

# Christ in My Chaos, I

*Blessed in Spite of My Mess*

January 5, 2003

## SPIRITUALITY

Q: Are you a truly spiritual person?

Q: Would you describe yourself as a [extend palms] spiritual person?

What's this? What am I doing with my hands? We all seem to understand that it's some kind of universal code for spirituality.

Q: What is a truly spiritual person anyway?

Q: Is it someone who prays all the time, or rejoices in the midst of every trial?

To a Catholic it might be one who takes a vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience and devotes herself to active service and meditation.

To a Pentecostal it might be someone who slays people in the Spirit, prays in tongues, or prophesies words of wisdom and knowledge.

But, whatever our background, whatever our definition, it usually refers to someone out of our league; someone really close to Jesus.

- Someone sort of *unreal* to our day-to-day messy, chaotic lives.

And because of that, we're tempted to act a little unreal ourselves in order to try and achieve a little spirituality in our lives.

## THE CLEANING WOMAN

I know a woman whose husband hired a housekeeper (just to come in once a week to dust and clean the bathrooms and the out-of-the-way stuff). The woman dreaded cleaning day.

- She'd clean all morning, to prepare for the housekeeper.
- If the house was dirty, what would the housekeeper think!

We can treat the Lord the same way. Thinking we have to prepare ourselves or clean up some of our mess or, "What would He think?"

## THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

Q: Remember when Jesus asked the woman at the well for a drink?

**The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" - John 4:9 NIV**

She was so surprised that this Jesus (a *Jew* and a *man*) would speak to her (a *Samaritan* and a *woman*). But, not only does He speak:

- He's kind; He listens; and He treats her with grace and dignity.

And He "lets it slip" that He has something called "living water."

**The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." "I have no husband," she replied. - John 4:15-16 NIV**

She's been married five times and she's living with some guy ... but can you blame her for not wanting to be completely honest?

- She's got the water deal hanging there.

And her reputation could only damage his reputation. But then, Jesus knew that before He ever sat down and spoke with her.

**Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. - John 4:16-18 NIV**

He doesn't lecture, condemn, or humiliate; but with gentleness He brings her face to face with her past failures, and forces her to admit the current mess she's made. But He only does this so that she can receive His "living water" and become a spiritual person.

- The cornerstone of true spirituality is authenticity.

Q: Do you know why those "spiritual" people seem kind of unreal?

A: Because you compare what you know about yourself with what you don't know about them.

## A QUEST TO BE REAL

None of us is who we appear to be. We all have secrets. We all have issues. We all struggle from time to time (Romans 3:10 paraphrased).

“What is real?” asks the Rabbit one day. “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?” The Skin Horse replies, “Real isn’t how you are made. It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but really loves you, then you become real.” – The Velveteen Rabbit

- To be truly spiritual is to be on a quest to be real.

Q: Remember the paralytic man who was lowered through the roof?

**Some men came, bringing to [Jesus] a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” – Mark 2:3-5 NIV**

He didn’t say: Just look at this mess you’ve made!

Q: Remember when the sinful woman crashed a private dinner for Jesus?

**... she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. – Luke 7:38 NIV**

He didn’t say: Gross!

**When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, [Gross!] “If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is ...” – Luke 7:39 NIV**

Jesus blesses and heals and gets close to these people because:

- Jesus responds to desire and passion and desperation.
- Not competency, capability, or capacity.

This is what spiritual people have in common: a desire to find Jesus and get in His presence in spite of the messes they’ve made or the messes they’re in.

- Being spiritual isn’t about perfection, it’s about connection.
- Being spiritual isn’t about competency, it’s about intimacy.

## THE CHOSEN PUPPY

A young boy was choosing his first puppy from a litter. All the puppies were jumping up and down except for the runt, which the boy decided was the one he wanted.

- The owner explained that it was crippled.
- He'd have much more fun with one of the others.

The excited young boy quickly lifted his pant leg to expose a chrome leg brace, and said, "That's why I want him."

The very thing that disqualified the puppy from being chosen by others is what most-qualified him to be chosen by that little boy.

- Jesus is attracted to the unattractive.
- He favors the lost over the found; the broken over the whole.

## THE WORKSHOP

- In the OT, God's people are in one mess after another.
- Much NT was written to straighten out messes in the early church.

Jesus' disciples at times were suspicious of each other, accusatory, impulsive, selfish, lazy, and disloyal.

- They rarely knew what He was talking about.
- And when he died they hid (they didn't know what else to do).
- Spirituality comes in unlimited shapes and sizes.

And it looks like whatever you and I look like when we are:

- Striving to connect with Jesus.
- Straining to hear His Holy Spirit.
- Struggling to follow His lead in the daily chaos of our lives.

## NOTE TO THE LOST SOUL

Jesus simply isn't repelled by you. You may feel like trash, but to Him you're the pick of the litter.