

Issue 24 - The Father Comes Out to You Too

Messy Story of the Week

Amber stood in the laundry room staring at the mud-caked shoes on the mat like they were Exhibit A in a trial. Her youngest had tracked half the backyard through the house. Her husband had promised he'd mop. He hadn't. And in the middle of her frustration, her phone buzzed: a message from her sister.

"I'm sorry. I messed up again. I don't even know what to say. Can I come over?"

Amber's first thought wasn't kindness. It was a tight, hot little *nope* behind her ribs. Her sister always came back with her own chaos and a tangled story. And Amber was tired of cleaning up messes she didn't make.

Then her oldest walked in, eyes down, holding a shattered ceramic mug. "I didn't mean to. Please don't be mad."

In one afternoon, Amber felt both sides of Luke 15: the person who needs mercy... and the person who thinks mercy is being handed out too easily.

She looked at the shoes again, sighed, and grabbed a towel.

Faithful God Then and Now

In **Luke 15**, the prodigal doesn't return with a strong résumé or a clean record. He returns with a rehearsed speech and a lot of shame. But the Father doesn't negotiate. He runs. He restores. He places a robe, a ring, and sandals on his son, not because the son earned them, but because the son still belongs.

And then there's the older brother. He didn't leave home, but his heart drifted into resentment. The Father goes out to him too, inviting him into the same joy and the same inheritance.

In **John 21**, Peter experiences another kind of restoration. Jesus doesn't just forgive him privately and move on. He makes breakfast. He asks the questions that reach the heart: "Do you love me?" And then He gives Peter a next step that proves restoration is complete: "Feed my sheep."

That's what we talked about on this week's episode of **Marriage, Mayhem, and Mercy** with my guest Tiffany Colvin: mercy that doesn't just wipe the slate, but **restores identity, honor, intimacy, and purpose**. God doesn't wait for you to get it perfect. He runs toward you while you're still dusty and embarrassed, and He welcomes you home as family.

What We Can Learn

- Restoration is not just "forgiven." Restoration is **belonging**.
- Shame says, "Hide." God says, "Come home."
- Suffering can become part of the road back, and God can use it to **refine and equip** us.
- The older brother needs restoration too, because resentment can keep us outside the party even when we never left the house.
- A restored heart often comes with a next step: "**Feed my sheep.**" Love gets feet.

Behind the Curtain

In coaching I often see people stuck in one of two places:

1. **The prodigal place:** "I've messed up too badly. God couldn't want me back." That mindset usually carries a heavy backpack of shame, and shame loves to pretend it's humility. But shame doesn't lead to repentance. It leads to hiding.
2. **The older brother place:** "I've done everything right. Why do *they* get mercy?" That mindset usually reveals a quiet ledger in the heart, where love has turned into wages. And when love becomes wages, joy evaporates.

Both places need the same thing: a return to the Father's heart. Not a performance. Not a speech. A return.

Faithful Family Tools

If you want support as you practice this kind of grace at home, here are two places to plug in:

- **Faithful Families Free Community on Facebook**

A gentle place to learn, be encouraged, and take small next steps with other imperfect humans who love Jesus and want healthier homes.

- **Marriage, Mayhem, and Mercy Podcast**

If this newsletter helped you breathe, the episode will meet you there too. This week's conversation is about mercy that restores, and why your hardest season might be part of how God is preparing you.

Faith Step for the Week

Choose one person to practice “coming out to them” the way the Father does in Luke 15. That could look like: initiating a soft conversation, sending a kind text, offering a clean start, or simply praying, “Lord, help me see them with Your eyes.”

Bible Verse

Psalm 147:3

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

2-Minute Practice

Set a 2-minute timer and do this simple reset:

1. Put one hand on your chest and take three slow breaths.
2. Pray: “Father, I’m here. I need You. Help me come home in my heart.”
3. Ask: “Am I acting like the prodigal or the older brother today?”
4. Choose one next right step: confess, forgive, reconnect, or ask for help.

Two minutes. A small turning. Big fruit over time.

Next Week

Next week on the newsletter, we’re previewing an upcoming episode of **Marriage, Mayhem, and Mercy** with **Pamela and Kevin Bowen** as we talk about **the woman at the well** and all the wells that promise satisfaction but never satisfy. Their story includes being married, divorced, and remarried, and the restoration is a living testimony of what God can do.

If you’d like, I can also give you:

- 3 subject line options
- a 1–2 sentence “preview text” (the little line under the subject in email)
- and a short PS that points people to the Facebook community + podcast link.