



# It's a Wonderful Mess In Spite of Your Label

#n pitsawonderfulmess

Week 3

3 of 4

December 22, 2019

**Bottom Line:** Accept God's grace—reject the label.

**Icebreaker:** What's a nickname you were called? Why? Did you like it or hate it? What's a label you would like to wear?

**Key Verse:** . . . *if you acknowledge and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord [recognizing His power, authority, and majesty as God], and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Romans 10:9 AMP

Matthew has been writing to the Jewish people to tell them they are part of the story of Jesus. The reason they're a part of the story is because they're the point of the story. The reason you are part of the story, in spite of what you've done or haven't done, is because you are also the point of the story, the point of the story of Christmas.

He begins by saying, "Remember, remember, remember, remember . . . all along, God has chosen the unworthy. All along God has chosen sinners. All along God has chosen and used people who didn't get it right because He is a God of grace and mercy." Right in the middle of the Christmas story He drops the name of Rahab, an ancestor of Jesus who was a Canaanite harlot. When the spies were checking out Jericho, she tells them that she already believes in their God based on what she has seen and heard. She says she wants to help them, and asks them to protect her and her family when they take the city. They agree, and when the walls of Jericho fall, they all keep the promises they have made, and Rahab is a heroine. She lives among the people. She lives among the Israelites as a picture of, as a testimony that God is a God of mercy and grace who would spare an outsider, an enemy, someone who by their very law should be judged. In the center of God's people, she married a Jewish man. Their child, named Boaz, married a young widow named Ruth, and their great grandson was King David, and eventually their line led to Jesus. Matthew knew that Rahab's story was like his. He was about to tell the story of Jesus, the One who invited all kinds of people with all kinds of labels to follow and believe in Him while they were still wearing their labels. His righteousness did not overshadow His mercy; His holiness would never overshadow His grace. His forgiveness is big enough and broad enough to encompass everyone regardless of their label.

The message of Christmas is that God has done for you what you could not do for yourself. You have been invited—while you're still wearing your label—you have been invited to lean into the God who has leaned into you. You have been invited to reach out to the God who has reached out to you. You are the point of the story, the point of Christmas.

## THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

Matthew is writing to a very religious group of people who believed that in order to be right with God, there are certain things you had to DO. There are certain ways you have to behave. That you come to God based on what you've DONE and what you have NOT done. In fact, basically all world religions embrace this approach to God . . . generally speaking, the platform we stand on in approach to God is all the good things we've done and the bad things we've avoided. Reflect and discuss.

Humankind has been invited to approach God on a relational level, and the foundation of that relationship is not what you and I have or haven't done . . . the foundation of that relationship is what God has done on our behalf. This message of grace we have been preaching is a very freeing message to some people, and a frustrating, disturbing message to others. Why is grace controversial? Why might some people prefer to earn God's favor?

## LOOK IT OVER <<<

And God says, "In spite of My law, My grace is broader than My law—My mercy is broader than my judgment. My love and My forgiveness can overwhelm and surpass all that I've said is right and wrong. And even though she is guilty because of her lifestyle . . . and even though she's an outsider because of where she was born . . . still my grace and my love and my mercy is large enough and broad enough . . ." Reflect and discuss. Is there anyone to whom you can't believe this applies? Why or why not? In your experience, do most of us struggle more with OUR OWN unworthiness when it comes to grace, or the unworthiness of someone else? Explain.

God's word for courage is faith. Faith is when you put your belief into action. Where do you need to do that?

A real relationship with God is characterized by grace, mercy, and forgiveness. How do you realize that?

## NEXT STEPS

1. Accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and Redeemer of your life.
2. Reject any shame label you have worn.

## EVALUTION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

**Bottom Line:** Accept God's grace—reject the label.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

## PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

## DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at [newpointe.org/daily](http://newpointe.org/daily):

Monday: 1 Corinthians 6:11

Tuesday: 1 Timothy 1:15-16

Wednesday: John 3:16-17

Thursday: Isaiah 43:25

Friday: Isaiah 62:2

***Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.***

*(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)*