

I. ME

- A. Welcome/Cards/Online
- B. Part 3
 - 1. People who were nothing like Jesus loved being around him.
 - 2. Why?
 - 3. Accepted: No matter how different we are, I see you as a person worthy of value and honor
- C. Lasts weeks- Curious/Skeptic
- D. This week... something... well...
 - 1. If you're new and a friend invited you... this is the topic they were hoping I wasn't going to bring up
 - 2. They are about to regret their invitation... don't hold what I say against them.
- E. Today we are talking about SINNERS
- F. To ease us in... **Game: Are you a sinner?**

II. WE

- A. **SIN**: not a fun word is it? Why?
- B. Weird religious word that usually brings up three responses...
 - 1. I don't care... next week.
 - 2. Anger
 - a. How dare you?!
 - b. You don't know me
 - c. Who are you to judge
 - d. I've made mistakes but I'm not as bad as...

3. Shame

- a. You're right. I'm horrible
- b. You don't know the half of it
- c. If you really knew how bad I was you wouldn't even talk to me
- d. A cloud of shame follows wherever I go

4. Usually a mix of both

- a. Don't call me a sinner! I do that to myself enough!
- C. However we respond... we usually agree that... if there is a God, he definitely does not accept sinners.
 - 1. They broke the rules
 - 2. God doesn't accept sinners... He condemns them to hell, right?
 - 3. "I'm not that bad... but some people really are and they don't deserve God's acceptance."
- D. Exactly what people in Jesus' day thought too
 - 1. Except it was institutionalized.
 - 2. There were people who were in... the righteous
 - 3. And people who were out... sinners
 - 4. The righteous people even had rules against eating with and associating with sinners.
 - 5. If a righteous person touched a sinner they would be "unclean" until they washed the unclean ick away.
 - 6. Sinners were kicked out of their synagogues... barely considered a Jew.

- E. Worst were Tax collectors...
1. Jews who were working for Romans
 - a. The empire who had subjugated their people
 2. Collected a certain amount for Rome but charged extra and became rich off of the profits
 - a. Used the strength of Rome to enforce their fees.
 - b. Against their own people
 3. Weren't allowed into the synagogues or religious life...
 4. Separated from their people, their heritage, God.
- F. Everyone, including the sinners, knew there was no way God accepted them.
- G. **Everyone was sure God hated sinners... until Jesus came.**
1. A man who claimed to be pure righteousness in a body started touching and eating with unclean, dirty sinners.
 2. Jesus not only hung out with them and accepted them ... he enjoyed them!
- H. Perfect example comes from a story we find in the eye-witness account of Matthew.
1. Written by one of Jesus disciples.
 2. Shows us that **Jesus' acceptance is appallingly offensive b/c it is unbelievably inclusive.**

III. GOD (Matthew 9:9-13)

A. V. 9

1. No one could believe it.
2. No doubt his disciples had some serious feelings
 - a. John and Andrew devout religious guys
 - b. Simon the Zealot- freedom fighter against Rome.
3. Matt hadn't asked to follow... hadn't repented and said forgive me lord!
4. Jesus initiated... Jesus pursued a relationship with him!
5. Used same words he used to call them... "Follow Me."
 - a. Be my disciple.
 - b. Be one of my main guys in bringing God's Kingdom to earth.
6. Get's worse... or better... depending which group you're in.

B. V. 10-11

1. Ultimate sign of acceptance was sharing a meal inside someone's house.
2. I'm with you. We are friends. I accept you.
3. Pharisees- No way you are from God. Our rules forbid this...
4. Jesus- Exactly... YOUR rules

C. V. 12-13

1. "Pharisees you think you are righteous... you think you are healthy..."
2. "You've followed all the rules and rituals to a T, but you've missed the big picture"
3. "Go and Learn"

4. "You missed what all those rules and rituals point to..."
5. "No one can keep them... everyone is separated and sick, everyone needs restoration and healing"
6. "God wants to offer you mercy and forgiveness and for you to offer the same to others... but all you do is judge to trick yourself into thinking you're not so bad."
7. "You ASSUME you're healthy..."
8. You've deluded yourselves into thinking you can be good enough to earn God's love...
9. **God's love is not something to earn... it's something to accept.**
10. In fact, in trying to keep your deluded self-righteousness going you have pushed away the people God has been trying to reach.
11. You've set yourselves above them to make yourselves feel more secure... "at least you aren't as bad as them."
12. You're worse.
13. They admit they are separated... you refuse to see your own sickness.

IV. YOU

- A. Now before we get all excited and saying, "Yeah get 'em Jesus!"
 1. I have to ask you some questions... usually I'll tell you you are safe... but these aren't safe questions.

- B. **Churched:** How comfortable are you with the fact that Jesus called Matthew to be one of his disciples...
 1. Before talking about his sin?
 2. Before Mathew changed his life?
 3. Isn't recorded that he confronts it at all
- C. **Everyone:** If you were Matthew...
 1. Are there things in your past/present that would make you think you should turn down the invitation?
 2. Things you think would disqualify you?
 3. Or things you wouldn't want Jesus to find out?
- D. When we see Jesus accept people we think don't deserve it... it's **appallingly offensive**
- E. But it's that unbelievable inclusion that is our only hope...
- F. The truth is **we are all sinners.**
 1. Sin: Breaking the Law of Love... what I want is more important than you.
 2. None of us deserve to be accepted and included...
 3. **That's offensive.**
- G. B/c most of us have given into the delusional self-righteousness that we "aren't that bad"
 1. There's a part of us... like the Pharisees that says... I'm not as bad as those sinners...

2. Mistakers

 3. We don't want to accept we're sinners b/c then we are exposed... here comes the punishment...
- H. But **God doesn't hate you b/c you're a sinner. God hates sin b/c he loves you and sin hurts you.**
 - a. Sin kills/destroys... separates

- I. God wants to heal you and restore you...
- J. But in order for that to happen **we have to recognize that we are sinners.**
- K. You have to acknowledge you're sick before the doctor can heal you.
- L. B/c there's no ultimate healing without the removal of sin
 1. **Like cancer.** It has to be eradicated... removed.
 2. But where does the sin come from... you.
- M. God made a way to destroy sin without destroying you... Jesus.
 1. Jesus took our punishment... and rose from the dead proving that he has the power to destroy sin and it's ultimate effect... death.
- N. Jesus' death and resurrection is the cure.
 1. Not just sinning less... it always grows
 2. Not just cleaning up the outside (religion)... that's what the Pharisees were trying to do
 3. But acknowledging that you are not a mistaker. You are a sinner that needs what we all need... forgiveness.
 4. It's trusting that Jesus' death paid the penalty of your sin and his resurrection destroyed its power.
 5. Trusting Jesus to heal you and restore you to a perfect relationship with your heavenly Father
 - a. And then loving others the way he loved you.
 - b. And restoring and healing relationships with them
 6. **Forgiveness restores and heals relationships.**
 7. **And it is available to everyone... unbelievably inclusive.**

- O. Matthew experienced it first hand.
 1. No coincidence that the story is in the Gospel of Matthew...
 2. This passage is an autobiography of one of the worst sinners one could be experiencing love and acceptance
 3. The true story of God pursuing those who have been pulled away by sin and pushed away by the self-righteous.
 4. Changed his life forever...
 5. Can change yours too
- P. **Admit what you already know... you're not a mistaker you're a sinner**

Q. Ask for and Accept God's healing and forgiveness

R. Want that? Tell him.

V. WE

- A. Jesus' acceptance is appallingly offensive to those who think they don't need it... b/c it's unbelievably inclusive to those who know they do.
- B. We are all invited to experience true healing and restoration... are we willing to admit we need it?
- C. Jesus accepts you... he loves you... he is for you... he died for you.

D. Jesus accepts and pursues sinners.

