



The Chaos in the Mirror

Romans 3:19-20, 23

Message from Pastor Martin Hawley

June 10, 2018

Bottom Line: If you can see your chaos, you can see God. To recognize one is to acknowledge the other.

Introduction:

We all have chaotic lives. We all have messes in life.

- Relational mess: dating, live-in, marriage
- Family mess: kids, in-laws
- Financial mess
- Physical mess
- Habit mess

You may be between messes right now, but you've got one or two in your rear view mirror. Also, you never quite know when the next chaos will materialize.

Here's the good news ...

We are genetically engineered toward messes.

Our parents were messes.

Their parents were messes.

Your children's parents are messes.

Comforting Thought: There's always someone whose life is a **bigger mess** than yours.

The chaotic part of life (the mess) is our common ground.

It's not just you!

Jesus said, in Matthew 7:5, to **first** take the plank out of our own eye, so we can see clearly to remove the speck from our brother's eye.

We need each other. It's very rare to meet someone who is able to clean up their messes all by themselves.

Christians believe the mess that brings us *together* is the mess that brought God near.

The mess is the lens through which we **discover** God.

Recognizing **your** mess is a baby step toward **acknowledging** God.

Romans 3:19-20, 23, "Now we know that whatever the **law** says, it says to those who are **under the law**, so that every mouth may be **silenced** and the whole world held **accountable** to God. Therefore no one will be declared **righteous** in his [God's] sight by **observing the law** [works]; rather, through the **law** we become **conscious** of sin. ... For **all** have **sinned** and [all] **fall short** of the **glory** of God."

The oughts and ought not.

There is a universal law written in the hearts of all people. There are universal "oughts and ought not." You experience these as, "Everybody knows a person should/shouldn't/should try not to."

Or better yet, "I know I should/shouldn't/should try not to ..."

Then we **all** – religious or not – say the strangest thing, and when we do, we say far more than we think we're saying. We say, "But nobody's **perfect**."

When you say that, you're saying there is a perfect out there.

When you say that, you're saying there is a standard that we all fall short of.

Could this standard be God?

We are **accountable**.

We "**knew better**" and did it anyway. It wasn't a mistake. Carrying around the law in our minds doesn't make us better, it makes us **accountable**!

You're a mess! You have fallen short of the law/the standard.

Awareness of our messes awakens us to something outside of us to which we are **accountable**.

"The law of gravity tells you what stones do if you drop them; but the Law of Human Nature tells you what human beings **ought** to do and do not (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 25)."

"Human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way and **cannot really get rid of it** (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 18)."

There is something **above** and **beyond** the ordinary facts of men's behavior, and yet quite definitely real – **a real law**, which none of us made, but which we find **pressing on us** (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 27)."

Once we acknowledge our **messes**, we are a baby step away from acknowledging **God**.

Conclusion:

The moral of the story: We **all** have something in **common**. The thing you have in common with the person or group you secretly despise most is the "me too" syndrome.

The "we may be related" factor is that we **all** "fall short."

You're a mess. You too have a chaotic life.

I know a mess when I **see** one because I've **been** one.

NEXT STEPS:

- Memorize: Romans 3:23.**
- Acknowledge Your Mess.**
- Accept God's Solution.**
- Pastor, today I have decided to follow Jesus.**