



SINNERS

EXPERIENCING JESUS' COMPASSION
IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR SIN, STRUGGLES, AND SHAME

— KAT ARMSTRONG —

STORYLINE

I'm convinced that the Bible is somehow powerfully simple and beautifully complex. Like a diamond viewed from different angles, Scripture continually confronts my heart in fresh ways. This Bible-study series offers insightful perspectives and gives its participants a refreshing opportunity to admire the character of God and be transformed by the truth of his Word. Our souls need to meander through the minutiae and metanarrative of the Bible, and the **Storyline Bible Studies** help us do both.

KYLE IDLEMAN, senior pastor of Southeast Christian Church and bestselling author of *Not a Fan* and *One at a Time*

If you are longing for a breath of fresh air in your spiritual life, this study is for you. Kat Armstrong brings to life both familiar and less familiar Bible stories in such an engaging way that you can't help but see how the God of the past is also working and moving in your present. Through the captivating truths revealed in this series, you will discover more about God's faithfulness, be equipped to move past fear and disappointment, and be empowered to be who you were created to be. If your faith has felt mundane or routine, these words will be a refreshing balm to your soul and a guide to go deeper in your relationship with God.

HOSANNA WONG, international speaker and bestselling author of *How (Not) to Save the World: The Truth about Revealing God's Love to the People Right Next to You*

We are watching a new wave of Bible studies that care about the Bible's big story, from Genesis to Revelation; that plunge Bible readers into the depths of human despair and show them the glories of the Kingdom God plans for creation; and that invite readers to participate in that story in all its dimensions—in the mountains and the valleys. Anyone who ponders these Bible studies will come to terms not only with the storyline of the Bible but also with where each of us fits in God's grand narrative. I heartily commend Kat's **Storyline Bible Studies**.

REV. CANON DR. SCOT McKNIGHT, professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary

Kat Armstrong is an able trail guide with contagious enthusiasm! In this series, she'll take you hiking through Scripture to experience mountains and valleys, sticks and stones, sinners and saints. If you are relatively new to the Bible or are struggling to see how it all fits together, your trek with Kat will be well worth it. You might even decide that hiking through the Bible is your new hobby.

CARMEN JOY IMES, associate professor of Old Testament at Biola University and author of *Bearing God's Name: Why Sinai Still Matters*

Kat Armstrong takes you into the heart of Scripture so that Scripture can grow in your heart. The **Storyline Bible Studies** have everything: the overarching story of God's redemption, the individual biblical story's historical context, and the text's interpretation that connects with today's realities. Armstrong asks insightful questions that make the Bible come alive and draws authentically on her own faith journey so that readers might deepen their relationship with Jesus. Beautifully written and accessible, the **Storyline Bible Studies** are a wonderful resource for individual or group study.

LYNN H. COHICK, PhD, provost and dean of academic affairs at Northern Seminary

Christians affirm that the Bible is God's Word and provides God's life-giving instruction and encouragement. But what good is such an authoritative and valuable text if God's people don't engage it to find the help the Scriptures provide? Here's where Kat Armstrong's studies shine. In each volume, she presents Bible study as a journey through Scripture that can be transformational. In the process, she enables readers to see the overarching storyline of the Bible and to find their place in that story. In addition, Armstrong reinforces the essential steps that make Bible study life-giving for people seeking to grow in their faith. Whether for individuals, for small groups, or as part of a church curriculum, these studies are ideally suited to draw students into a fresh and invigorating engagement with God's Word.

WILLIAM W. KLEIN, PhD, professor emeritus of New Testament interpretation and author of *Handbook for Personal Bible Study: Enriching Your Experience with God's Word*

Kat has done two things that I love. She's taken something that is familiar and presented it in a fresh way that is understandable by all, balancing the profound with accessibility. And her trustworthy and constant approach to Bible study equips the participant to emerge from this study with the ability to keep studying and growing more.

MARTY SOLOMON, creator and executive producer of *The BEMA Podcast*

You are in for an adventure. In this series, Kat pulls back the curtain to reveal how intentionally God has woven together seemingly disconnected moments in the collective Bible story. Her delivery is both brilliant and approachable. She will invite you to be a curious sleuth as you navigate familiar passages of Scripture, discovering things you'd never seen before. I promise you will never read the living Word the same again.

JENN JETT BARRETT, founder and visionary of The Well Summit

Kat has done it again! The same wisdom, depth, humility, and authenticity that we have come to expect from her previous work is on full display here in her new **Storyline Bible Study** series. Kat is the perfect guide through these important themes and through the story of Scripture: gentle and generous on the one hand, capable and clear on the other. She is a gifted communicator and teacher of God's Word. The format of these studies is helpful too—perfect pacing, just the right amount of new information at each turn, with plenty of space for writing and prayerful reflection as you go and some great resources for further study. I love learning from Kat, and I'm sure you will too. Grab a few friends from your church or neighborhood and dig into these incredible resources together to find your imagination awakened and your faith strengthened.

DAN LOWERY, president of Pillar Seminary

Kat Armstrong possesses something I deeply admire: a sincere and abiding respect for the Bible. Her tenaciousness to know more about her beloved Christ, her commitment to truth telling, and her desire to dig until she mines the deepest gold for her Bible-study readers makes her one of my favorite Bible teachers. I find few that match her scriptural attentiveness and even fewer that embody her humble spirit. This project is stunning, like the rest of her work.

LISA WHITTLE, bestselling author of *Jesus over Everything: Uncomplicating the Daily Struggle to Put Jesus First*, Bible teacher, and podcast host



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with Tyndale House Publishers



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Sinners: Experiencing Jesus' Compassion in the Middle of Your Sin, Struggles, and Shame

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For my dad, Ronald K. Obenhaus.

I think you would have loved this.

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A Message from Kat

I WROTE *SINNERS* when I was depressed and anxious. In a matter of weeks, I lived through

- ◆ the five-year anniversary of my father's death,
- ◆ significant church hurt,
- ◆ a two-hundred-page report on sexual abuse in one of the largest Christian denominations, and
- ◆ the news of a mass shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Every day I woke up to more news that evil abounds, and all I could say was, *I am not okay. Christ, have mercy.*

What lifted my spirits? Reading about Jesus' compassion toward sinners. In the chaos and pain and devastation of this world, Jesus is our rescue plan. He came to save sinners like me and you.

As I searched the Scriptures for encouragement, what held my attention and brought peace to my soul was Jesus' tenderheartedness, compassion, and mercy toward the unlikely "sinners" who expressed great faith.

Righteous sinners are all over the New Testament. So much so that I suggest that they are a character archetype in the Scriptures, a literary pattern in the Bible. This pattern highlights God's compassion and kindness for all and emphasizes the beautiful expressions of faith from people burdened with sin, struggles, and shame.

These memorable people will be the focus of our study together, and I'm confident that anyone seeking peace for their soul, anyone struggling to abide in this world, anyone defeated by circumstance will be encouraged by God's rescue plan: Jesus came to save sinners like us.

I'm praying that your time studying righteous sinners in the Bible is an awe-inspiring catalyst to engage and experience God's truth—that you would marvel at the artistry of God's storytelling. And that the righteous sinners in the Bible will help you stay gentle and tender in a world so hardened and broken.

Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kat". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Storyline of Scripture

YOUR DECISION TO STUDY THE BIBLE for the next few weeks is no accident—God has brought you here, to this moment. And I don't want to take it for granted. Here, at the beginning, I want to invite you into the most important step you can take, the one that brings the whole of the Bible alive in extraordinary ways: a relationship with Jesus.

The Bible is a collection of divinely inspired manuscripts written over fifteen hundred years by at least forty different authors. Together, the manuscripts make up tens of thousands of verses, sixty-six books, and two testaments. Point being: It's a lot of content.

But the Bible is really just one big story: God's story of redemption. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible includes narratives, songs, poems, wisdom literature, letters, and even apocalyptic prophecies. Yet everything we read in God's Word helps us understand God's love and his plan to be in a relationship with us.

If you hear nothing else, hear this: God loves you.

It's easy to get lost in the vast amount of information in the Bible, so we're going to explore the storyline of Scripture in four parts. And as you locate your experience in the story of the Bible, I hope the story of redemption becomes your own.

PART 1: GOD MADE SOMETHING GOOD.

The big story—God's story of redemption—started in a garden. When God launched his project for humanity, he purposed all of us—his image bearers—to flourish and co-create with him. In the beginning there was peace, beauty, order, and abundant life. The soil was good. Life was good. We rarely hear this part of our story, but it doesn't make it less true. God created something good—and that includes you.

PART 2: WE MESSED IT UP.

If you've ever thought, *This isn't how it's supposed to be*, you're right. It's not. We messed up God's good world. Do you ever feel like you've won gold medals in messing things up? Me too. All humanity shares in that brokenness. We are imperfect. The people we love are imperfect. Our systems are jacked, and our world is broken. And that's on us. We made the mess, and we literally can't help ourselves. We need to be rescued from our circumstances, the systems in which we live, and ourselves.

PART 3: JESUS MAKES IT RIGHT.

The good news is that God can clean up all our messes, and he does so through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. No one denies that Jesus lived and died. That's just history. It's the empty tomb and the hundreds of eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after his death that make us scratch our heads. Because science can only prove something that is repeatable, we are dependent upon the eyewitness testimonies of Jesus' resurrection for this once-in-history moment. If Jesus rose from the dead—and I believe he did—Jesus is exactly who he said he was, and he accomplished exactly what had been predicted for thousands of years. He restored

us. Jesus made *it*, all of it, right. He can forgive your sins and connect you to the holy God through his life, death, and resurrection.

PART 4: ONE DAY, GOD WILL MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.

The best news is that this is not as good as it gets. A day is coming when Christ will return. He's coming back to re-create our world: a place with no tears, no pain, no suffering, no brokenness, no helplessness—just love. God will make all things new. In the meantime, God invites you to step into his storyline, to join him in his work of restoring all things. Rescued restorers live with purpose and on mission: not a life devoid of hardship, but one filled with enduring hope.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S STORYLINE

If the storyline of Scripture feels like a lightbulb turning on in your soul, that, my friend, is the one true, living God, who eternally exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is inviting you into a relationship with him to have your sins forgiven and secure a place in his presence forever. When you locate your story within God's story of redemption, you begin a lifelong relationship with God that brings meaning, hope, and restoration to your life.

Take a moment now to begin a relationship with Christ:

God, I believe the story of the Bible, that Jesus is Lord and you raised him from the dead to forgive my sins and make our relationship possible. Your storyline is now my story. I want to learn how to love you and share your love with others. Amen.

If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

ROMANS 10:9, NRSV

How to Use This Bible Study

THE **STORYLINE BIBLE STUDIES** are versatile and can be used for

- ◆ individual study (self-paced),
- ◆ small groups (five- or ten-lesson curriculum), or
- ◆ church ministry (semester-long curriculum).

INDIVIDUAL STUDY

Each lesson in the *Sinners* Bible study is divided into four fifteen- to twenty-minute parts (sixty to eighty minutes of individual study time per lesson). You can work through the material one part at a time over a few different days or all in one sitting. Either way, this study will be like anything good in your life: What you put in, you get out. Each of the four parts of each lesson will help you practice Bible-study methods.

SMALL GROUPS

Working through the *Sinners* Bible study with a group could be a catalyst for life change. Although the Holy Spirit can teach you truth when you read the Bible on your own, I want to encourage you to gather a small group together to work through this study for these reasons:

- ◆ God himself is in communion as one essence and three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Interconnected, interdependent relationships are hallmarks of the Christian faith life.
- ◆ When we collaborate with each other in Bible study, we have access to the viewpoints of our brothers and sisters in Christ, which enrich our understanding of the truth.

For this Bible study, every small-group member will need a copy of the *Sinners* study guide. In addition, I've created a free downloadable small-group guide that includes

- ◆ discussion questions for each lesson,
- ◆ Scripture readings, and
- ◆ prayer prompts.

Whether you've been a discussion leader for decades or just volunteered to lead a group for the first time, you'll find the resources you need to create a loving atmosphere for men and women to grow in Christlikeness. You can download the small-group guide using this QR code.



CHURCH MINISTRY

Church and ministry leaders: Your work is sacred. I know that planning and leading through a semester of ministry can be both challenging and rewarding. That's why every **Storyline Bible Study** is written so that you can build modular semesters of ministry. The *Sinners* Bible study is designed to complement the

Saints Bible study. Together, *Sinners* and *Saints* can support a whole semester of ministry seamlessly, inviting the people you lead into God's Word and making your life simpler.

To further equip church and ministry leaders, I've created *The Leader's Guide*, a free digital resource. You can download *The Leader's Guide* using this QR code.



The Leader's Guide offers these resources:

- ◆ a sample ministry calendar for a ten-plus-lesson semester of ministry,
- ◆ small-group discussion questions for each lesson,
- ◆ Scripture readings for each lesson,
- ◆ prayer prompts for each lesson,
- ◆ five teaching topics for messages that could be taught in large-group settings, and
- ◆ resources for deeper study.

SPECIAL FEATURES

However you decide to utilize the *Sinners* Bible study, whether for individual, self-paced devotional time; as a small-group curriculum; or for semester-long church ministry, you'll notice several stand-out features unique to the **Storyline Bible Studies**:

- ◆ gospel presentation at the beginning of each Bible study;
- ◆ full Scripture passages included in the study so that you can mark up the text and keep your notes in one place;
- ◆ insights from diverse scholars, authors, and Bible teachers;
- ◆ an emphasis on close readings of large portions of Scripture;
- ◆ following one theme instead of focusing on one verse or passage;
- ◆ Christological narrative theology without a lot of church-y words; and
- ◆ retrospective or imaginative readings of the Bible to help Christians follow the storyline of Scripture.

You may have studied the Bible by book, topic, or passage before; all those approaches are enriching ways to read the Word of God. The **Storyline Bible Studies** follow a literary thread to deepen your appreciation for God's master plan of redemption and develop your skill in connecting the Old Testament to the New.



INTRODUCTION

THE SINNERS STORYLINE

“IS ANAKIN SKYWALKER one of the good guys?”

My son, Caleb, has started asking some curious questions about Star Wars—his favorite movie series. Although he doesn’t yet have the language to articulate the themes he’s picking up on, Caleb can easily identify basic character types.

Television programming for grade-school kids often reduces characters into two categories: good and bad. But as soon as Caleb started enjoying more complex stories, he had trouble identifying the good guys and the bad guys. Sometimes it felt as though characters were a mix of both.

Caleb is a long way off from literature classes where he’ll learn about more nuanced character archetypes. But he’s intuitively learning that characters like Boromir from *The Lord of the Rings* and Anakin Skywalker from *Star Wars* are tragic hero types. Flawed leaders. Good guys who do bad things. And you and I know that the complex characters in our favorite stories more closely resemble real-life people.

The Bible is a literary masterpiece for infinite reasons, and one way God’s artistic brilliance unfolds is through his archetypes. We see throughout the Scriptures that God is not only comfortable preserving the confusing actions of complex characters but also purposeful in layering their character development in order to teach us timeless truths.

In *Sinners*, we’re going to explore one of these startling and powerful truths: that some of the bad guys repent faster than the good ones.

In a bout of depression, I found great comfort zeroing in on the “sinful” characters in the New Testament who exhibited great faith in Christ. In some cases, these people were considered sinful because of their behaviors, their lifestyles, their titles, or their ethnic backgrounds. Often, the people who experienced Jesus’ compassion most powerfully were struggling with sin and shame.

You and I are going to discover together God’s tender compassion for *anyone*—regardless of their social status, regardless of their past, regardless of their labels. And we are going to notice the counterintuitive ways “sinful” people responded to Jesus in righteous acts of faith. You’ll start to see a theme unfold: The people considered sinful often acted with greater faith than the most religious people of Jesus’ day.

Palestinian Judaism generally followed its scriptural heritage by warning of conduct that was deemed “sinful” and persons who were regarded as “sinners.” Yet these were not simply moral terms for violators of God’s law. What was regarded as “sin” and who was a “sinner” were matters of legal dispute among Jewish leaders. In many cases, “sin” and “sinner” were freighted terms within Jewish sectarianism and were deployed in order to denounce or exclude persons for behavior that did not meet the perceived norms of certain Jewish factions.¹

Michael F. Bird, “Sin, Sinner,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*

According to Jesus, it is the restoration of sinners through repentance, rather than the exclusion of sinners from communal life, that is God's intended purpose for sinners.²

Michael F. Bird, "Sin, Sinner," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*

Every person we survey in this Bible study is deeply embedded in an ancient, symbol-driven world where the characters in a story don't just exist—they also represent concepts larger than the person themselves. Sometimes God repurposes a character archetype to emphasize biblical themes.

The *Sinners* Bible study will guide you through five Bible stories in which a person who is considered sinful by society acts righteously and with great faith. The presence of these people in the Scriptures is a key element in the story, embodying truths about God.

In *Sinners*, we're going to explore

- ◆ *Matthew 9*: the disciple and former tax collector named Matthew who leaves his tollbooth to follow Jesus and whose faith confuses the religious;
- ◆ *Luke 7*: the Roman centurion who advocates for his sick servant and whose faith saves the servant's life;
- ◆ *Luke 7*: the sinful woman who anoints Jesus with the perfume from her alabaster jar and whose faith saves her;
- ◆ *Matthew 15*: the Canaanite mom who begs Jesus to heal her demon-possessed daughter and whose faith leads to her daughter's healing; and
- ◆ *John 4*: the Samaritan woman at the well who is approached by Jesus and whose faith starts revival in her town.

We're going to do this by looking at each righteous sinner through four different lenses:

- ◆ **PART 1: CONTEXT.** Do you ever feel dropped into a Bible story disoriented? Part 1 will introduce you to the character you're going to study and help you study their story in its scriptural context. Getting your bearings before you read will enable you to answer the question *What am I about to read?*
- ◆ **PART 2: SEEING.** Do you ever read on autopilot? I do too. Sometimes I finish reading without a clue as to what just happened. A better way to read the Bible is to practice thoughtful, close reading of Scripture to absorb the message God is offering to us. That's why part 2 includes close Scripture reading and observation questions to empower you to answer the question *What is the story saying?*
- ◆ **PART 3: UNDERSTANDING.** If you've ever scratched your head after reading your Bible, part 3 will give you the tools to understand the author's intended meaning both for the original audience and for you. Plus you'll practice connecting the Old and New Testaments to get a fuller picture of God's unchanging grace. Part 3 will enable you to answer the question *What does it mean?*
- ◆ **PART 4: RESPONDING.** The purpose of Bible study is to help you become more Christlike; that's why part 4 will include journaling space for your reflection on and responses to the content and a blank checklist for actionable next steps. You'll be able to process what you're learning so that you can live out the concepts and pursue Christlikeness. Part 4 will enable you to answer the questions *What truths is this passage teaching?* and *How do I apply this to my life?*

One of my prayers for you, as a curious Bible reader, is that our journey through this study will help you cultivate a biblical imagination so that you're able to make connections throughout the whole storyline of the Bible. In each lesson, I'll do my best to include a few verses from different places in the Bible that are connected to our sinner's story. In the course of this study, we'll see the way God

shows up for righteous sinners throughout his Word—and get a glimpse of how he might show up in our lives today.

God’s Word is so wonderful, I hardly know how to contain my excitement. Feel free to geek out with me; let your geek flag fly high, my friends. When we can see how interrelated all the parts of Scripture are to each other, we’ll find our affection for God stirred as we see his artistic brilliance unfold.

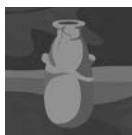
LESSON ONE

LEAVING YOUR SECURITY BEHIND TO FOLLOW JESUS



**THE TAX COLLECTOR:
THE FAITH OF THE DISCIPLE WHO LEAVES HIS TOLLBOOTH**

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 9



PART 1

CONTEXT

Before you begin your study, we will start with the context of the story we are about to read together: the setting, both cultural and historical; the people involved; and where our passage fits in the larger setting of Scripture. All these things help us make sense of what we're reading. Understanding the context of a Bible story is fundamental to reading Scripture well. Getting your bearings before you read will enable you to answer the question *What am I about to read?*

MY HUSBAND, AARON, sold cars right out of college and into our early years of marriage. We don't miss the late nights on the car lot or the ups and downs of commission-based living, but we sure do miss the demo cars—the nicest rides of our lives.

Whenever we told our friends and family what we were up to, we'd get a lot of confused looks in response to Aaron's profession. Sometimes we could tell that people were trying to fix their faces so their disapproval wouldn't show. But of all the reactions, one stands out the most. I was working at a marketing firm when a client—a professor—asked me more about myself. I shared that I was a new seminary student and that my husband also had plans to start seminary, which of course led to the question of what Aaron was doing in the meantime. I thought the professor was going to slide out of his chair, melt into the ground, and lose

consciousness at my answer. He was mortified. And he told me why: Car salesmen are “slick.”

The car industry looks different twenty years later, but people often still stereotype people in the car-sales business as untrustworthy. We might feel the same way about politicians and attorneys. And yes, like all professions, these career paths could use some reforms. I don't want to diminish those issues. But sometimes a person's job title overshadows their humanness. Instead of a job being what someone does, the caricature of their position defines who they are.

In the first century, tax collectors fell prey to dehumanizing stereotypes too. The New Testament offers plenty of reasons why this was the case:

- ◆ A tax collector was “someone responsible for collecting taxes and tolls on behalf of the Roman government.”¹
- ◆ “Tax collectors earned a profit by demanding a higher tax from the people than they had prepaid to the Roman government. This system led to widespread greed and corruption. The tax-collecting profession was saturated with unscrupulous people who overtaxed others to maximize their personal gain.”²
- ◆ “Since the Jews considered themselves victims of Roman oppression, Jewish tax collectors who overtaxed their fellow countrymen were especially despised. Jews viewed such favor for Rome as betrayal and equal to treason against God. Rabbinic sources consistently align Jewish tax collectors with robbers.”³

Governments have a right to collect taxes, but those who collect them have often been unpopular, not least because they seem to have demanded more than they were entitled to. Jesus Christ welcomed such people, as he did other sinners, and many repented as a result of his affirming attitude.⁴

Martin H. Manser et al., *The Complete Topical Guide to the Bible*

Here are some facts about tax collecting:

- ◆ “Romans taxed just about every commodity imaginable.”⁵
- ◆ “The Jews were also suffering under a system of double-taxation . . . , as they had to pay all of the religious taxes as prescribed by the law (Exod 30:12-16; Matt 17:24-27) as well as the Roman taxes.”⁶
- ◆ “It has been estimated that a direct sales tax on all produce in Israel may have been as high as 12.5 percent.”⁷
- ◆ “Furthermore, there is some evidence that the Romans exacted an additional tax from each Jewish household. . . . When one adds to this the various custom taxes required for transporting goods from one region to another, the annual tax burden of the Jews may have been as high as 40 percent of one’s total income.”⁸
- ◆ “The Jews hated paying taxes to the emperor and harbored a deep resentment for those who collected taxes from them.”⁹

We might want to make a joke about the IRS right now. Or just mutter, *Taxes—booooo*. Even today, we still feel tempted to lump the profession in with the person. But in Jesus’ time, it was far worse: Tax collectors were hated, judged, and considered traitors. They were least liked by the religious elite and considered unclean and unrighteous sinners. That’s why Jesus’ invitation to Matthew—to join Jesus’ inner circle as a disciple—is so astonishing.

In this lesson we are going to study the conversion story of Matthew, the author of the Gospel of Matthew, the first book in the New Testament. Matthew, a tax collector, was minding his business when Jesus approached him, invited Matthew to follow him, and welcomed Matthew as a disciple.

You’re about to read the story of a man who likely carried a lot of shame and experienced a lot of rejection because of his job. He was viewed as a sinner by his religious community, and he was absolutely an outsider. But he ended up leaving behind the security of extortion and taxation to start a new life.

If you need a redo, a total overhaul of your life, you're in good company with Matthew. And the rest of us who are eager to experience Jesus' compassion will find an archetypal example of Jesus' love for us and for all sinners. Even the worst of us get invitations to follow Jesus. The only question is whether we will say yes.

1. PERSONAL CONTEXT: What is going on in your life right now that might impact how you understand this Bible character?

2. SPIRITUAL CONTEXT: If you've never studied this Bible story before, what piques your curiosity? If you've studied this passage before, what impressions and insights do you recall?