

2008 February 13th

Tonite's title is

Messy Sprituality, *The place where our messiness and Jesus meet.*

I will start off with a story from last weeks chapter. It is the conversion story of Ann LaMott whose life was a mess. Maybe it still is but now at least it's a godly mess.

Story...

Maybe you can relate to Ann's story or maybe it reminds you of a friend or a family member. It might make you sad or hopefully it will remind you of the hope we always have in Jesus Christ.

Yaconelle quotes Eugene Peterson from his book, **A LONG OBEDIENCE IN THE SAME DIRECTION** *When we sin and mess up our lives, we find that God doesn't go off and leave us—he enters into our trouble and saves us.*

He also quotes speaker and writer, Keith Miller

Our churches are filled with people who outwardly look contented and at peace but inwardly are crying out for someone to love them.... Just as they are---confused, frustrated, often frightened, guilty, and often unable to communicate even within their own families. But the other people in the church look so happy and contented that one seldom has the courage to admit his own deep needs before such a self-sufficient group as the average church meeting appears to be.

I just want to share one more little story from the Peanuts cartoon. The young girl Lucy is at her five cent psychology booth. Charlie Brown stops for advice about life.

"Life is like a deck chair, Charlie," she says. "On the cruise ship of life, some people place their deck chair at the rear of the ship so they can see where they've been. Other people place their deck chair at the front of the ship so they can see where they're going."

The good "doctor" looks at her puzzled client and asks, "Which way is your deck chair facing?"

Without hesitating, Charlie replies glumly, "I can't even get my deck chair unfolded."

I have listened to a number of episodes of "unshackled" by Union Mission. I believe it's in Chicago. It is a radio drama of a true stories of people whose lives were going down the toilet or were in the toilet when God turned their life around. These radio dramas are as my kids would say "cheesy" with the organ playing in the background and the overly dramatic narrator but I always liked listening to them. Maybe it's like that verse from that familiar hymn: *I love to hear the story of Jesus and his love.*

But as often as we hear those stories of Jesus saving people when they have hit bottom and we believe those stories; how come our image of a Christian is someone who has it all together? And everyone else unworthy?

How come when it comes to us we don't feel worthy of God's love? How come we give up hope for those whose life is a mess? Granted they or we mess up time after time, granted logic tells us to give up. But our faith tells us to hold on. We believe in a God that changes lives don't we? We believe in a God who meets us in our mess. We believe in Jesus who entered into this imperfect world, into all the mess,

in spite of the imperfect people for imperfect people. We believe in Jesus. And our hope is that he will meet us in our mess.

Maybe we should quit. Quit like Anne LaMont quit. Jesus I quit, come into my life. Amen.