Five Survival Sayings (Read, Believe, Repeat… Constantly)

Theological elitists, keep moving along. There's nothing that will interest you here.

Jacked-up sinners, like me, pay careful attention.

We all need a few easy-to-remember axioms that get us through the day. As a man of habit who has struggled with self-condemnation through the years, I've white-knuckled these truths in the middle of my own messiness. You may have heard them before but they are worth reviewing:

> ***The depth of God's love for me has nothing to do with my performance.***

It has *never* been about earning His love. There's *nothing* I could do that will make God love me more than He already does. (nothing) God is love, love, love all the time, regardless of my behavior.

> ***Jesus came for messy people (like me).***

He walked into my personal hurt locker. The last few days of Jesus earthly ministry are a statement: "I can be hurt just like you." He didn't run away from the pain. He walked into it with purpose. He didn't create the struggle bus. He doesn't drive the struggle bus. He's on the struggle bus and He's sitting right there with you. If you grieve because you don't have it all together, remember this: Everybody– even (insert name of the holiest person you know) struggles.

> ***The Gospel means Good News.***

Jesus came to save, not to condemn. If you are feeling the weight of overwhelming condemnation, know that this is not from Jesus. Jesus was never into condemnation, except when it came to name-calling, angry, judgmental professional religionists.

I can never out-grace God.

He doesn't create torture. That is not in His nature. The stubborn nature of humanity is to figure out how to justify one's self in two ways: revealing our righteousness or someone else's unrighteousness. *This is not what Christianity is all about.*

We pay good money and attention to radio hosts, bloggers, TV pundits, and investigative reporters to root out the scandals around us. Something inside us draws us in to listen and to analyze it with friends. Perhaps we do this so that we can hear that whispering voice within us saying, "I'm better that that guy. Right God?" While the truth is this: Uh… no. Jesus loves the ones caught in the act of adultery, idolatry, and addiction. It is the beautiful scandalous truth of Jesus' nature.

Love is the theme.

Ultimately, it all deconstructs into one simple gigantic word: love. It's not about how much money I give, how many good deeds I perform, how many verses I know, how many awards I garner. Love is the ultimate tester. It is about love and it always *will* be about love.

Important:

If the church you go to doesn't sound like this, you might want to reconsider what keeps you there. Because the message of Christianity is so often hijacked by legalism,

perfectionism,
authoritarianism,
politics,
elitism,
showmanship,
personality worship,
serial guilt-mongering,
racism,
behavior-modification idolatry,
brow-beating,
shame-casting,
theological hairsplitting,
apoplectic apologetics,
righteous sarcasm,
appearance management,
and a thousand other slings and arrows disguising themselves as orthodoxy.

Orthodox Christianity says, “Come, weary one. Find rest.” If you’ve been wounded by the church and find yourself disconnected, I want to challenge you to find a community of grace. Reengage with the truth of Jesus. You need it like I need it. Because when it comes right down to it, without that kind of love, grace and connection the world is a dark and lonely place.