

SPEAKER: Rusty Miller

DATE: May 25, 2025

SERIES: Upside Down

Sermon Title

“Upside Down Devotion”

Introduction

This week, we continued our series called “**Upside Down**”. Throughout this series, we are unpacking the things Jesus taught that at first glance are not just counter-cultural, but seemingly counterintuitive. Much of what Jesus said seems backwards and confusing and it's easy for us to write those off as things we cannot apply to our lives. But when we actually see the truth of what Jesus said and see what happens when we put those things into practice, we notice that letting Jesus turn our world **Upside Down** brings about so many great things that God wants for us. To get started this week, answer this icebreaker question with your group:

- Share a time when you experienced a meaningful moment of connection with God through a simple act of kindness or generosity.

Seek the Word

Read Matthew 6:1-4 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- What does Jesus say about the attitude we should have when we give?
- How does the concept of giving in secret challenge our natural inclinations for recognition and approval? What steps can you take to cultivate a heart of humility in your acts of generosity?

Read Matthew 6:5-8 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- In Jesus' teaching on prayer, how does He contrast the way hypocrites pray with the way that He wants us to pray?
- Consider the warning against "babbling like pagans." How can you ensure that your prayers are meaningful and heartfelt rather than repetitive or ritualistic?

Read Matthew 6:16-18 aloud, then answer the questions below:

- According to Jesus, what is the purpose of fasting, and how should it be practiced?
- Fasting is described as a way to focus on God. What are some distractions in your life that you might need to set aside to deepen your spiritual focus?

Going Deeper

- Consider your own spiritual practices and devotion. Are there areas where you might be seeking the approval of others rather than focusing on your relationship with God, and if so what are they? How can you realign your heart to focus fully on God?

Talk About It

- When you hear mentions of spiritual disciplines and practices, does your mind usually go to “action-adjustment” or to deepening your relationship with God? Why do you think that is?
- How does the concept of an “audience of one” change the way you view your daily walk with Jesus?
- Take some time sharing what you think it means to be “devoted” to Christ, both in faith and in how you live. What would look different in your life if you pursued devotion to Christ through consistent engagement in spiritual disciplines like giving, prayer, and fasting?

Wrap Up

Reminder: Jesus calls us to practice our spiritual disciplines—things like giving, praying, and fasting—with a heart focused on God, not on the approval of others. Our relationship with God deepens when we engage in these practices sincerely and privately. In the world around us, devotion is measured by flash and pomp, by how many people can see how much you “care” about something. But Jesus came and turned that **Upside Down** by refocusing us on the only audience we strive to live for— God.

Challenge for the Week: Be Devoted through Spiritual Disciplines

Choose one spiritual discipline— giving, praying, or fasting— to focus on this week. Set a specific goal for how you will practice it in a way that honors God and strengthens your relationship with Him. Ask your group for help in keeping you accountable and focused on God more than the approval or acclaim of others.

Prayer: Close your group time by praying for each other to have the courage and wisdom to practice spiritual disciplines with sincerity. Ask God to help each member of the group grow closer to Him and to find joy in these practices. Pray for the strength to resist the temptation to seek approval from others and to focus on pleasing God alone.