

Lucado: 'Don't Settle for Wimpy Grace'

Max Lucado has appeared on every major national best-seller list, including *Publishers Weekly*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, Evangelical Christian Publishers Association and Christian Booksellers Association. He has been writing for nearly 25 years, and has sold more than 100 million products—including 80 million books. Charisma News recently sat down with Lucado to discuss his latest book, *Grace*, available next Tuesday, and his Christmas project, *In the Manger*, which released last month. He also shares his thoughts on what is happening right now in the church and in the nation.

Charisma News: Your new book, *Grace*, is fascinating. I guess the cover says it all, doesn't it? "More than we deserve, greater than we imagine."

Lucado: This book came out of a conviction that most of us, myself included, tend to settle for a wimpy grace. For many people, it's been a long time since grace was really amazing. I wanted to dig a little deeper into the teaching of grace. To say that you're going to write a book on grace is like saying you're going to put the ocean in a thimble. It's not going to happen. I wanted to focus on what happens when grace really happens, when I really receive God's grace. What difference does it make in my life? That's the question that this book tries to answer.

Charisma News: It seems like grace is something that we readily receive from God, but giving it, at times, is very difficult, isn't it?

Lucado: I think a sign that we've really received grace is that we're willing to give it. There is something that happens

in us when we receive grace. There is the classic story of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. After He washed their feet, His command was that you are to do the same to others. The principle is that as we let Christ wash the dirt and grime off of the ugly parts of our lives, the natural consequence of grace received is a grace given. You don't have to force it; you don't have to sit through a seminar to learn how to do it. It's something that is a natural consequence of receiving grace.

Charisma News: You dedicated this book to your wife. So, has she shown you a lot of grace in 30 years of marriage?

Lucado: You know you've written a lot of books—I think I've written 28 or 29—when you're circling back and dedicating a book to your wife for the second time. It is coming out on our 30th wedding anniversary. That's what made it a great gift. And yes, she's given great grace to me.

Charisma News: What is the idea behind the Scriptures and the quotes at the beginning of each chapter?

Lucado: Those are simply to help people who are trying to dig deeper on the topic of grace. **Pastors** especially appreciate isolated quotes that give an accurate summary of the main message of that chapter.

Charisma News: God's grace is never-ending, isn't it?

Lucado: I was 10 before I ever saw an ocean. What struck me when my dad took my brother and I to California and we saw an ocean for the first time was that the waves just kept coming. Nobody had ever explained to me that the way an ocean works is that it just has this tidal consistency. They just kept coming. I think grace is like that; it just keeps coming. It never stops; it's one breaker after another. To really understand God's grace is to allow yourself to be drenched—not just occasionally forgiven, but constantly forgiven—and not just to trust what Christ did on the cross but to trust Him

as to what He does in our hearts right now.

Charisma News: Talk about *In the Manger*, your Christmas project. This is a compilation of text from some of your past works, isn't it?

Lucado: Exactly. Christmas and the Advent and the Incarnation of Christ have always been a favorite subject of mine. I guess it is for all Christians. It's just the whole idea of God becoming flesh and living on the planet and bringing the message of salvation. It's the heart and core of our whole faith. Any opportunity we have to put a message in the conversation of what makes **Christmas** what it is, we need to take advantage of that.

Charisma News: What was the purpose of putting these together? Had you done anything like this before, and had you done a Christmas project previously?

Lucado: I think the third book I ever wrote is considered a Christmas project. It was called *God Came Near*. It covered more than just the Incarnation. It was primarily about the coming of Christ. I've actually even done some fiction works throughout the years. I've written three different fiction books—novelas I call them—and all of them were about the coming of Christ and about the importance of thinking about Jesus during the **Christmas season**. During Christmas, I think all of us are looking for something accessible and that we can rely on for some good inspiration. I'm not a newcomer to the discussion, but this one is a good tool because it is a collection of Christmas thoughts from all of the books that I've written.

Charisma News: This is a very crucial time for the country right now. What are your thoughts about what's happening with the country, and with the church?

Lucado: We have a prayer initiative ourselves that is a 40-days-of-prayer deal leading up to the **presidential election**.

I'm like other folks in that I'm really concerned about the morality of our country, about the difficulty in maintaining marriages, the increasing addiction to pornography. I'm afraid it's really going to take its toll on us.

But, unlike some Christians, I'm not anxious about it. I really trust in the sovereignty of God. Nations come and nations go. But, God's hand and his kingdom never change. I pray for the United States to be a beacon of light and a greenhouse for citizens for centuries to come. I don't know what God's plan is for our country. But I do know what God's plan is for His kingdom.

Our job during difficult times like this is to **pray**. That was the command of Paul to Timothy. There are those among us who are gifted in the area of political service and they can even do more. But, at the minimum, every Christian should be daily praying for God's will to be done in the presidential election. Regardless of how a person feels about the president we have now, it's our privilege and honor to pray for him, his wife, the vice president. Ultimately, God is the one who changes the hearts of rulers.

Charisma News: Can we see another Great Awakening in America?

Lucado: To see a **revival** come, that would just be splendid. I'm optimistic. The darker the days, the brighter the light. That's the principle. As the morality of our country grows darker, then the testimony of Christians hopefully will shine brighter by contrast.

Charisma News: You've obviously been pretty busy lately. But are there any other projects in the works for you right now?

Lucado: I'm always working on something. I just finished a book for 2013 on the life of Joseph called *You'll Get Through This*. Right now, I'm working on a book for 2014 on prayer. I do a book a year. I preach six months out of the year. Every year I write at least one, maybe two or three children's

books. I stay pretty busy with all of it. I love the balance because now I'm a teaching pastor at the church and that means I'm not the senior pastor. I was for 22 years. Now I don't have to do the budget means, I don't have to head up the staff. I just show up when it's my turn to preach and ask the Lord to keep me prepared.