

**April 26, 2020**

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**LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE**

**Part 2 – Bless This Mess**

**Welcome to the messiest place at my house.** The garage! Right now, Gail is not excited about you seeing our mess. When I told her, I was going to film this Sunday's message from the garage she said, "oh good, you're going to clean the garage." **Nope.** If I open the garage and bring company through the garage and into house, **she is not happy.** 😊

**We all have mess in our lives.** If you've got kids at home during this time you are probably experiencing some messes of epic proportions. Some of you might agree with the sign ...

**Slide** Sorry about the mess but **we live here.**

Do you have a place in your house that compared to everything else, **it's kind of messy?** A closet, a room, a junk drawer, the attic, your garage? Some of you have been taking on projects during this stay at home time and **you've made a mess.**

I know some of you are like **those mask making heroes** we just saw and you are thinking I'm just creative and you know what that means ...

**Slide** Creative people don't have messes ... they have ideas lying around everywhere.

**We all have messiness in our lives** and at times like this, in seasons where we are under stress, increased anxiety and worries ... well let's just say our messes are more visible and some of them more painful.

**Messes are a part of life and we all have them and we all make them.**

Mess originally referred to **food** and **people** eating it. A food plopped on a plate, disordered, offensive, unpleasant slop. **Kind of like eating in the mess hall when I was in the military.**

But most of us understand mess as ...

**Slide** **Mess** - a disordered, untidy, offensive, or unpleasant state or condition

**Some of you this morning have made a mess.** You've made a mess in your marriage, a mess of your finances, a mess with your kids, **maybe you have made a mess of your relationship with God.**

**Slide** I know a **mess** when I see one because I **am** one!

**Or certainly have been one!** King David was a mess and acknowledged it to the only one who could do anything about it. In the Message translation ...

**Slide** *And me? **I'm a mess.** I'm nothing and have nothing: make something of me. You can do it; you've got what it takes - but God, don't put it off.* Psalm 40:17 (The Message)

**But let's be honest.** Our messes create anxiety, worry, stress, and even shame ... and what do you do with messes ... **well you either hide them, clean them up or just live with it.** You've heard the expression, "sweep it under the rug." The problem is when what's under the rug is so big that you trip over it.

**Slide** Don't let your **mess** get in the way of God's **message**.

Shame is one of those messages that accompanies a mess because most of us don't want others to see the mess. They will say we are hypocrites; we need to get our own house in order, keep it to yourself.

**For that matter** ... do you want to see or get involved in the mess of others?

**Life is messy.** For some of us, **that scares us to no end.** We don't know what to say, what to do, how to engage, or how to help. **We step into neighboring,** loving where we live tentatively, secretly hoping it will not be messy. We want good friends, loving community, and easy, comfortable, enjoyable conversations. And at first that's probably what we get. **But as we love where we live,** as we grow deeper in our friendships and deeper in our capacity for love, concern, compassion for others we will find, make, discover, smell the mess.

**Slide** *People are messy; therefore, relationships will be messy. Don't be surprised by messiness.* Tim Keller

**Messes scare us because we have no quick fixes for the deep wounds we and others face:** depression, anxiety, eating disorders, broken relationships, miscarriage, loneliness, unemployment, deteriorating health, wayward children, death of a parent, disability, and the list literally goes on and on.

**Slide** Loving where you live is messy because **life** is messy!

**It just is.** We don't live in a Norman Rockwell painting with tranquil, idyllic landscapes. We live in a world of mess ...

- **Cancer** ravages the health of a young wife and mother.
- An impending **divorce** threatens to tear apart a marriage, family, and community.
- The single mom **cries out for help** with her teenage son.
- A young couple **struggles** to accept that they can't have biological children.

- The **widow**, married for more than six decades, gropes for reasons to go on.
- A father of six children shares the news of his recent **layoff**.

**But here's the thing** - Messes actually bring us together, like a pandemic, a shared reality that we are living through, a shared humanity. **The mess that plagues humanity is the mess** that brought a savior into the world. You might say ...

**Slide** The mess that brings us **together** is the mess that brought God **near**.

**Jesus love the little messes all the messes of the world** ... that's the beauty of John 3:16 ... for God so love the messes of the world ... We are sinners, the world is broken, and God is at work.

**In the gospel story, his grace and love shine more beautifully than ever in the messiness of our lives.** Paul writes in Romans 8:3 in the Message translation ...

**Slide** *God went for the jugular when he sent his own Son. He didn't deal with the problem as something remote and unimportant. In his Son, **Jesus, he personally took on the human condition, entered the disordered mess of struggling humanity** in order to set it right once and for all.*  
Romans 8:3 (The Message)

**Slide** Your mess has the **potential** to bring you closer to God.

God so loved the messy world that he drew near ... but verse 17 says ...

**Slide** *For God did not send his Son into the world to **condemn** the world, but in order that the **world might be saved through him**.*  
John 3:17

Jesus invited messy people to follow him while they were still messy!

## Woman caught in adultery

Here was woman caught in the act, **she had made a mess of things**. She was drug before Jesus. They said that the law of Moses says to stone her, what do you say ... they were testing Jesus looking for something that they could bring against him. Then he knelt down and with his finger wrote in the sand and then said ... let the one who is without sin cast the first stone. Then he bent down and continue writing in the sand ... they left one by one, **beginning with the oldest**.

**Slide** Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I **condemn** you; **go, and from now on sin no more.**"

John 8:10–11

**She made a mess of things but then she met the Messiah.**

## Zacchaeus the chief tax collector

Zacchaeus, a hated little tax collector who had stolen from the poor and defrauded people. He had made a mess of his relationships but he wanted to know more about this Jesus and h couldn't see over all the crowds so he climbs up in a sycamore tree. Jesus says, come down, I want to stay at your house and so **Jesus goes off with this messy man** to talk to him and Zacchaeus gets it ... he understands ...

**Slide** Behold, Lord, the **half of my goods I give to the poor**. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, **I restore it fourfold**.

Luke 19:8

**Slide** And Jesus said to him, "**Today salvation has come to this house**, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to **seek and to save the lost.**"

Luke 19:9–10

**He made a mess of things but then he met the Messiah.**

## Woman at the well

Then there is one of the most famous encounters with a messy life when Jesus is traveling with his disciples and they are going through Samaria of all places and Jesus sends them off to get food.

**Slide** Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but **whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.** The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 4:13–14

**Slide** The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; **for you have had five husbands**, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”

John 4:17–18

**Slide** The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “**I who speak to you am he.**”

John 4:25–26

**Slide** Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. **Can this be the Christ?**

John 4:29

**She made a mess of things but then she met the Messiah.**

## The Thief hanging on the cross

Then there was the one ... **hanging on a cross next to Jesus.** A common criminal, a no name **who had made a mess of his life that was about to come to an end.**

**Slide** And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, **today you will be with me in paradise.**”

Luke 23:42–43

## He made a mess of things but then he met the Messiah.

Here is what Jesus offers all these people and here is what Jesus offers all of us who have messes that we have to clean up.

**Slide** Jesus offers Himself as the solution to our messes!

If you are in a mess that you can't get out of, a mess that you made you need a light and that light is Jesus. **He is will show you the way out.**

**Slide** **"I am the light of the world.** Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

Our mess can become a **redemptive moment** in our lives where we see God restoring, forgiving and making new.

**Slide** You can't pray yourself out of a mess you have behaved your way into.

You can't confess yourself out of a mess you have behaved your way into. There's not silver bullet, but not because he doesn't care.

**Slide** You can follow your way out.

**God's view of his relationship with you isn't to be your AAA,** someone to call, come fix the problem and shake your hand and be there next time you make a mess so you can call. But **God is our Father** who loves you enough to accept you in your mess but not to leave you there.

He enters into our mess – As a parent would rather have perfect children and absolutely not relationship with them or have a close, lovely relationship in the midst of their mess. I hope the later. Because that is what God does when we, the mess, meet the messiah ... **God enters our story and our mess ... becomes our message.**

**Slide** In end your **mess** becomes your **message**!

Once I **lost** but know I am **found**, was **blind** but now I **see**. I was living in greed, now generosity. Skeptical and now believing. Anger ... now at peace. Apathetic not loving God and others!

Everyone has mess until they meet the messiah and then your mess becomes your message!

A message of healing, a message of forgiveness, a message of hope, a message of love!

This week as we love where we live. Be present to the mess and messiah who is in the midst of the mess with you.

Begin today to recognize that those around you living in the mess of sin and shame. Those who don't know the messiah, Jesus and what he has for them you can begin to Bless this mess.

**Slide BLESS This Mess!**

**Slide** Begin with pray for your neighbors.

**Slide** Listen to their stories of life, pain, struggle.

**Slide** Enjoy food, conversation and connection. Share a meal.

**Slide** Serve them in real ways, come alongside them and invite them to help you. like make masks or let them know about the food drive.

**Slide** Share your messy life and your messiah story!