

Sunday Leftovers

Sermon Title: Hot Mess – Inside Out

What's this message about?

Most of us, especially the culture around us, possess a radical misunderstanding of the goal of Christian living. We are tempted to think that Christian living is about avoiding messes. That being the case, we tend to spend a good portion of our lives looking for ways to avoid screwing up. We quickly come to the realization that this is harder than we thought, so when we accept that we will mess up, ask for forgiveness, and the cycle starts over again. Is this the “abundant life” that Jesus talks about? Is this the freedom that Paul preached? Truth be told, this is not the Christian life that Christ came to offer. The ultimate goal and the real satisfaction of living what you believe is a mature faith. What that means is that our lifestyle and inner convictions are transformed to allow us to embrace and desire an expanding and deepening love for the people around us. Christianity isn't about external spiritual behavior modification; it's about an inner surrender of our desire to do it ourselves that leads to an outer transformation directed by the Spirit of God.

Questions for discussion:

- *What do you think was the main point of Matt's message?*
- *Philippians 1:1-11: What does Paul's message to the church at Phillipi tell you about their faith and his prescription for their continued growth and maturity?*
- *Why do you think we are more naturally inclined to try to clean up our own messes rather than to ask God to help us?*
- *Have you ever created/been a part of a “hot mess” which, due to no efforts of your own, turned into something positive? How did that change your perspective?*
- *How are you planning on applying what you learned today?*

Do something about it:

“Letting go and letting God” is tough. It is not about “not trying” to clean up the mess, nor is it about “giving up.” It is about allowing God to become a partner in the cleanup process. It is about believing that God is planning to use this mess to help you to mature in your faith and grow in your love and care for others. Begin by asking God, “Father, complete the work you have begun in me” and then allow God to work from the “inside” by being open to the Spirit's guidance as He directs you out of the mess.

Digging deeper:

Philippians 1:1-11; 1 Corinthians 2:5-7; 2 Peter 1:3-10; Ephesians 4:11-16; James 1:2-4; Romans 5:1-5