A Messy Church

Ken Chapman · Ephesians 1:22–23

INTRODUCTION

- Today's lesson, I'm talking to one person in this building. And before you sweat, that one person is me.
- I like things neat, buttoned up the way they ought to be. I'm not messy, and I don't like messy things.
- Sometimes the church is messy. In fact, I'm going to argue this morning that not only is it that way sometimes, but that's the way it ought to be.

1 What Is the Church?

Ephesians 1:22–23

- This church is the body of Christ. It is the fullness of him who fills all in all.
- In the mind of God, this church, which is his body, is everything perfect. But you're what makes this messy. And I'm what makes this messy.
- It's a body of men and women who've been called from our sinful lives into a relationship with God.
- Not only is this church by its very inherent nature going to be messy. But we compound that messiness when we decide to be a growing church.

2 The Messy Church at Corinth

Acts 18:4–8; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11; 1 Corinthians 1:2–9

- We need to remove from our mind the idea that, in the first century, in New Testament times, oh, it was perfect. Nothing could be further from the truth.
- Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized.
- Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God, and such were some of you.
- What does the Holy Spirit say about this messy group of people? Says, I thank God for you. You're called to be saints. You're the church of our God.

3 Assemblies of People Who Don't Look Like I Do

James 2:1–9

- Its assemblies are going to be filled with people that don't look like I do. And don't look like I think they should.
- My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with partiality.
- If you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. You do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin.

4 Let's Rejoice

- First of all, let's rejoice. It's a good thing.
- The church is a body. A body of saved people who have been called out of the world who are calling other people to come with us. And that's going to be messy. And we rejoice in that mess.
- Rejoice that there's a place for all of us. Now, this requires some humility. It requires me to admit that I contribute to this mess as well.
- I'll put up with your flaws while urging you to have fewer of them.

5 Be Patient

Romans 15:1–6

- We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak and not to please ourselves.
- Let each one of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification.
- I have to be patient. And pray that you're patient with me as we rejoice in this glorious mess.
- We rejoice at the sound of crying infants and squawking toddlers. So although they may be a distraction, where else do I want them to be?

6 Keep Working

- The third thing we need to do is keep working. That doesn't mean we have to sit still in this mess.
- This is a mess, remember, because it's a work in progress. It's growth in progress, which is going to be messy, but it must be growth.
- We're going to work to encourage one another, to edify one another, and even admonish and discipline one another.
- It's not about just coming just as I am and staying just as I am. It's about coming to Christ just as I am and growing to be like him.

> THE CHALLENGE
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> **Would you be a part of this? You don't have to be perfect. You just have to try.**

MY NOTES