

Messy People | The Girl Who Loved Love | Discussion Guide - *John 8:1-11*

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It's fun to watch babies learn to feed themselves. Maybe it's infant rice or mashed potatoes when they are older, but it is a bit of a show. Dr. Seuss might have stated it like this, "Food on the floor, food on the door, food in the hair, food in the air, my oh my food is everywhere!" It's funny upon reflection and it brings to mind three lessons. First, mashed potatoes sure are a lot of fun for babies. Second, babies don't know how to eat at first. And third, Someone has to clean the baby.

People are a mess too. Those three lessons are easily correlated with our own experiences in life. We could just as simply say, that people sure are having a lot of fun with life. But, people don't know what they are doing and are making a mess. And, someone has got to clean up the mess. This series takes a look at our need as "messy people" for a MESSiah. We are going to watch Jesus clean up a few messes in the Bible and learn about the hope, forgiveness and peace available for our own messes. So let's start with a young woman in a real mess.

John 8:3, 10-11 (NLT) ...The Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd 10 ...Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?" 11 "No, Lord," she said. And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

The Heart Wants What It Wants...

Adultery is a serious line to cross. As we read the story we must ask ourselves, "What made that okay? How do you rationalize something like that?" But, then again the world we live in has a way of pushing us across lines we never thought we could cross.

What if her world was a lot like ours? What if she grew up with unhealthy notions about love and romance? What if her definition of love was broken? God defines love like this.

1 Corinthians 13:4, 7 (NLT) Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Possibly we have heard people speak of "falling in love". But have we ever heard someone tell their story of "*falling into*" patience, kindness, peace, forgiveness, endurance, or hope. Maybe it's time to admit that the world we live in doesn't really have a good definition for love. And, it is also likely that the popular definition in use today is causing distrust, cynicism, and even isolation,

Are You A Relational Mess... Are you able to identify with this woman? Do you long for "love to conquer all" while unsure of what needs to change? Let's start with caution, remember...

Two Wrongs Don't Make Anything Right

The Pharisee's were Jerks. Everything about this is wrong. Adultery takes two people but in this story she is all alone. These men didn't care about her, people, the law, or God. They just hated Jesus and she was a pawn to move against Him. And, that is just wrong.

But, She was not justified by a Bigger Sin. The Pharisees evil DID NOT make her guilt any less. And like her, we will never be able to justify ourselves by pointing out the sins of others.

2 Corinthians 10:12b (NLT) ...But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant!

Godly Sorrow and Worldly Sorrow are different things. A term that better defines "worldly sorrow" for us is the word "guilt" and it is easy to identify. It looks in. It cries within, "I failed." "I sinned." Or, "I am stupid." It is the shame and misery caused by any number of mistakes and sins but it will never free us because it keeps us focused within ourselves.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NLT) For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

Godly Sorrow looks out in Love. It sees the damage done to others. It sees that personal sins hurt people. We may tell ourselves that they only affect us, but we know the truth in our hearts. And, in the story, even though our hearts go out to this poor woman, we must admit that she did real damage. She completely disregarded God's heart for a marriage. She gave Jesus' enemies a weapon with which to attack Him. We really just can't know how many people she hurt. But...

REAL Love Changes Things

Repentance is letting go. There she knelt among the Haters. Her mess put her at the mercy of cruel people. By letting go of her mess she would have put herself at the mercy of the one who is Mercy. Jesus.

Forgiveness so close. So many are in a mess right now. Maybe thinking thinks like - "There is no way out of this." "NO ONE understands." "No one could love me. Or, "I'm so stupid." Jesus' answer for our mess is "I don't condemn you." Jesus loves us. He accepts us even covered in the ashes of our bad decisions.

Holiness is the path forward. Jesus accepts people but he does not affirm sin. He told her to "Go and Sin no more." She was created for so much more than shame and so were you. Sure, we are all a mess, but that is okay. Our Mess is Why God Sent a MESSiah!

Discussion:

- Review **John 8:1-11**. What do you like or dislike about the story? Paraphrase your favorite parts of the passage. What questions does this passage raise for you?
- Read **Isaiah 43:18-19**. What might it look like in your life if God did "something new"?
- Read **Luke 4:18-19**. Discuss Jesus' relationship to "messy" people.
- As a group, how would you define Love? Compare your definition with **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**.
- Discuss God's view of marriage. Review **Mark 10:6-9** and **Malachi 2:16**.
- Discuss a situation in which a worse offense or sin was used to justify a "lesser" sin.
- Review **2 Corinthians 7:10**. Discuss the difference between Godly and Worldly Sorrow.
- Discuss Jesus' restoration of this woman. Why didn't he condemn her? Why did He tell her not to do it again?
- Did anything stand out in your reading today that you could share with someone else?