

## THE BIG IDEA: God turns messes into messages.

### The Take-Off

Of all the weeks when we've talked about what we are - we are His, and we are generous, and we are family, and we are planted - this is the week when I really want us to highlight the **WE**.

As I've told you, all of the things we've talked about apply to The Gathering corporately even when they don't apply to all of us individually

The Gathering values holiness and being set apart as His even if everyone who attends The Gathering isn't living a life set apart to holiness

The Gathering values generosity and gives away resources all the time even if you as an individual don't See what I mean?

But today, this word describes ALL of us - every last one.

**We** are messy.

### 1. Messes in the Bible

- a. Let's see if we can find some **messes in the Bible**. It shouldn't be hard since it appears to be full of them.
- b. Adam and Eve managed to throw away perfect union with God for union with a liar.
- c. Noah celebrated God's faithfulness after the flood by getting drunk and naked.
- d. Abraham lied about his wife and said she was his sister. He did this twice.
- e. Samson loved women. A lot.
- f. Moses got angry. A lot.
- g. David had an affair and tried to hide it by ordering a hit on the woman's husband.
- h. Jonah got mad at God for being kind when people repented.
- i. And messes in the Bible aren't limited to individuals. It got messier when messy people formed groups.
  - Acts 5 / Ananias and Sapphira lied about an offering and were killed by God
  - Acts 6 / One group of believers accused another group of believers of discrimination
  - Acts 10 / Gentiles receive the gospel and the Holy Spirit and Peter eats with them
  - Acts 15 / The early church doesn't know what to do with the Gentiles
  - Galatians 2 / By the time Paul wrote Galatians, this was still a mess
- j. Bottom line? The Bible is full of messes because the Bible was written to messy people.

### 2. Messes in the church

- a. Think the Bible isn't relevant? Just spend some time in a local church!
- b. Almost every letter in the New Testament addressed **messes in the church**
  - Galatians / the temptation to earn salvation through what we do
  - 2 Thessalonians / a belief that Jesus would return immediately and destroy their enemies
  - 1 Corinthians / so many messes - mostly stemming from incorrect beliefs and morals
  - 2 Corinthians / Paul shows us the stress of not being honored as a "real" apostle
  - Romans / Jews and Gentiles are both justified by faith in Jesus
  - Philemon / deals with issues related to slavery
  - Colossians / addresses having a low view of who Jesus is
  - 1 Timothy and Titus / warnings against false teachers in the church
- c. Those are examples of messes historically - what about messes currently?
- d. The early church had different takes on circumcision, we have different takes on racism, politics, environmental issues, mental issues, and the list could go on
- e. But the biggest messes aren't issues, but people - WE are messy and we need to remember that God came to the mess for the mess

### 3. Messes in God's hands

- a. Because of that, we can't be afraid to put our **messes in God's hands**
- b. Paul did that - in 2 Corinthians 12:7 he said that he'd been given a messenger from Satan to torment him
- c. Y'all - that's messy
- d. What did Paul do? Brought it to the Lord and found grace in weakness.

- e. Jesus prayed 3 times to not go to the cross! Why? Messy, painful, hard.
- f. Jesus understands how hard the mess is - and yet He surrendered it into the Father's hands.
- g. When we do that, we find the power of this statement: **God turns messes into messages.**
- h. **2 Corinthians 12:8-10 (NLT)**

## The Landing

Here at The Gathering, we are messy. We're not saying that we love messes so much that we want to stay messy. What we are saying is that this is a place where you can come as you are.

Come messy to a table prepared for messy people, because that table is where the relationship starts.

We don't find Jesus dealing with messy people in classrooms as much as living rooms.

That's where a rejected woman poured oil on His feet. That's where sinners and tax collectors ate with Him.

A table is where He shared life with His followers and where He pointed to His death through communion.

And so we end this morning by bringing our messes - ourselves - to the table.

His table. A table built for messes by the very hands that can transform messes into messages.

Come as you are and you'll find yourself becoming more than you were. You won't be defined by the mess. You'll be refined through it.

It all starts at a messy table with messy people hearing about a message greater than all of it.

**[SONG / Mercy by Chris Renzema]**

Let's pray.