

When God Get's Personal with my Mess

Rick Swing, Westwood's Executive Pastor of Ministries

July 26, 2009

Sermon Outline

1. Coming to grips with our mess or our flaws is a prerequisite to grasping God's grace and blessing.
2. Lasting encouragement comes when we feel pain over our sinfulness
3. Victory only comes in a life that is made alive in Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-4

"Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and began to teach them, saying:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Group Session

Opening Question

Some have said that everyone has issues. Do you believe that to be true? Why or why not?

Discussing the Scripture & Life

1. Read the focus passage, Matthew 5:1-4. "Blessed" means being in the place of God's favor. How is it that we can be blessed when things seem to be bad?
2. Romans 7 talks about the conflict going on within us. Read this passage below.

17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Have you ever found yourself in these shoes or feeling this way. What are some of the steps to victory when we find ourselves conflicted between belief and action?

3. Life-Changing Lesson #1 is, **“Coming to grips with our “mess” or our “flaws” is a prerequisite to grasping God’s Grace and Blessing.”** Why do you think this statement is true?
4. Rick said, “Cultural Christianity won’t find the Biblical Christ.” First of all, what is cultural Christianity? Secondly, is this true?
5. Life-Changing Lesson #2 is, **“Lasting encouragement comes when we feel pain over our sinfulness.”** Have you ever noticed what a good feeling it is when we come to an honest relationship with God and stop pretending? Why is that so? What keeps people from getting honest with God?
6. Rick shared the formula: “Encouragement = Dying to self + afflictions + Life of Jesus” Which part of that formula do we struggle with most?
7. Life Changing Lesson #3 says, **“Victory only comes in a life that is made alive in Christ.”**
8. Look at the following examples of the life of Paul. Christ made a difference in his life.

Pre	Post
A zealot for the law	A Believer of Grace
A persecutor of the Church	A Church Planter
A hunter of man	A hunter of the lost
Had a believer stoned	Was stoned himself for Christ
Lived for the Flesh	Lived in the Spirit
A man of power	A man of Integrity
Was Blind	But now he SEES
Was lost	But he was Found
Boasted about his strengths	Boasted about his weakness

If you were going to make a list of what difference God has made in your life, what could you write? Are we allowing God to make real differences in our lives?

Closing Challenge

There is spiritual benefit that comes when we are honest about who we are. Each of us has things about ourselves that are a struggle. Galatians 5:16 talks about confessing our sins to one another. I challenge you to meet with someone this week and reveal who you really are.

Other Passages Cited

- Romans 7:17-25 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.
- 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.”
- Romans 12:1 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship”. It goes on to say in verse 2, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will”.
- Ephesians 2:1, 4-10 “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins... (4) But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, (5) made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. (6) And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, (7) in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (8) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— (9) not by works, so that no one can boast. (10) For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”
- Lamentations 3:40 “Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.”
- II Corinthians 4:7-12 “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.