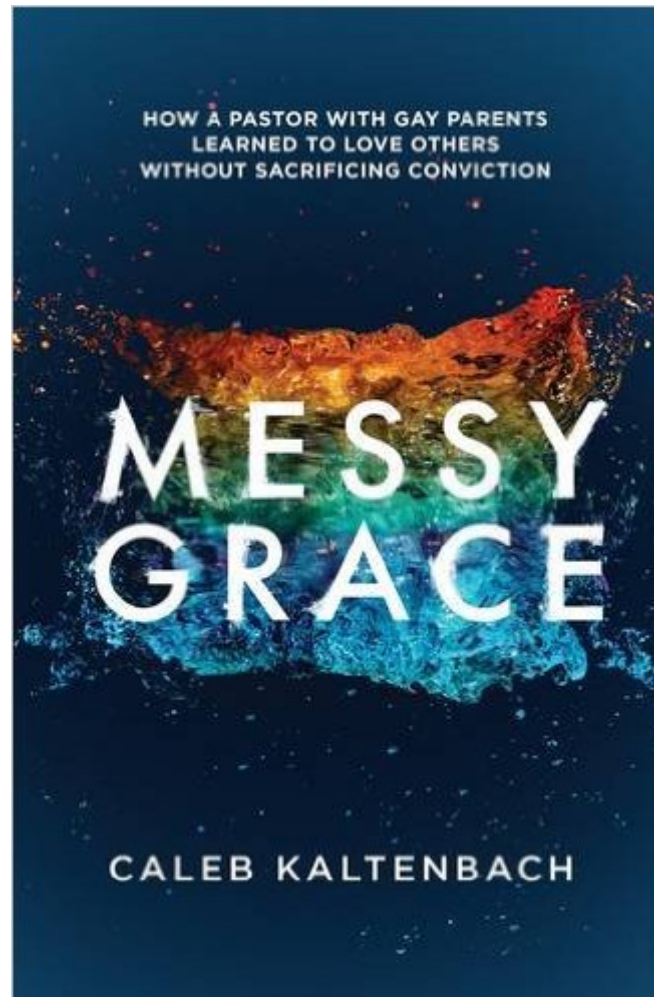


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Messy Grace: How A Pastor With Gay Parents Learned To Love Others Without Sacrificing Conviction



Synopsis

Sometimes, grace gets messy. Caleb Kaltenbach was raised by LGBT parents, marched in gay pride parades as a youngster, and experienced firsthand the hatred and bitterness of some Christians toward his family. But then Caleb surprised everyone, including himself, by becoming a Christian and a pastor. Very few issues in Christianity are as divisive as the acceptance of the LGBT community in the church. As a pastor and as a person with beloved family members living a gay lifestyle, Caleb had to face this issue with courage and grace. Messy Grace shows us that Jesus's command to "love your neighbor as yourself" doesn't have an exception clause for a gay neighbor or for that matter, any other neighbor we might find it hard to relate to. Jesus was able to love these people and yet still hold on to his beliefs. So can you. Even when it's messy. Messy Grace is an important contribution to the conversation about sexual identity for churches and leaders. Caleb's story is surprising and unique, and he weaves it together compellingly. He states his views clearly, leaves room for disagreement, and champions love no matter where you are in this conversation.

Jud Wilhite, Sr. Pastor, Central Christian Church

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Customer Reviews

Caleb Kaltenbach is a pastor with a unique past. When he was still a child, his mother divorced his father and married another woman. Meanwhile, his father hid his own homosexuality until Caleb was in college. He grew up completely immersed in gay culture: going to pride parades, tagging along with his mom and her partner to parties, and watching his parents maligned by

'Christians.' One story in particular broke my heart. When he was a teenager, he went with his mom and her partner to a gay pride parade. While there, they met a group of 'Christian' hecklers waving signs that said, "Fags go away," and "Jesus has no room for you." The hecklers used water-guns to shoot them with urine. As they were being verbally and physically demeaned, Caleb looked at his mother and asked her, "Why are those people acting like that?" Her response was heartbreaking: "Well, Caleb, they're Christians, and Christians hate gay people. Christians don't like anyone who's not like them." It would be easy for us, as Christians, to immediately object, "I don't hate gay people. I'm just speaking the truth." But what do our actions say? Are our lives proclaiming God's Gospel of love to all creation? Or, have we predetermined who is worthy of hearing God's plan to reconcile all humanity back to himself? If there's one issue that many in the Church have dropped the ball on, it's the issue of homosexuality. Most Christians simply haven't been equipped to deal with this complex and sensitive subject. And by the way, this is a topic that isn't going away. We need to learn how to deal with this issue in a way that reflects both the truth of God's Word and his great love for every member of the human family.

Imagine finding out both of your parents are gay. They divorce and live in separate cities where you go to visit them. Imagine you were raised in LGBT community, going to gay pride parades, the LGBT events that your mother helped put together. Imagine as a child you see what Christians do to people who are not like them. You were told by your mother that Christians hate us because we are gay. Imagine you now attend church knowing who your parents are and coming to faith in Christ. Imagine telling your parents you are now a Christian knowing they have been hated on by some Christian groups. Years later, you sensed God's calling to the ministry. Imagine the anxiety you were feeling at that time. These things might not have happened to you personally but they did happen to Caleb Kaltenbach. Caleb is a pastor and writes his story along with what the church should do in a book called, *Messy Grace*. I must admit when I first heard of this book, I thought this is one of those books of a pastor compromising God's Word in regards to the LGBT community. I was wrong. This book is about how the church should show love to the LGBT community without compromising the truth of God's Word. He does believe the Bible calls all to repent and we must trust in Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins. I should have read the subtitle of the book a little more carefully, which says this book is about a pastor learning to love others without compromising conviction. The reason this book is called *Messy Grace* is because the church is called to be a messy place. We are called to love messy people. The church should be the first place where we are honest about our struggles, but it is not. I am not just talking about same-sex attraction.

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