

Mess is what brings us together.

God loves us too much to leave us in our mess.

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him...
Matthew 9:9a NLT

More than a "quick fix", Jesus wants us to follow him out of our mess.

So Matthew got up and followed him. Matthew 9:9b NLT

Jesus can work through us in spite of our mess.

Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners.¹¹ But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?"¹² When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do."¹³ Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices...' Matthew 9:10-13 NLT

I thank my God every time I remember you.⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:3-6

God works in us so He can work through us.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ... Philippians 1:9-10

Following Christ isn't about avoiding something; it's about becoming something.

...filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:11

Connect

- Talk about a time when you narrowly avoided a mess.

Word and Reflection

Life is messy. We've all made messes in our lives. Mess is something we have in common. A common misconception is that the Christian life is all about avoiding mess. Nothing could be further from the truth! Jesus meets us in our mess and we follow Him out of our mess. In spite of our mess, God works in us and through us, making us more like His Son, Jesus. Christianity isn't about avoiding something; it's about becoming something.

Matthew 9:9-13; Philippians 1:3-11

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- A basic way some people navigate the world is to divide it into "us" versus "them". Why do you think we do this? How have you seen the dynamic of "us" versus "them" played out in Christianity and the church?
- Read Matthew 9:9-13. What does this interaction reveal about God? What does it reveal about us? What do we learn from Matthew about the immediacy of his response to Jesus?
- Read Philippians 1:3-11. What might it look like for your love to *abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight*? What will it require from you to pursue this kind of faith?
- *Following Christ isn't about avoiding something; it's about becoming something*? What do you pray the "future you" God is creating looks like? What steps will you need to take to make that a reality?

Action

- What is one thing you can do this week to attune your heart to what God desires to work in you?

Prayer

- Pray Philippians 1:9-10 for your life. Ask for God to make your *love about more and more in knowledge and depth of insight*...
- Pray for your group and for those whom you're reaching out to.