

Week 3: Our Mess is Blessed

Point: The greatest gift the church has to offer the world happens a result of when we love each other.

Scripture: Isaiah 25:6-9 | John 13:33-35

Know: It isn't easy to be with others who are different from us – but we have to get this one right.

Do: Invite a person to your dinner table who is different than you.

Welcome:

Good morning, today we conclude our series called the Table. We have been challenging you to make relationships with people and use those relationships to influence people with the Gospel. Week #1 you were challenged you to make room at your table for people who are different from you. Week #2: We talked about two tables where Jesus sat with those who were nothing like him. Today, we are talking about loving people radically. I am entitling this talk; **Our Mess is Blessed.**

The Messianic Banquet (Is. 25)

READ: Isaiah 25:6-9

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, and a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

About 700 years before Jesus came to earth, the prophet Isaiah was predicting a day when the curse of sin, pictured as a veil over the earth, will be taken away by God and all people from all over the world will be invited to a banquet where there will be a feast in the presence of God.

As we have been talking about these last two weeks, the meal all throughout time has been a symbol of acceptance, friendship, and connection, but the meal we look forward to in the future is a sign of reconciliation. This is a table of human beings that sinned against God and are reconciled with God and forgiven. What an awesome reality for those of us who believe. Can't wait!

When we welcome the world to our tables, we proclaim the past reality – that we have been welcome to the table apart from our life's resume. When we welcome others to our tables, we image the future that you and I are hoping for – which is a feast for people who believe. It is a

visible, tangible picture for people of a gift given apart from our works but that can be received if you believe.

The greatest gift the church has to offer the world happens when we love each other.

The New Command

READ: John 13:33-35

“Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

The world at the time was divided by prejudicial divisions that make many of our differences pale in comparison – master and slave, Jew and Gentile, and so on. The Greeks regarded Jews as barbarians. The Jews had a reputation for being haters. There was a vast separation between men and woman.

Jesus illustrated it in the story of the Good Samaritan that a man would rather cross the street and walk away from a man who was racially different from him rather than him.

What happened after the time of Jesus is that the Jew, the Gentile, the free man, the slave owner, men and women – they sat down at a table together and experienced what it was like to be one in Christ. They were ready to break all the other bonds at that point as well and yield to the uniting force of being a collection of people who follow Jesus.

This band of brothers marched into the world that had been so divided by its differences – and the world was amazed at the love these people had for each other that flowed from their love for Jesus.

This was how the world knew that they belonged to Jesus.

Teaching Note: Our love for others should be defined by Jesus, not by our preference.

I hope over the past few weeks you have developed a burden for someone. I hope you have been setting an empty place at your table. I believe God is giving you a vision, a picture. There is someone you pass every day at work, in your hobby, or here in church who you need to invite into your home. Somebody needs you to walk into their mess and love them like Jesus does.

I know it is scary. It is not easy to do. But your relationship can be life changing.

Made for the burden

[Gal 6:1-5 NLT]

Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. For we are each responsible for our own conduct.

We are each responsible for certain parts of our spiritual walk. You need to have a relationship with Jesus. You need to have a hiding place. You need to be in your Bible. You are called to be holy and chase after the purity of God. But...

But the writer is saying, that need is the essence of our faith.

Teaching Note: Our love is dangerous when demonstrated.

Love is dangerous. Sometimes the goal of our church is this white t-shirt. It is to get clean in our spirit and stay clean in our living. Clean living. But if you are loving like Jesus, you are going to get messy. If we are going to bring people into this room, we are going to get a little messy. You don't want a White T-shirt Faith.

Love is dangerous to your paradigm. When you carry someone else's burden you are going to have to sit with them, hear them, and love them. The judgements you had decided on before will become compromised.

You have someone in your church and you say this...

"We are not the same age, and we do not have the same hobbies. But I know you are struggling with anxiety. I know you get overwhelmed. But I am here for you. I don't understand it, I can't fix it but I love you. You always have a place to sit with me."

See, Jesus knew your struggles when he brought you to himself. And he is there for you anyway.

Maybe there is someone else in your church. You see them and you say...

"I know that person you love is in the hospital. I see that you are hurting, and you have a lot of questions. But if you have someone in the hospital then I HAVE SOMEONE IN THE HOSPITAL. And I WILL BE HERE. I will visit. I will call. I will text. I will listen until we see the miracle!

Because miracles are not just for the Christians right? You need to go out into the world and tell people that God is going to use this situation. I am praying for you and I will sit with you.

We will not be a **Thoughts and Prayers Church**. We need to be a **Present Church**. When people who don't believe see your faith change a circumstance... wow...

Teaching Note: There is blessing when we wear each other's messes like Jesus did.

So, whose mess do you need to wear? I bet there is someone sitting in your row, the row behind you, or the row in front of, who you don't know. What if today you talked to someone here who you have never talked to? What if you invited them into your home for a meal? How about that person at work who just lost someone. How about that person you used to work with who was just fired?

You know what? Send that text right now. Seriously. If you have a phone, take it out and text someone. Say, "Hey I have been thinking about you. Can we have you over for dinner?" Do it.

And if you have Facebook, go for it! If you are here with your spouse or your friends, or your family... lean over to them right now and say "We are inviting ____ over for dinner next week. We will talk about it later <3"

Or tomorrow when you walk into that place, tap that person on the shoulder and send them the invite.

Because when we bear each other's burdens we are able to bear more. It feels a lot better to walk into work on Monday having seen God work in a messy situation than walking in with your boring white shirt, from your boring clean weekend. **The best food for your soul is on the front lines.**