



Change

Part 1 – You Don't Have to be Too Much

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We're grateful for all that the Lord is doing in this church. We're starting this series called *Change*. Where and why are we jumping into this? Have you met someone who says Jesus died for all, Jesus loves all, but yet they choose to live their life however they want. It's this "Yes, Jesus died for all, loves all, forgives all, but I'm going to do whatever I want. I'm going to live however I want. I'm going to love whoever I want. No one is going to tell me how to live or define life for me."

I want to take you to John 8. As we look at this today, I think sometimes we don't give people a complete picture of Jesus. We give a very one-sided Jesus when we talk about our Lord. Today, we want to see the full and complete picture of who our Lord is.

I'm going to jump right into John 8. **2 At dawn he (Jesus) appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery."** If you catch someone in the act of adultery, how many people are guilty? If you're bringing one person caught in the act of adultery, that does not work. There has to be more than one.

5 "In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap... You know, he who frames the question wins the debate." You've heard that expression used. It's one of those questions where whether you get a yes or a no, you're going to get in trouble. That's what they are trying to do. They are trying to create a question for Jesus to be trapped in. **...in order to have a basis for accusing him.**

I love this next line. Jesus doesn't give them a yes or a no. **But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.** What did Jesus write on the ground with his finger. There is only one answer to that question. We don't know. But many speculate. Many have created sayings that Jesus put in the dirt.

Some believe that Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground all of the sins of those accusing this woman. Some believe as God wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets, that Jesus bent down and started to write the Ten Commandments on the ground. I like what Calvin says, "Jesus was just ignoring them." Whatever you think of the three I just shared – and there are many more – the answer is still the same: we don't know.

7 *When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."* So, picture them standing there with their stones, ready to go and put this woman to death. **8** *Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

9 *At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time...* If you are one to read through the Bible every year, I just want to encourage you. This is one of those stories and one of those teachings of Jesus that sometimes we can go too fast through and we can miss some key observations. One of my favorite observations in this text is right here. They heard, they began to go away one at a time, and look what it says. ...*the older ones first...*

The older ones dropped their rocks first. Now this is not a guarantee, but it is a tendency. Senior adults tend to have more self-awareness than younger people. Senior adults tend to know, "Okay, I have my own sins to deal with and I'm tired and I don't have time to do this." ...*the older ones first...* I just think this in an observation that we can make. In our youth, we tend to hold onto things longer. We tend to fight for things longer. The older we get... again, maturity and old age are not synonymous. Maturity is not guaranteed just because a person has gray hair, but, typically, as a person grows in age and as they grow in the Lord, they are going to have more self-awareness. In this scene, they were the first ones to leave. ...*until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Where are the ones who accuse you? Has no one condemned you?"*

Verse 11 is the heart behind this whole series. **11** *"No one, sir," she said.* She said, "There is no one left to accuse me." And then you get a complete picture of life in Christ in this verse. Jesus says to her, *"Then neither do I condemn you..."* Follower of Jesus, we believe there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And all God's people said... Amen.

That's where a lot of people like to end the story. Do you know what this is? This is the pardon. But what I see today, and I hear from folks, "I want the pardon, I don't want the change. I want to be forgiven, but now what are you going to be asking of me."

Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." In our culture today, we don't like this "go leave your life of sin." "I just want the pardon. Then I'm going to live however I want." It's an incomplete picture of our faith in Christ if we take the first part without the second part. In theological terms, we would say, "Justification means to be declared righteous." And you receive justification by placing faith in Jesus. Your salvation comes to you not because of changed behavior, but because of what Jesus did for you. Sanctification is "Now go and leave your life of sin." Go and leave here a changed person. None of us in here should ever encounter Jesus and leave unchanged. It should change how we think. It should change what we do. It should change how we treat people.

I've been caught up in these conversations lately with folks that want Christians, the church to accept their lifestyle. I see it on social media and I see on blogs. "Jesus loves me, Jesus died for me and he receives me. When is the church going to understand that message?" I don't go back at them, but I'm thinking, *you're only getting half of it. Yes, Jesus loves you, yes Jesus died for you, yes you can have your sins completely and totally forgiven and once you do that, the motivation out of that should be to go and*

leave your life of sin. I'm going to change. I'm motivated by this. I'm not changing my life to receive salvation, I'm changing my life as an overflow. I'm allowing Jesus to change my life as an overflow of the forgiveness he has given me.

We end up at a place in the church where people are like, "Will you receive me? Will you love me? Will you love me like Jesus loves me?" I always know that's kind of a trap question. When I'm asked that question, I just bend down and start writing on the ground with my hand. Wouldn't that be a great way to start responding to every critic that comes up to you at church? If you see me out in the lobby bent down, writing on the ground...

It's fascinating to me though what we're looking for. I go back to this old, old, old definition that I heard Charles Stanley say years and years ago. He said, "A true friend accepts you for who you are but loves you too much to see you stay that way." Go and leave your life of sin.

Many today want a Jesus who loves us but doesn't change us. We want the love. We need the love. In a world full of Nike issues... You know I wasn't going to let that go this morning. You knew as soon as you heard it that you would hear about it on Sunday. Do you know who hope is here today? I hope all of those who went and bought Nike this week are here. I hope all of you who burned Nike are here. We're going to work through it because Jesus loves all; he died for all. His pardon is available for you, but here at the church, we also talk about the Jesus who changes us and that's why we're doing this series.

Let's talk about that person who is too much. I can be too much. Can anybody else here be too much? My personality can be too much. My passions can become too much. Have you ever met someone that they want their passion to become your passion and it's a little too much? My projects can become too much. My social media can become too much. The points that I try to make sometimes can become too much. Andy Stanley said it this week. "Don't be content with making a point; make a difference."

I understand I become too much. Let me show you a place where I am too much. If you've ever been to a Lego store, at the back of every Lego Store, they have a wall called Pick & Build. On this wall, you have all these containers filled with all different shapes and sizes of Legos. You walk over there and grab this smaller container and they allow you to fill it for \$13.99. Filling this container of Legos could be the most stressful thing I've ever done in my life because I want as much as I can get. I would prefer that they charge by the ounce. I wouldn't be as stressed. But, when we're talking volume and making sure I get the most, it's a very, very stressful time. I'm not the only dad in there that is stressed.

I go over there, and I watch people make this fatal mistake. They start with these massive pieces and I'm like, "NO!" You've got this little area down at the bottom of the container. I don't know if you can see it, but it goes in about an inch and there is all this space to fill in. You have to start with these small, little lights and sirens pieces. So, you stand over there and you're just sprinkling those in until they fill up the bottom. I watch grandparents come to get some for their grandkids. They will fill the container only $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full and walk up to the counter. I'm like, "NO! what are you doing? Fill it all the way up and don't leave any space in there."

So, you fill up all this space and then you start going for the bigger stuff, but you don't fill it all the way to the top with the big stuff. No. You do a little of the big stuff and then you go back to the little stuff and get the little stuff in there. You have to fill up those cracks and fill up all the little tiny spaces. Carson will come over and want to help sometimes and I'm like, "Get away! I'm doing this for you!"

Then what do you do? You pound the container on the counter to settle them pieces in to make more room. Then you go back and get the big pieces. Just stick with me here for little bit; this illustration will stick with you, I promise. You're starting to grab different shapes and then you go back to the little pieces... You fill the container up.

Now you have an issue. You've got this lid and it's got a little space right in the top. It takes four 4x4s put together; they fit in there perfectly. But you still have some space around there, so you've got to come in there one at a time and put these little tiny things in to fill in the sides. But, now the problem is you've got to be able to shut this thing. Then you go over and get another couple of big pieces. This is way more information... We're going to be praying in a couple of seconds, so I want to make sure. You put the bigger pieces over the 4x4s to trap all the pieces in. I'm awesome. I am pretty much a professional at filling these up.

And then you walk up... It's kind of embarrassing when you walk to the counter and the young guy at the counters is like, "Oh my golly, what this guy did for forty-five cents." I'm trying to hold the lid on and I'm totally stressed. I go, "Can you get some tape on it?" I sit there and hold it while he grabs the tape. He starts putting tape on it to hold it down. If a piece falls out, I'm like, "I want that in the bag!" I get really passionate. He tapes it up and he puts it in a bag.

For some of you right now, it's that idea that we want all of the love that we can get from Jesus, but we don't want to change life. This how we approach our faith, which, in turn, is how we approach all of our relationships. "I want as much as I possibly can get, but when it comes to me giving something, that may be another story. I am frantic, I am stressed when it comes to taking all I can get, but what about when it comes to giving what I should be giving and pouring into other people."

The scripture puts it this way with my obsessive/compulsiveness. ***Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house*** (the Lego Store) —***too much of you, and they*** (the cashiers) ***will hate you.*** -Proverbs 25:17

I'm not kidding you. Carson looks at me sometimes like, *Dad, I appreciated it, but it's a little much right here. You need to back it down a notch.*

Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house—too much of you... Too much of your personality, too much of your passions, pet peeves, points, social media footprint, whatever it is. You're a loving person, you're a kind person; you would consider yourself a generous and giving person, but there are times all of us are just too much.

Today, I want to break down why we're too much and why it is changing our relationships, hurting our relationships, and what we can do about it.

Our relationships suffer when we want much but give little. For some of you, that's the struggle right now in your family, in your marriage, in your church, in your friendships, at work. You want much. You have a list a mile long of things you should be getting and you're getting as much out of it as you possibly can, but you're not giving as much, and the relationship is strained. There is another part of this; that's not the only reason why.

Our relationships also suffer when we give much and receive little. We give much to the point of being too much. We give much, we expect much in return, and we receive little. In this situation, we forget who the true and only source of life is. We forget that he pardons us, he loves us, he forgives us, he fills us, so that we can pour into other people.

If I can take you now to Luke 6. We were just in John 8, let's go to Luke 6 where Jesus is going to explain this great relationship principle that should carry with us throughout all our relationships: our friendships, our marriage, our family, here in the church, in the community, at work. How you should treat people you don't agree with. I said it this week and I'll say it again. You can be passionately patriotic without being a hateful person. You can love your country without being a hateful person. You can disagree passionately with someone else... Dare I call them your enemy. And you can disagree with them without hating them. How do we do that? Jesus said to love your enemies. We're kind of taking that today and interpreting it to mean to go after them with everything we've got.

This is what Jesus teaches in Luke 6. **37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged."** Do you see the "whole reap what you sow" principle coming out of this text? **"Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."** Forgive others as Christ has forgiven you. God is love. We love for into each other as he first loved us. So, he is the source and he pours into us. **38 "Give, and it will be given to you."** Many believe this was put into the Bible to help televangelists raise money for their ministries. Not true. It's not a fund-raising verse. It's a relationship verse. It's Jesus teaching us how it works. To the person who has wronged you, don't condemn them. To the person who attacks you, don't judge them. To the person who has hurt you in a relationship, forgive them, don't hate them. Give to them liberally.

And if I can give you another illustration, I love this from the text. Jesus doesn't go to the Lego Store and do the hoarding and taking like I just did. Jesus goes to the grain markets of that day and he's going to talk about a good merchant, how a good merchant does business with grain in that day. Here's what we should be doing in our relationships and in our relationship with the Lord now pouring into other people as well.

A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. So, I'm going to move from Legos over to the grain markets of that day. Today, I'm going to be selling organic brown long grain rice. Amy's always sneaking the good stuff into our home. She's still sneaking spinach into brownies and cucumbers into deserts. Let's walk through it. A good measure. I'm going to just say this is a good measure. Then what does it say? Pressed down. They what does it say? Shaken together. Then what does it say? And running over.

What they would do in that day is you'd have your robe on and the merchant would pour out whatever grain you were buying, and you would just pick up the bottom of your robe and hold it up and they would pour it in. Then you would turn it into a little pocket and tuck it up under your belt. This is how you and I are to be treating one another. The idea here is your heavenly Father is generous to you. He's gracious to you.

If you had a rough day yesterday, or maybe a rough week, would you raise your hand? The scripture says his mercies are new every morning. It is heaped onto you. This is why we now go into relationships. We don't judge others because there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. This free gift has been poured onto us and now we get to go and liberally pour onto others. But, what do we do in our relationships? "You burn me, and I'm supposed to be nice?" The Bible says turn the other cheek and the Bible says love your enemy. We like to sprinkle this stuff around. We like to say, "Oh, I can't believe you said or did that and I'm going to come at you." That's not at all how you and I... In our relationships, we love to take as much as we can get, but what about the pouring into others part? What about that part?

"For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Are you blessed for being a generous and giving person? Absolutely. Does it mean you're going to receive more because of it? No. Why? Because you are already abundantly blessed by your savior. He has poured into you. The very breath you're taking right now comes from your Lord. He is the grace and the mercy, the forgiveness of your sins. This is not earned by how you treat other people, but how you treat other people is the overflow of all that's been heaped on you. So, stop looking at your relationships like you have to get as much out of them as you possibly can, and start thinking about how much can you pour into your wife? How much can you pour into your children? How much can you pour into your church? We should have an attitude of pouring not of getting as much as we can get.

"I want a Jesus who died for me, loves me, and loves me unconditionally, but then he says go and sin no more. I'm going to stay in my life of sin." Then you've missed the whole point. We are a freed people, we're a forgiven people. We heap into the laps of other people because it has been poured out so abundantly on us.

One reason... Not the only reason, but **one reason your friendships struggle is because you expect more than you pour in.** One of the reasons you are what we call an extra grace required person... I know there are plenty of times I'm an extra grace required person. It's because you're just too much. You expect too much. You're a Lego hoarder, not a grain pourer. You're a "get as much as I can get..." "I need your time. I need your attention. I need your resources."

This is why I just want to help you. This is from the heart of a pastor who loves you. When you don't know how to end a text message thread, you're being too much. I can be too much, I know it. Some of you still don't know what the thumbs up emoji means. When your friends send you that, it means "Good, we're done." Then you go into a long thing. Now they don't even bother to get the emoji. You can hit the like or ha-ha button on that particular tweet and you get another thumbs up and you go back into it. You're just too much.

If I can just talk to the teenagers a little bit this morning. You know what I'm talking about. You've got people in your life right now that take as much as they can from you. They get as much as they can from you. Every time the phone rings and you see it, you know the person and you're kind of going *I don't think I want to answer that because they never call to check on me; they're calling just to see what they can get from me.*

We're talking today about those who are too much and then how we can deal with those who are too much. Can I just say this? I see this. This comes from my wheelhouse. **One reason your marriage is drifting, one of the reasons your marriage is struggling is because you expect more from your spouse than you currently pour in.** You are "give me as much time and attention and love as possible." It wasn't a problem early in the relationship. You were heaping it onto each other, but now it's like "What can I get and I'm going to get and then I'll give back. We'll pour into each other," and you have forgotten who the true and only source of life is. The worst marriage on the planet are two Lego people together taking as much as they can. The best marriage on the planet are two people that are heaping the good measure into one another's lap.

We had a moment on Friday. Our whole family got on a plane to Miami. It was a 5:30 am flight. We got on this flight and there was a senior couple in front of us. They were just, from the gate to the seat, grumpy people. They were not happy. I'm going to give them a little bit because it was 5:30 am. We all need a little bit of extra grace at 5:30 am. We're tired and I'm sure they walked a lot to get there. But it was one of these where when they sat down in the seat, they let out this big sigh. She says this, and I thought it was precious: "I'm having a hard time breathing this morning." Now, as a husband, how would you respond to that? "Are you okay?" I think would be one proper response. "Would you like me to turn the vent on? I could help you with that?" No, that's not what he did. She said, "I'm having a hard time breathing today," to which he responds with, "Well, that explains your attitude." To which I did a spit take. It could be one of the best marriage conflict exchanges I've ever seen. "You've been a pain in the butt all morning and I now realize it's a health condition."

I don't want this to be my family. I don't want the container of Legos to be my family. I want the good measure, as Jesus is teaching us, to be my family. I don't want to be the husband or the dad... And I don't want to raise children that are constantly worried about what they can get, what the family will provide for them, and it's just on them to get as much as they can and walk away hoarding it. Instead I want our family to be like the good measure.

Every now and then our marriage is like this; one is the Legos and one is the good measure. I'll leave you to figure out who is who in this picture. I'm the measure. Are you that spouse that when your spouse is the Legos, you're like "You know what, because you're not my source of life, I'm going to heap the good measure onto your lap. I'm not going to judge. I'm not going to condemn. I'm going to forgive freely."

For some of you right now, in your friendships and your marriage, the problem is a source problem, not a spouse problem and not a friend problem.

One reason Woodland Hills Family Church may not be working for you is because you expect more from us than you pour in. You expect more from this church and actually you refuse to pour in. I get

the comments and criticisms all the time of how our church is not measuring up and it is so hard for me. Some of you are new to our church and I get the emails and the messages online where you're saying this happened or that happened. I just want to encourage you. At some point... I'm required by the love of Jesus to continue to heap onto your lap the generosity he has heaped onto me, but at some point, I'm going to snap and I'm going to say, "It's time for you to start pouring in."

I know there are some of you that are here... I want to make this very clear. Woodland Hills right now is a place for you to rest. It's a place for you to heal. You came from a church that wanted much from you and they didn't want a whole lot for you. You kind of got that feeling and it burned you out.

We have many pastors in our congregation that have come from different parts of the country to just find time to heal here. They'll come to me because they know, they've preached this point as well. They're like, "Is it okay?" You kind of get that "How long am I able to rest without plugging in?" We want you to know that we hope we will always be that church where you experience the good measure from us. I'm just going to encourage you. Don't make that your new normal. If that becomes your new normal, then you're like the Legos. Let the Lord use this church and this body and the family here to pour into you so that you can be refreshed, refueled, replenished, not for the purpose of hoarding it all for yourself, but for the purpose of pouring it into others.

What if you pour more in than you receive? I'll take you to this passage in Proverbs 11 where we want to be known as a people... If we are redeemed and the Lord has generously poured out onto us his love and his grace and his mercy and we have freedom and we've received the pardon as the woman caught in adultery had received... If we have received that, may the overflow of our lives be pouring into people everything we have received from the Lord. May we be known as a refreshing people, not an exhausting people. The scripture says, **24 One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. 25 A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.** Stop looking for just your relationships to pour into you. Understand with your heavenly Father, you have unlimited free refills. He pours into you, on top of you, through you so that you can pour into the lives of others.

I hope to see it this week. Maybe at lunch today, you'll sit around... Teenagers, lead out with this. Will you find a way in your family... Don't be the Lego teenager. Don't be the one who sees what they can suck out of the family and get everything they can from the family. Be one that participates in the family by pouring into the laps of each family member. If you want to take a huge step up in maturity... Even young adults if you're going out to lunch with your parents today. Just ask them, "What can I do this week that would refresh you?" I'm not saying you exhaust your parents, but maybe you do. You take the step up in maturity.

Can I just encourage you to go into work this week and maybe sit down with your boss, "I know I exhaust you. I know I wear you out. I know when we have meetings and my opinion and your opinion... And we rarely get along in our opinions and I am constantly sucking the life out of you. I get that. What could I do this week to be a refreshing employee?"

Maybe if you have small children... By the way, the three-year-old, they don't care about refreshing you, so just let that go. Don't try to give them this lesson at lunch. But maybe on the way to lunch, husband and wife, you turn to one another and confess your sin before one another. Just say, "Hey, we're both exhausting one another. We're both sucking the life out of each other. What one thing can we do this week to refresh one another? What can we do this week to pour into each other?"

For some of you that have been at Woodland Hills for a while and you're still not serving, stop by the Welcome Center on the way out and find a way to pour into the lives of other people. We had 2,130 people here last week. We're hoping it divides evenly across three services. That's 710 people a service, but it comes with a lot of need. We need a lot of help and we want to encourage you. Maybe it's time to step up and say, "How can I pour into others.

The Lord's generosity poured into us motivates us to pour into others. Yes, you have been pardoned. Now go leave your life of sins. Change. Do something different with your life. You don't have to go back and live the way that you've been living. Take what you have received and pour it into other people. And all God's people said... Amen.

Father, we thank you for this morning. We thank you for what you continue to do in our church. May we be a church that is known in this community as refreshing. We've all been in relationships and in families and even part of churches that we leave exhausted and drained, but we want to be a church that leaves refueled and refreshed and replenished after being with one another.

We've so been reminded of your love and pardon in our lives that this would now mark all of our relationships, and we would pour it freely into those that we love, we would pour it into those who are difficult. I want to pray it in my life and in the life of every member here that we would also pour it into our enemies. That we would learn to love well as you have loved us, as you have cared for us.

Today, we leave your presence changed. Every time we come face to face with the scripture, when we worship together, when we are reminded of the love that you have for us, may we leave changed people. That is our heart and that is our desire and we're grateful for it.

It is in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.