

If God So Loved Us...
"Messy Love"

Introduction: Morocco, Indiana-1985

1. First 2 months-first man in the church, David Jones (retired pastor)
2. His daughter-Millie (husband, Dave)-split up-2 sons
3. Bad marriage, infidelity, partying-he lived in 1 bedroom apartment above his auto repair shop
4. Coached-Scott/Duke-friends with Millie
5. Visited Dave-both cussed, drank, smoked
6. Millie would talk about God as a child
7. For month, talked to both-finally moved home
8. David passed away-did funeral
9. Came to church a few weeks, visited on porch, in kitchen, smoked, cussed
10. One Sunday-both at the altar, new building, David roofed
11. Millie played the organ (still smoked) even worked in the office
12. Whole family came to Christ-not perfect, or cleaned up
13. Daughter was living with boyfriend, I married-came to church

Messy Love!

John said the sending of God's Son (Advent of Christ) was a manifestation of Divine Love-It reveals what God's love looks like!

Relentless Love- (Never selfish, weary, never giving up, pursuing the lost)

Selfless Love- (Build a bridge into a lost culture, enters that culture, and gives itself to it)

Today-Messy Love

- ✓ We want clean, neat, packages-easy discipleship
- ✓ Rarely the case, certainly not the way it was with Jesus

I. Messy Love is prepared for the long-haul in relationships

"Not easily provoked..."

- A. Provoked-to place a barrier, or to stand off or walk away from
1. Love doesn't walk away from others easily
 2. Doesn't quit on others when they fail
 3. Doesn't adopt the "three strikes and you're out" approach to people

NOTE: *Much neater/cleaner to do that!*

4. Doesn't burn bridges
- B. Jesus and Peter (flat-out denial)

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." Luke 22:31-32 NKJV

(ILL) Ralph Farlow, Bev Gray

NOTE: *Messy-but what we are called to*

II. Messy Love does not keep track of the failure of others

"Thinks no evil" (Literally-does not keep an account of evil or wrongs)

- A. Leads to judgmentalism/criticism
- B. Leads to grudges
- C. Our call is just the opposite

And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8 NKJV

What does this mean?

NOTE: *Reference from Proverbs 10:12*

Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins. Proverbs 10:12 NKJV

- ✓ Also used in James 5:20

Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. James 5:20 NKJV

- ✓ Likely by now had become proverbial in the church
- ✓ In Old Testament it means one will pass over faults rather than a dispute (hatred stirs strife but love covers all offenses)
- ✓ Church in Peter's day under persecution-needed unity. Instead of internal fighting will cover faults to protect the body.

III. Messy Love takes no pleasure in the failure of another but rejoices in the mercy and forgiveness of Christ

“Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth.”

- A. Sad reality in the church is that we love juicy stories about the failures of others (Marital, sin, sexual, job loss, etc.)
1. Stories are embellished and perpetuated
 2. Many are hurt deeply by such behavior

NOTE: Someone’s failure, sin, or pain is NEVER something believers should relish in or discuss.

(ILL) Schadenfreude (German word) that describes our malicious enjoyment of the mishaps or misfortunes of others.

- ✓ Part of our culture, intrinsic in every sport
- ✓ Golf buddy misses a putt or flies in a bunker
- ✓ Tennis opponent double-faults or hits into the net
- ✓ Opposing quarterback fumbles
- ✓ Central to slapstick comedy by 3 stooges, or Roadrunner cartoon

Shadenfreude-part of every life

Media-scandal in politics or celebrities

(Others sins make us feel morally superior and virtuous)

- ✓ Love seeing our enemies destroyed
- ✓ When people we loathe suffer we feel justified because they have hurt us or our loved ones

Shadenfreude

- B. Love does not delight in evil (Jesus over His enemies)
C. David and Absalom
1. Absalom’s popularity

In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. 2 Samuel 15:6 NKJV

2. Conspired against his father-stole the throne, became king

And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness. 2 Samuel 15:23 NKJV

3. Joab, Abishai, and Ittai were going to lead the attempt to recapture

Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom. 2 Samuel 18:5-6 NKJV

4. Absalom was killed in the battle by Joab

Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: "O my son Absalom — my son, my son Absalom — if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!" 2 Samuel 18:33 NKJV

5. David knew his failure to parent Absalom was part of his reason for rebellion—could not rejoice

D. Love rejoices in truth

1. We are all sinners—so we don't delight in the fall of others

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8 NKJV

2. Truth that a single failure does not disqualify—redemption in Christ
3. Truth that failure is not final
4. Truth that Jesus changes lives, restores brokenness, and uses the mess of humanity to change a world

*It's messy but its love

IV. Messy love doesn't bail out when things get tough

Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:7 NKJV

NOTE: Verse is a chiasm-staccato of 4 verbs—all attached to "all things"

- ✓ Bears all things
- ✓ Hopes all things
- ✓ Believes all things
- ✓ Endures all things

1st and 4th deal with the present-2nd and 3rd deal with the future

NOTE: *Love is able to put up with everyday “Messy, but it’s tough” nothing love cannot face*

IMPORTANT: *Love that is messy has a tenacity in the present that is held up by an absolute confidence in the future-able to live in every circumstance and pour itself out on behalf of others*

(ILL) Joy set before Jesus-endured the cross (very messy)

A. Messy love is not unrealistic

“Always believers, always hopes”

1. Doesn’t mean always believe, the best about everything and everyone one
2. But it never ceases to have faith, never loses hope

B. That’s why it can endure

1. The life touched by the never-ceasing love of Christ is enabled by the Spirit to love others the same way
2. It trusts God in behalf of the loved one, hopes to the end that God will show mercy in that person’s behalf

(Jesus with Peter)

Messy love doesn’t bail when it get tough!

Conclusion: Messy Love

- ✓ Prepared for the long haul in relationships
- ✓ Doesn’t keep track of the failures of others
- ✓ Takes no pleasure in the failures of others
- ✓ Doesn’t bail out when things get tough

1. Insert name of Christ in each one
2. Don’t lose focus-if He so loved
3. Should insert my name too