



Lucy Moore

# God's Word for Messy People

31 Bible readings and reflections



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## 1

## Getting beyond the 'meh'

**The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

Jesus. How does that name make you feel? I'd love to be like Paul here, bubbling over with passion about him. But if I'm honest, my reaction is too often more like the 'meh' that pops up on social media: the lazy verbal equivalent of a shrug. I hear 'Jesus' so often! You do, when you belong to a church, don't you? And it's too easy to pretend to have the 'right' reaction.

Jesus stands for the truth. He claimed to be ‘the truth’, spoke the truth, lived the truth, rejoiced to see it in others and saved his harshest criticisms for hypocrites, for those who pretend. So we can be sure that he wants us to be honest with him as we read on, even when that makes us think something that startles or even shocks our conscious mind.

We’re going to step out of the busyness of life and catch the vision of Jesus again through a month’s worth of Bible passages. We’ll explore the way he demonstrates the Messy Church values of creativity, hospitality, inclusivity and celebration. Perhaps, if we could become more like Jesus in who we are and in what we do, our world would be revolutionised by the church.

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**If Jesus made the invisible God visible 2,000 years ago, we can make the invisible Jesus visible today as we ourselves come closer to him. It’s an enormous dream, almost as enormous as Paul’s description of him here.**



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## Don't bin it

**'Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.'**

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah described somebody chosen by God as his unique man of action, as someone who takes things that are a mess, that are damaged or dying, that someone else would give up on and throw away. The chosen person takes these things and brings about his new way of being human through them, always giving them a second chance, a new lease of life: the ultimate upcycler.

Perhaps the Jewish fishermen on Lake Galilee 2,000 years ago felt bruised and broken by God's apparent long absence from his people, by the savage Roman invaders of their country, by the religious leaders who were turning their vibrant faith into a set of elitist rules and rituals. Maybe they felt insignificant and unable to make a difference in the world. Then along came a young carpenter with laughter in his eyes and a sense of purpose they'd never seen in anyone else, someone who called them to come and join him on his adventure: how could they refuse?

Think of the number of times Jesus demonstrated a gentle chemistry of transformative justice, encountering someone bruised and broken by the powerful, restoring them to full human dignity and reinstating their reason for living. In each of these encounters, Jesus showed us how God sees every person beneath the labels other people have stuck on them.

Just as the creator God took the formless, empty, dark earth and created light, life, order and fruitfulness, so Jesus brought that same creative and redemptive power into every one of his encounters with people.

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**What creative gentleness, what gentle rebuilding of a just society can you bring into your encounters with other human beings today?**

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