



# THE SINNER

week one

2/6/22

page 1

## Prayers

Opening Prayer:

O Divine Creator, remind us that we are all created in your image and that the Body of Christ is made up of rebels, outsiders, and sinners. Help us face our fears and biases that lead us to exclude or dismiss others. And, give us the courage to face our own sin and feelings of unworthiness. Thank you for Chris, for his willingness to share, and for the work you are doing in his life. Amen

Closing Prayer:

O Holy God, we lower our heads before you and we confess that we have too often forgotten that we are yours. Sometimes we carry on our lives as if there was no God and we fall short of being a credible witness to You. For these things we ask your forgiveness and we also ask for your strength. Give us clear minds and open hearts so we may witness to You in our world. Remind us to be who You would have us to be regardless of what we are doing or who we are with. Hold us to You and build our relationship with You and with those You have given us on earth.\*\*

## From The Rebel

*\*Throughout the series, Luke: A Gospel for Rebels and Outsiders, we will be featuring the voices of real people in our congregation who have felt (or continue to feel) like an outsider.*

Closing Prayer: My father (Tom) and I live our lives by the old adage, "play hard, work hard", and boy do we live up to the phrase.

We are NOT "church" people. Even though he was raised Italian/Catholic (and I inherited those traits) we don't go to church on Sunday mornings, which is fine by me because I'm certain I don't belong there.

Tom and I are closer than close. We are "brothers", best friends, and also father/son. The order here is intentional. I work for Tom – I live for Tom – I would walk through the gates of hell for Tom.

But now he's dead. All of my eggs were in his basket. F---! I can't cope. The only thing I know to do is to drink (and snort) myself to death. Ramp it up. I don't want to be here. I want to be with him. But I'm too much of a chicken-shit to end things myself. So, drugs and alcohol are my means to an end - eventually they'll get me to wherever he is. I don't care about anything or anyone else.

But for f---'s sake, it isn't working. Something inside of me keeps saying, "live... you have work to do".

– Chris\*

Reflection Questions:

- Reflect on how you may view the author if you saw them in the deepest part of their sin. Now reflect on how you would view them sitting next to you at church or in core group. What is different? Why is that different?
- What is a setting in your life that you can have more grace for sinners?



# THE SINNER

week one

2/6/22

page 2

Read Aloud:

Luke 4:14-19

Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news about him spread throughout the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been raised. On the Sabbath he went to the synagogue as he normally did and stood up to read. The synagogue assistant gave him the scroll from the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because the Lord has anointed me.  
He has sent me to preach good news to the poor,  
to proclaim release to the prisoners  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to liberate the oppressed,  
and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Luke 5:27-31

Afterward, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at a kiosk for collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, "Follow me."

Levi got up, left everything behind, and followed him. Then Levi threw a great banquet for Jesus in his home. A large number of tax collectors and others sat down to eat with them. The Pharisees and their legal experts grumbled against his disciples. They said, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

Jesus answered, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do."

Engaging Scripture:

Let's pause before we think about how this passage makes us feel or how it applies to our context. This section can help ground your group in talking about what is written and consider its impact on the original audience.

The passage Jesus reads from in Isaiah (Isa 61:1-2) is a prophecy and he goes on to say, in Luke 4:21, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" indicating that the prophecy is, in fact, about him. What does the passage list as the things he was sent to do?

How does the story about Levi demonstrate the fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus' work?

1. In both sections of scripture this week, we see Jesus reaching out; first to those in the synagogue within earshot and then to a group at a banquet that included tax collectors and others. How did that physical act of Jesus reaching out represent God's plan for all people?

Application Questions:

- Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. Perfect people don't need Jesus/the church/the gospel, sinners do; and we are all sinners. We see Levi "leave everything" and move towards Jesus and the author of the opening true story contemplates that choice in a way as well. Have you ever felt like your sin of choice was your only choice?
- Chris' inner thought of "live...you have work to do" (in the story above) is compelling. Church, CoreGroups, and daily devotions are part of that work. How do you keep the work in the forefront when the desire to sin is oftentimes stronger?
- A painful reality is that sin can be a means to cope with the brokenness of the world. It is a dark, deceptive, numbing temptation that pulls us away from God. Yet, in the readings this week, we see Jesus fighting through that sin to show God's will. The truth is that God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to rescue us from the destruction of sin. What are some things we can do to keep that truth on our minds and in our hearts?

Taking it Further (Challenge for Rebels):

Check these out to take the heart of the sermon and our discussion further this week.

Reach out to someone in your life who may see themselves as a sinner, invite them to dinner or to church.

Have a conversation with your family about sin. Talk about the unbalanced relationship between our sin and the forgiveness of the church, and how that encourages us to sin as little as we can.

Be a sounding board for someone who needs to share. We all have pasts and maybe someone close to you needs to unload some of theirs.