to applaud. And when that man walked up on the stage to get his basketball, he didn't return to his seat. He walked down the table and gave that basketball to that little boy with those tiny little hands. And those hands would never dribble that basketball down a court. And they would never pass that basketball to a friend on a fast break or never have the strength to shoot that basketball into a goal. He just watched it in his hands. And the entire room was levelled. *They were all undone*, he writes in his biography. Every heart was melted. Women cried and men fought back tears. Some of those big NFL players sobbed like young children.

Have you bought a basketball for anyone lately? We have so much, you and I. We own so many things. Some of us even have a storage facility that we rent, because we have so many

things we can't keep them in a big house. We have to put them over here. Have you bought a basketball for anyone lately? Love mercy. It will cost you.

It could be something simple, though. You could just read to a child. Go to one of the elementary schools in our area and just read to an elementary school student and change his life. There are so many ways to love mercy. We have a web page dedicated to that. It's called "Mobilize." You can go on our website—I think it's under "Service" and "Mobilize", and there are these ministries around the city and around the world that we think are great investments of your energy and your wealth, whatever it might be. There are ways to love mercy.

Walk Humbly

The Lord requires us to act justly and to love mercy. And then, finally, it says to walk humbly with our Lord. That word "humble" is the first time it's used in the Old Testament. It is the only time it's used in the Old Testament. It's hard to know if they even knew what the world meant. Because after this word is written, the Greeks and then the Romans used the word as an insult. Humility was a vice, not a virtue.

So, how are we to live this way? It's for the weak, it's for the people who can't be proud about anything. **"To walk humbly with our Lord ..."**—there's the key— **"the Lord."** Yahweh. We are in His image, and Yahweh is humble. Yahweh is all powerful, and what does He use his all power to do, but to stoop down to our level. Jesus, who was in the very form of God, humbled Himself to become a man, and humbled Himself to the point of death. And what kind of death? The single most humiliating death that the Romans could imagine. Jesus, with all of His power, used His power to humble Himself. We are to be that. He changed the very meaning of that word. To walk humbly means to pray the prayer sincerely before God. **"God, search my heart and know me. See if you can find any pride in me that is detestable to You."**

Is there anything I won't do because it's unbecoming of me? It might be embarrassing to me. It is lower than who I am. *Do you know who I am? I shouldn't be having to do that.* That's not walking humbly with the humble Yahweh.

I'll bet I've heard a dozen times at pastors' conferences—it goes something like this. When a business leader comes to a pastor and says "I'd like to get involved at the church," quite often a pastor will provide them with a menial task. A business leader, a CEO, a man or woman that has influence and attributes, and they'll make them a greeter, or have them work in the

children's ministry, instead of running a relief project or some kind of citywide movement. Why do pastors do such things? And I completely understand the under-utilization of gifts and influence. Okay, let's put that over there for a second. But what if, maybe, maybe, what a leader CEO power person needs most to become like Christ in all of life is to serve in any capacity, even if it's to sit on the floor with toddlers on a Sunday morning to serve the church of Jesus Christ.

I mean, think about it like a general that hasn't made his own coffee in years, and when he walks across the military campus, his stars pop everyone into attention, and they demand respect, and people salute him. Do you think he needs another opportunity to lead, or do you think what would be better for his soul would be to change diapers for an hour and a half? Right?

C. S. Lewis knew the cancerous, poisonous effects of success on the human soul. And he was afraid of it for his own sake. And he wanted to walk humbly with his God, who's humble. And so, he had at least two disciplines that I know of. And one was that he would go to mass every single day. And the other was that he would respond to every child's letter to him. Lewis felt like if it ever came to a point where he was too important to answer a child's letter, then he was already a sick soul. He knew that he needed to work on walking humbly before God.

Summary

What does the Lord Yahweh God expect of us? We should know this ... to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him. It is the purpose of the entire human existence. It is as image bearers of God that this is what we are to do. We're supposed to accept these attributes and to give this to every man, woman, and child, every tribe, every color, every race, every income level. We get to give this out. And if you just imagine what it would be like if just a single church was dedicated to this, or the Church. What would happen? What would happen in the world? How would nations be altered, or even just a city, if a group of people said, *I'm going to know what is intuitively left in my soul?* **“O mortal ... act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”**

You don't have to imagine. All you have to do is turn the page. Micah 7 says this is what happens: **“And then the nations will see and be ashamed ... They will come trembling out of their dens and turn in fear to Yahweh our God and will be afraid of Yahweh. Who is a God**

like You, who pardons sin and forgives transgression? You will again have compassion on us and hurl our iniquities into the depths of the sea.”

The world could be restored if the world just had a lighthouse. And my prayer is that we would be that lighthouse.

Here’s how I’d like to end. Would you join me by standing, and we’re just going to read Micah 6:8. And let it be a commitment to each and every one of us. Let’s do this as a church, please, by all means. Stand—let’s give this the respect that it deserves. Let’s read this together. Are you ready, you at home? You can stand too. Here we go ... ready? Micah 6:8

“God has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does Yahweh require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” Amen.

[Prayer]

Lord, I’d ask that Your Spirit would allow us to open our eyes to see these opportunities before us, that we would pursue humility before You, so that we might be courageous enough to be the person who brings justice to an unjust circumstance and situation; that we would have the courage and the insight to know how to love mercifully, no matter the cost to us; that we would humbly desire to serve You and Your church in every possible way that we can.

Lord, I’d ask that You would give us an attribute of responding to Your Spirit’s drawing us to these actions of what it means to be a saint and what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. We enjoy that. We look forward to that. And we know that this is according to Your will, so we pray with expectation that You would answer this prayer. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Interview with Director of The Source, Mary Whitehurst

Matt Cassidy: Please have a seat. It just gets better. So, I would like Mary to join us. This is Mary Whitehurst. She is the director of The Source here in Austin, and we’ve been friends with them for years now. And she’s going to tell us a little bit about what’s going on at The Source, past, present, and future. The past has been rough. Let’s go all the way back to 2020 and the COVID thing and all that ... anyway ... Say hello to Mary first.

Mary Whitehurst : Good morning! Is it still morning? For two more minutes it's still morning. Good morning, Grace. It's so good to be with you all. Thank you all so much.

So, yeah, I don't know how you guys feel, but there are days when I can't actually believe we made it to 2022, because of how this journey has been for all of us the last two years. I'm sure many of you remember in March of 2020 when COVID hit Austin. And we were then forced to shelter in place. We had to close the clinic. And that was a little bit challenging. We had just rebranded as The Source. We had just started to launch our clinical service and get ready for that, and we had to close.

But our team, really with God's grace and guidance, was able to pivot really quickly, and we started offering virtual services so that we could still continue to help the women that were in need that were coming to us. And then very quickly after that, just two weeks later, we were able to get back in the clinic. Because in the work that we do with women who are dealing with unplanned pregnancies in particular, the pregnancy test to confirm their pregnancy as well as the ultrasound actually give them an opportunity to see their baby. And that's so pivotal in that decision-making process. So, we did our best to get back into the clinic as soon as we could.

And then we were able to move forward with launching clinical services. Now we are restored and back to regular operating hours, we have a full clinical team that are not only offering preventative gynecological care, but also the same pregnancy resource support and options counseling that we've always had.

So, we have survived. And now that we've gotten past this surge that we've seen in Omicron, things are starting to pick up again as well.

And so, that's 2020. And then also, when we're talking about what has happened over the last couple of years, we had a second annual Bags and Brew fundraiser where Grace Covenant showed up in a big way (at that particular fundraiser). And that's an opportunity for us to get together with people who love The Source and who are wanting to learn more about us. And we had a cornhole tournament.

Past



Matt: It's a fun-raiser... like, it was fun.

Mary: It was a fun fundraiser, right? It was very Austin and very fun, and just a great laidback way for people to get together. And who won this year, Pastor Matt?

Matt: I don't know ... I don't know who won, but I think they won last year too.

Mary: They did.



Matt: There it is ... yeah!

Mary: So, the Grace Covenant team ...

Matt: Maurice and Lawless team won again. I think we've won every time we've ever played. The greatest of all time!!!

Mary: Pretty much. Reigning champions. And we'll be coming back in 2022 ...

Matt: Let's not over-celebrate, but we did win twice, so ... anyway.

Mary: For sure.

Matt: There's probably more to this ... what else happened?

Mary: So, one of the things that has been really amazing, even in the short time that I've been with The Source, and knowing the history that we have with Grace Covenant, is that over the

years we have provided recovery Bible studies, particularly for abortion recovery. And Grace has long partnered with us, not only offering the study to your congregation, but a couple of years ago your women's ministry just took the lead and started offering that study here for women who are part of this church, but also extending it to some of our patients as well.

And so, I reached out to Pastor Melissa and asked her, "Can you just talk to some of the women who just went through *Forgiven and Set Free* and see how that study has affected their lives?" And they shared some amazing testimonies with us.

This is kind of an epidemic in some ways. One in three women have had an abortion, which means that there are churches all over Austin, all over the country, who are filled with women who are filled with the shame of that secret and not being able to heal from that. So, for you all to say that this is important, that these women matter, and wanting to be able to meet them where they are and offer that healing and recovery is amazing.

So, thank you all for your continued partnership and commitment to that area of ministry.

Matt: Right. And we love the opportunity to allow women from all over the city, and to train other people to have that Bible study, since some women hold onto that for literally decades.

Mary: For sure. It is.

Matt: And it's so freeing. And then in July we had a collection for you guys like we have never had before.

Mary: It was absolutely mind-blowing. I still can't believe how absolutely outrageously generous you all were. For me, this is just an amazing opportunity to come back after we were here in July and to say that ...

Matt: \$161,000 dollars.

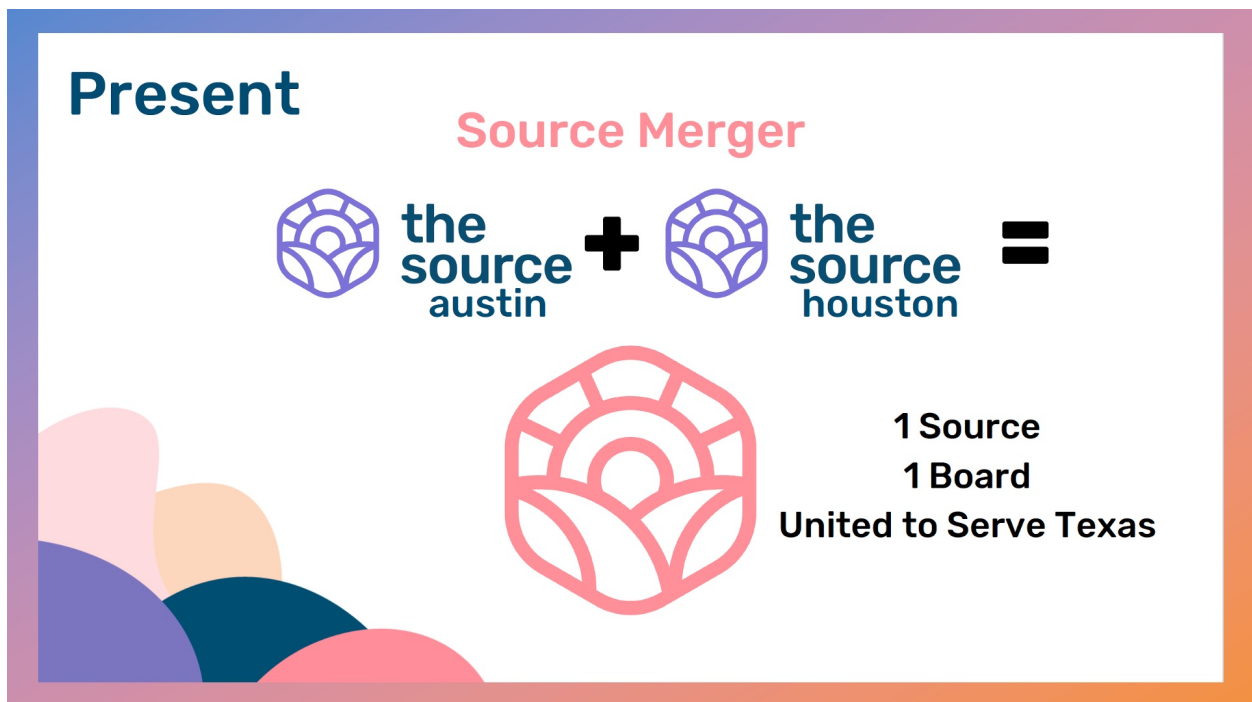
Mary: Yes, thank you, Grace! We were just completely blown away by how generous you all have been. And last year was a record-breaking giving that you all had for us. So, thank you all

so much for that. You have no idea how many lives are being touched and how that is sustaining and helping us to grow the ministry. So, thank you for partnering with us in that way.

Matt: I think also, from a leadership standpoint, having resources like that moves you from being *Oh no, I'm afraid about how we're going to make ends meet* to being ambitious about what your future looks like. And that was a major swing, because of the generosity of our church. So, we're grateful for that.

How are things in the present? What's happening?

Mary: So, one of the exciting that has happened is that in October of last year, we actually came alongside another clinic that we'd already partnered with. When we rebranded as The Source, we tried to come alongside and partner with other organizations that were like-minded. But after making it through COVID and realizing that there are just a lot of ups and downs and challenges, The Source in Houston—their board and our board got together and said, “We would be so much stronger together as one organization under one board, really united to be able to lay a blueprint down that will help us to scale across Texas.”



The vision for The Source is that every woman in Texas will have access to life-affirming, reproductive health and pregnancy care. And that's what we're setting the foundation

for with this merger. So, we have one clinic here in Austin. We have two clinic locations in Houston that are doing amazing work. And their team there has just been amazing to work with. We are integrating, we are getting best practices, which has been one of the amazing things about coming alongside other people who are like-minded and figuring out how we do this in a way that nobody else has done it before, so that we can come into a space and really help women where they're needing it the most.

Matt: Right. One of the things that I am particularly fond of with The Source is the sexual purity education that we bring to the public school system in junior high and high school. And Houston didn't have that, so you're helping them by exporting that ability, and teaching them how to get into the school districts for preventative care.

Mary: Yes, exactly. So, for over thirty years we've had the Lifeguard program in schools around Austin. So, this is going to give us the opportunity to take that program into Houston as well.

Matt: That's one of the largest in America, so, wow ... So what does the future look like?

Mary: The future is very bright. We have been talking and planning for several months now, trying to figure out how we can reach more women, even as we're trying to grow and have more locations. We know there are a lot of women across the state that need support right now. And so, last week we were able to launch our virtual clinic, which is virtual support for women anywhere in the state of Texas. We are focusing some marketing in Lubbock, we'll be focusing in West Texas and down in the Valley, so that any woman who is experiencing an unplanned pregnancy and not sure what to do, what resources there are available in her area, we can be that warm voice on the other side of the line, helping her to know that everything is okay, that she doesn't have to go through this by herself.

Future

Virtual CLINIC



And then we are creating a network of preferred providers in areas around the state so that we can also say, “Hey, there’s a doctor in your area, there’s a clinic in your area, that can support you and that also will affirm you in your decision to move forward with your pregnancy.”

Matt: Wow, yeah, taking it to the people. And what’s another way we’re taking it to the people?

Mary: Um-hmm. So, you guys have probably seen our big pink bus outside, our mobile unit. That was something that we ventured into before the pandemic. We bought an old RV, we renovated it, and we said, “We’re going to try to get into the community.” But sometimes when you make old things pretty, they don’t necessarily work the way that you want them to work.

Matt: It’s too old!

Mary: Yes. And so, we got out into the community in 2021 and we started serving women, but we just kept having all these issues with maintenance with the mobile unit. And we had this super-gracious supporter come to us and say, “What would it take to just replace this, to give you guys something that’s brand new, state of the art, built to do what you’re trying to do?” That

donor stepped up at the end of the year and has provided for us to get a brand-new mobile unit this year.



And so, we have some renderings from the design team we're working with, an amazing organization out of North Carolina. This is what they do—they equip ministries like ours to be able to go where the people are, right? The Bible tells us to go. So, we want to go into the communities where people need us, because not everyone can get to our clinic. And we want to be able to go. Maybe if we can be at the community center that's two blocks from her house, it's a little bit easier for her to come get the gynecological care or the pregnancy care that she needs.

Matt: How do we help? How can we serve you guys?

Mary: Well, you all have been absolutely amazing partners over the years. So many people came up to me after the last service, a couple prayed over me, and I know that we have so many prayer warriors in this congregation. So, thank you for that, and please continue to pray for us. You all have always been so tremendously and outrageously generous, and that continues to help us further the mission. I'm still asking you to continue to partner with us there.

But we are finally in a stage, after getting past a lot of the surges with all the COVID, that we are re-engaging the volunteers. And we've always had such great volunteer support from

Grace. So, we're looking for volunteers to work at our Bible studies, to lead those; to help with our education classes; to walk alongside our moms and our dads, because we're trying to do mentoring with our dads as well.

And when I talk to our team, the women who are in the trenches and working with these women every day, the thing that they say is always the thing that kind of tips a woman into that space of saying, "Hey, maybe I can do this," is her having support. And so, that's what we're trying to do—coming alongside these women and supporting them, and we need help with that.

And what I love so much about when we were here in July, Pastor Matt, is that you talked about how as believers we can really show and honor our sanctity, how we honor the sanctity of human life, by creating safe spaces, so that when people in our lives come to us and say, "This happened and I'm pregnant, and now I don't know what to do," that they know that this is a place they can come for support with people who will love on them.

And we had an amazing example of that. Right before Christmas, we had a young couple in their twenties—they were twenty years old—come to us, and they were very determined to terminate. This was not part of their plan. They were believers, which happens quite a bit. And we were trying to talk through that process with them, but they were determined this was not what they wanted.

But their families came alongside them over Christmas. Something happened and their hearts changed. And they came back to us in January and were able to see their baby for the first time and have decided to parent. So, they're going to have their little one. And they're going to engage in our pregnancy and parenting classes. They're going to have mentors through The Source as well.

So, the support that we're able to provide, not only to the women who are coming to us in trouble, but also, like you said, being in the schools, helping empower youth to make better choices and decisions, walking with women with their post-abortion recovery ... this is just an amazing thing that God has done and that we get to do with Him.

Matt: Oh, Mary ... so much to think about. So, two ways to apply. One is to go directly to their website and you can see those opportunities to volunteer and to give. Another way to do that is go to our website, and under our "Giving" there's a drop-down for The Source. And you can give that way through the Realm system that we already have set up. You can go out to the lobby

and we have envelopes for you to take home, or you can write a check right then and there, write it to The Source.

But let's do another year of giving crazy generously to The Source. I love, we love, Grace loves The Source for all that they do. And I want to just say it's conditional. It's conditional. If there's a better organization that's doing more for a woman that's in an unplanned pregnancy, then we will join them. But here's what The Source does and why we've been so attracted to them: because they answer the questions: "Well, what about ...?" And you hear them all the time.

"Well, what about prevention?" Well, we've had this thing going now for decades for prevention and about the sanctity and the sacredness of sex, and how to postpone that, and you don't have to get in this place.

And the, "What if we're involved in that, how do we get help?" Well, The Source does that.

"What if I'm considering an abortion?" We help that.

"What if I had an abortion ... after the abortion?" We have help for men and women dealing with a decision that they made that they regret.

So, it's the whole spectrum that does this.

And now, what about "But I can't get to you." Well, we're coming to you. You can call us on the phone and we'll bring a bus to your neighborhood. It's a strategic, ambitious, insightful and creative organization that practices mercy, that loves giving mercy.

So, here's my plea to everyone. Write a check for an amount that you're embarrassed about, and just see what happens. Maybe like last year ... let's do that.

But right now, we'll pray. We'll close our time in prayer and we have one more song to sing, and their bus is outside and the Team Source is all around our campus. They have a table on this side of our lobby. And there are also some people in front of that with the new designs for the new van that's coming soon.

But right now, let's pray, okay?

Mary: Thank you.

Lord Jesus, we are grateful for Mary and The Source and the history that we have with this organization, how creative and ambitious and vision-driven they are. And I'd ask that You would continue to bless them. I know the last few years have been an onslaught of physical and spiritual and emotional attacks, and I'd ask, Lord, that You'd give them grace and mercy and rest; that You would rejuvenate the leadership in everyone involved in that.

Lord, I'd ask that You continue to bless the ministry. I know in our culture today this is life and death. This is souls that are eternal. So, protect them and allow them to go through open doors that You are opening. Make this an Exodus experience where we just continue to hear stories about You defeating idols and gods, because we can't. But we can walk through. We can walk through walls of water that You've provided for us. So, Lord, I'd ask that You would give those stories to us, that You would bless this ministry and keep it strong and safe and out there.

Lord, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Mary: Amen

Matt: Thank you, Mary, for coming.