

Nine years ago my family was called to live in Laramie, Wyoming, where we would love and be loved by drug dealers, drug addicts, child pornographers, witches, thieves, mentally disabled, mentally ill, megalomaniacs, child abusers, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered, questioning, self-image managers, lovers of self, drunks, Rights, Lefts, Socialists, malcontents, and the list goes on.

The first few years of ministry here in Laramie I was very angry and agitated by what Whitewater was. It's almost as if God didn't take into consideration any of my suggestions on how things should look and be done. How could this resemble anything that resembles "church"? How were we supposed to make a dent with this broken down, inept population of people? How were we supposed to build anything sustainable here? Then, God showed up to forever correct my false narratives of Himself. He changed how I love, live, and interact with the world around me. It was only then that I realized that the Church has always been sustained by and forever will be built on broken down, inept people.

"When the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees saw Jesus eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?" When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners." – Mark 2:16-17 (NLT)

Go ahead read that again. Read it a third time. Let it soak in. Perhaps you find yourself in the same place I found myself nine years ago, angry and agitated that your church or life is filled with people you would rather distance yourself from, people that are too risky to be in community with or perhaps too dangerous to love. Perhaps you are reading this and find that you don't have that problem because you have surrounded yourself exclusively with "those who think they are righteous" and find yourself comfortably numb. Please excuse the Pink Floyd reference.

Anytime I read passages of scripture like Mark 2:16-17 it gets me thinking about how my life and love measure up to the life of Jesus. Let's go beyond just thinking and turn thought into action! Take a moment to think of someone, a person or family in your world right now, who you would consider broken down, inept or "scum". If that person doesn't come to mind, pray that God would reveal that person or family to you. Next, pray about a time that you can invite that person or family into your home for a meal. Perhaps you have figured out how to love and live life like Jesus with the broken down, inept, "scum". If that is you, pray about whom you should bring alongside you to teach them to do the same.

Love like Jesus. Love dangerously,
Adam Coop,
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