**Messy: Loving Others Isn’t Easy**

**Demonstration and Decision**

*Text: Romans 13:8-14*

*Sunday, February 27, 2022*

We must love the messy people all around us. In this series, we’ll be working through the Bible to better understand how and why we need to love the messy people around us. It isn’t easy!

The only way to love is to trust Jesus fully with our lives.

Mark 12:29-31, *“’The most important one,’ answered Jesus, ‘is this: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’” 31 The second is this: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no commandment greater than these.’”*

In the 10 Commandments, first 4 deal with our relationship with God. The remaining 6 deal with our interactions with others.

*James 2:8. “If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right.”*

Our natural state, default setting is “self.” Taking what we want, when we want, where we want.

We scurry around in the dark of night. Dark behavior is pretty obvious: wild partying with sex and drunkenness, uninhibited sexual excess, antagonizing competition to have one’s own way, and jealous quarreling. These are ugly, detestable sins, and we are to avoid them at all costs.Augustine lived a promiscuous life through his youth and even felt God pressing in on him to be saved, to which he would reply, “Leave me a little while,” because he wanted to live according to his flesh a little while longer (Saint Augustine, Confessions, 121). In other words, he avoided God and ran away from conviction for years. He was content to stay wrapped up in selfish darkness.

Put aside dark deeds—cast them off. Take all this stuff off and replace them with Jesus’ clothes. Wrap yourself up in the armor of light, putting Him on as a suit of clothes. Keep putting Him on, keep renewing your mind, keep being transformed. We are not ever done, as long as we’re alive.

Real conversion based on the actions of a loving, gracious, forgiving God brings real change. This passage is the conclusion of a section Paul started back in Romans 12:1-2. In view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices to God.

Believers. Conduct yourself, literally, WALK, in the light as He is in the light. We put Him on at baptism. We keep putting Him on, sinking into a Jesus suit, wrapping up in Him. What is it we put on? Something essential, Christ’s armor of light which isn’t just defensive, it’s a weapon, too. Iron Man’s suit.

We’ve been changed and live differently because of what God has done, but also because of what is coming!

As The Day approaches, we are ever more focused on our conduct in Christ. LET’S SNAP OUT OF OUR STUPOR.

We focus on please Christ, loving Him, loving others.

Non-believers, those who haven’t yet responded to the grace and love of God. My love for you compels me to make sure you know about the love of God available in Christ Jesus. The clock is ticking. Augustine’s “Leave me a little while” is eternally dangerous.

Ephesians 4:24 *“Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”*

If you find yourself delaying a response to God’s call, do not delay any longer. Today is the day to “clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ” and become a Christian.

*8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,”[a] and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”[b] 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

*11 And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.[c]*

**Big Idea: The law can be summed up in the single command to “love your neighbor as yourself.” The only way to be able to fulfill this command is to place our trust in Jesus Christ.**

Clothe yourself with Christ. Behave (literally walk) or conduct yourself. Behave decently. Also 1 corinthians 14:40. Honorably. Respectably. Becomingly. Regulate your life. Conduct yourself.

Don’t think about how to gratify flesh desires. Forethought. Make provision for. Desiring that which is forbidden, lust. Focus on what your body genuinely needs, not on sinful lusts and desires. Be careful what you wish for!

Titus 2:11-14. *“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”*