

# TASTE & SEE

Exploring the heart of the Christian message of hope over four meals.



## Meal Number 2

Week Two

# What's Gone Wrong?



# Meal Number 2: What's Gone Wrong?



## Leader's introductory notes

### Week 2. Overview

This week we break all of our own rules and indulge in a deliciously greasy fast-food feast. We investigate what's wrong with our world today and why is the good so broken? We look at two pivotal stories from the Bible that help make sense of the brokenness - Genesis 3 and we meet Jesus in Luke 15.

### On the menu: Fast Food

The easiest option is Domino's Pizza, paired with Coke and donuts! This has the advantage of being cheap, easy and delivered! It also comes in GF and Vegetarian for those who need those options. Alternatively, you may choose your own version of fast food - KFC, Fish and Chips, hamburgers...

A bag of snake lollies and a pack of donuts works well for sweets OR really go to town with dessert and make this a dessert focussed week (as per notes).

### Decor

Keep it basic. Dominos boxes on the table is fine. Plastic cups work! (this week only)

### Presenter Script

There are two options at the end for illustrating and explaining sin.

1. Prodigal Son story - Luke 15 emphasises sin-as-broken-relationship idea OR
2. Endless Summer - 1994 classic surf movie illustrates the sin-as-idolatry idea.

Our feeling is that presenters should use one or the other, but not both. People getting their head around one idea is probably enough!

The Luke 15 is more emotionally engaging, and Endless Summer (sin-as-idolatry) via may be more intellectual - both seek to challenge and dig deeper than seeing sin as just breaking the rules.

Luke 15 also affords the opportunity to begin to introduce Jesus and hear his words. We like to have Luke's Gospels available on the table to read directly from (rather than power point) and welcome people to take one home to keep reading for themselves.

**Blue** is where we have provided a couple of alternative options in the [footnotes](#).

**Orange** represents interactive elements, discussion questions and visual aids.

This week we finish with a **personal faith story** prepared by one of your team.



## **Suggested formatting of the night**

7pm	Arrival, welcome, mingle, seating
7:15	Presenter welcome everyone back.
7:20	Mains served - Ice breaker discussion over dinner. Session 2 Presentation (first half) - over / after dinner
7:45ish	Dessert break - discussion over dessert
7:55	Continue Session 2 (second half)
8:10	Personal Faith Story #2
8:20	Q&A
9pm	Wrap up

# Meal Number 2: What's Gone Wrong?

Presenter Script



## Introduction

Welcome to week number two of Taste & See!

Last week we ate healthy food from the ground, remembering the goodness of God's creation.

If you missed last week, sorry! This week we are eating mass-produced, man-made junk food that has little nutritional value for sustaining life! But if you are like me, too often we crave what we know is not good for us. (This is often people's favourite week!)

Today's junk food is a metaphor for what is wrong with our world.

**Discussion** So... as you pass the pizza (or KFC) around you might like to answer the question: *What's your go-to junk food?* And, if you want to go a little deeper, you might like to say *What's one of the things you think is wrong with the world?*

..... Pause to eat and discuss .....

## **A quick recap of week 1**

*Last week we saw the God of the Bible sits outside of Creation much like the author sits outside their work. He is the reason we live and move and have our being.*

*We saw that Creation shows his fingerprints - beauty, order, design and purpose. And we looked at how we can understand Science in relation to Genesis. (Science helps us answer the What and How questions.*

*Genesis answers Who and Why. It is not addressing science questions.)*

*We saw that Human beings are uniquely created as his image bearers.*

*Given dignity and worth and a great responsibility to create and work as his vice regents.*

*It was a beautiful picture.*

## **What's wrong?**

But most of us, I think, have a deep sense that something is not right. Something is not right with our world, with others, even with ourselves. Though there are hints of beauty and wonder in the world, We feel



there is this painful gap between how things are and how things ought to be. It feels like there's some back-story to how things ended up messed up and out of joint.

The French philosopher Jean-Paul Satre said that humanity *'is a race to whom something happened.'*

It's an interesting comment from a leading atheist. Somehow, Satre says, when it comes to humans, there's a question that needs answering, a state of affairs that needs to be addressed, there's some backstory to why we feel things aren't as they should be. Something happened.

In the Bible, that question is first addressed through the ancient and foundational story of a forbidden meal.

### **The Story Set Up**

Let me set up the story for you. The place is the garden. It's an orchard, a garden full of fruit trees. And in that garden you have a man and a woman, Adam and Eve. They have been put there by God to bear his image, to bring order and goodness to the Garden in the way God does to the universe.

Gardens in the Bible and the ancient world are associated with kings and rulers. Here Adam and Eve are like trainee kings and queens, getting ready to rule God's world under him and for him.

In that garden, Adam and Eve are told they can eat fruit from any tree except for one—from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

### **The Snake**

Into this garden comes the serpent. The serpent, we are told, was *"more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made."*

And it says to the woman:

*"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"*

(What did God say? Actually... 2:17 *"you are free to eat from any tree in the garden but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it, you will certainly die."*)

The implication is subtle but clear. *“God is keeping you from that tree? That fruit? Really? That’s how it works around here? Oh my. Sounds tough.”*

At first the humans, led by Eve, put up a gallant defence of God’s arrangements. *“God said we may eat from any tree in the garden”* (3:2), she says, correcting his lie.

But then things begin to unravel. The serpent encouraged her to eat from the forbidden tree... *“You won’t certainly die, for God knows when you eat of it, you will be like God...”* (3:4-5)

She sees that the fruit is *“good for food and pleasing to the eye”* (v6) The serpent tempts her, but he tempts her to do what she wants to do. And she does it. She eats the fruit God said not to eat. And so does Adam. And the whole set up of God’s world becomes unstruck.

### **The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil**

What is going on here!?! What kind of story is this? Talking snakes! Magical fruit! The whole world falling apart because someone ate a naturally occurring, high-fructose treat? The story is saying *something*, but what?

The trick for getting to the heart of this story is in the name of the tree. It’s not a Mango tree, or an Apple Tree, or a Durian Tree. It’s called *“The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil”*. That’s a clue. But what could it mean?

You see, eating the fruit gives them something that God has. As the serpent says and (God later confirms):

*For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. (3:5)*

Here’s the puzzle: What is something that is right for God but wrong (at least at this stage) for them? It’s not, I think, knowledge *that there is* good and evil, not the experience of good and evil, but becoming the arbitrators of good and evil. That’s the problem! As image-bearers, they were supposed to *be like God*; but in eating the forbidden fruit, they seek to BE gods. (ignore and do away with God)

Discerning good and evil is essential to bearing God’s image. But Adam and Eve reach for that ahead of God, and the instigation of the



serpent. They considered equality with God something to be grasped at. They did not wait humbly for God's training, for God to lift them up.

### **The rebellion and its consequences**

The results are disastrous.

*Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (3:7)*

Though initially this is comically tragic (!) what this indicates is they are alienated from each other. They who were once open to each other, vulnerable to each other, ("*naked and no shame*" Gen 2), now realise they are naked and a threat to one another. Before they honoured each other; now they are ashamed.

The blame game begins. Adam blames Eve. In the awful words of relational breakdown Adam says of the bride he once delighted in: "*The woman you put here with me— she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.*" (blames Eve and God!)

They are also alienated from God. Listen to these haunting words:

*Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called out to the man, 'Where are you?'" (3:8-9)*

The words are heart-breaking. Apparently, God and the humans once walked together with them in the garden in the cool of the day—the king and his vice-regents discussing operations together. But now they hide. "*Where are you?*"<sup>1</sup>, says God.

And they are alienated from the creation itself. They are cast out of the garden and into a world that will resist them. Childbearing will be painful, agriculture difficult, life hard. "*Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.*" (v17) ...And death will come upon them.

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<sup>1</sup> Like us today. We hide. But God seeks us out. Wonderful first hint of the gospel here.

*And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever." (3:22)*

We're going to be eating some amazing donuts / desserts after this meal. I hope you really enjoy them. But let's be honest, dessert is one of things that seems good in the moment, but you regret later. Dessert is "*pleasing to the eye and good for food*". The human rebellion was like that. It still is. We reach for that which in the moment appeals, but in the long term destroys.

Remember what Jean Paul Sarte said? "*Humans are a race to whom something happened.*" What happened? According to the Bible, we rebelled against our creator. We were made to be in relationship with God. We were made to bear the image of God. But we chose to go our own way.

And now we find ourselves alienated—from God, from each other, and from the creation. We are both victims and perpetrators.<sup>2</sup>

### **Dessert Break - Discussion moment: (pass the donuts around)**

As we pass dessert around, let's take a moment to think about...

In what ways does this foundational story explain the brokenness we see in the world today? Where and how do we see these things play out today? - Alienation from each other, God and Creation. (*Personal and global relationships, history repeats, climate change, damage to the planet, turning our backs on God.*)<sup>3</sup>

## **Sin**

We are talking about what the Bible calls "sin". But what is sin?

At the most basic level, sin is missing the mark. It's failing to live in God's way in God's world. But sin is deeper than just "doing wrong things". According to the Bible, doing the wrong things is a symptom of a deeper cause—a broken relationship with God. And, according to

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<sup>2</sup> **Pastoral note.** This is an important point. There will be some amongst our hearers who are victims of others' sin and feel the pain of being sinned *against* and need to hear that.

<sup>3</sup> **Build in time to discuss**, listen to our guests, riff and help them process this. BEFORE getting to "sin"



the Bible, when we sin, we get caught in the power of Sin. Like raging addiction, we find ourselves trapped in our own bid for freedom.

Like “fallen monarchs with amnesia”, we retain a memory of what we ought to be like. Like trying to push a balloon under the surface of the swimming pool, our knowledge that there is a God and we owe him our thanks and praise keeps coming up to the surface.

“Everybody worships, the only choice we have is what we worship” says author David Foster Wallace in a famous speech *This is Water*.<sup>4</sup> Wallace (not, I believe, a Christian himself) picks up on a strong biblical theme. We are hard-wired for worship. We were made for something more, made to look beyond ourselves. The Bible says yes, we are made to worship and serve the God who made us. But in our rebellion, we turn from the true God to worship the things our hands have made. But these things can never really satisfy or bear the weight of our worship...

### **Option #1 Illustration of Sin: Luke 15 and relational offense**

To better understand the problem of sin, let's look at a second story. This time from Jesus.

Jesus, when he was on earth, was known as a “friend of sinners”. That’s quite a striking claim when you think about it. Jesus came to put things right between us and God. He came as an advocate for God’s holiness. He came to bring glory to God. But he was a friend of those whose lives were obviously “falling short of the mark”. And they were also attracted to him.

On the table you will find copies of one of the four first century biographies of Jesus’ life. “Luke’s Gospel”.<sup>5</sup> Turn to (page 75, *The Search version*)

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<sup>4</sup> [“This is Water” David Foster Wallace](#). (reference YouTube 18:00 minutes in.) We are not suggesting you play this - but presenter might expand with his examples: *Worship money - never enough; Worship body, beauty - always feel ugly; Worship intellect - always feel stupid; Worship power - end up feeling weak and afraid.*

<sup>5</sup> Provide multiple copies of Luke’s Gospel on the table. It is great to read this directly from the Gospel so that guests are able to tangibly experience how accessible the Gospel accounts of Jesus are. Invite them to take a copy home if they want to keep reading.

Here is one of the most famous stories Jesus ever told—well known as the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). In the story there is a son who rebels against his father, trashes his own life in the process, and then returns home.

(SLIDE: Rembrandt painting)

It is easy to miss but the context for the story is important. Jesus is answering an accusation from his religious critics that he spends all his time with “sinners” **(Read Luke 15:1-3)**.

In reply he tells three stories about lost things—a lost coin, a lost sheep, a lost son. In all the stories something is lost, something is found and there is a great celebration. This is how God feels about sinners who come home. He celebrates! Tonight, we will focus on the third story.

*(Read the story in the gospel, breaking it up to comment along the way. We suggest you read it from the gospels but have provided slides in the extras if you prefer.)*

**(Read v11- 20a)** either you or one of your team

In the story the father represents God. Who does the younger son represent? What is the offense here? (Asks for his inheritance - wants him dead) Goes far away - breaks the relationship (not like a gap year!) The younger son wants the wealth of the father but not a relationship with the father. Which is like us—we want the gifts of God but not a relationship with the Giver of those gifts. We are like that! We live in God’s world and enjoy God’s creation, but we worship the gifts instead of the giver. In doing so we have (inadvertently sometimes) replace God, cutting ourselves off from relationship with God. This by Jesus’ definition is the heart of the sin problem.

How will the father respond when the son comes home?

**(Read v20b - 24)**

He sees him from far off, he runs toward him, embraces him, lavishes his love on him and celebrates. We may not have been so gracious but this is what God is like. A running, embracing, lavishing, forgiving, celebrating Father.

As author Tim Keller points out, this story is often called “the Prodigal Son.” “Prodigal” is an old-fashioned word meaning one who spends

money or uses resources freely and recklessly; for being wastefully extravagant. That is certainly what the son does with the father's resources. But the story could also be called "the Prodigal Father" as he lavishly spends his love on the disgraced rebel!)

What about the older son?

**(Read v25-35)**

Who does the older son represent? He represents the religious elite, the morally upright, those who have kept all the rules but didn't share the Father's heart. Sometimes people think that sin is about whether or not you keep the rules. But that's not really the case. In the story the older son kept all the rules, but he's still outside the house. Why? Because he has a broken relationship with the father. Sin, at its heart, is not so much about rules as it is about relationship. Both the older son and the younger son have a broken relationship with the father. One is expressed by rebellion, the other in the context of rule-keeping. And that is like us. I wonder if you see yourself somewhere in this story?

### **Wrap up**

Today we have seen two foundational stories that address the heart of the problem. According to the Bible, what's wrong with the world is that we have a broken relationship with God - which impacts all our relationships - we harm ourselves, others and our world. We've got ourselves lost. We need help. But the good news is God is the one who doesn't give up on us. He comes looking for us. *"Where are you?"* (Gen 3:9)

Next week, we'll be exploring what God does by sending Jesus, the friend of sinners, to restore that relationship - **"The Great Rescue"**.

### **As we wrap up tonight, take a moment to consider:**

- What struck you most tonight?
- What questions has it raised for you?
- How do these stories deepen our understanding of what's gone wrong in our world?
- Where do you see yourself in either story?

Please feel free to take a copy of Luke's Gospel home to read further.

## **PERSONAL FAITH STORY #2**

### **Q&A**



## Option #2 Illustration of sin: *Endless Summer*

*“The Endless Summer was a seminal surf film of the 1960s. It follows the adventures of two surfers from California as they follow summer across the globe, seeking out and surfing some of the most magnificent breaks in the world. Their journey takes them through deserts and across valleys, past mountains and into forests. The whole thing is distilled 1960s gorgeousness, filmed in what looks like an Instagram filter set to ‘Wanderlust’. It’s beautiful. You should watch it.*

*Films have credits. What are credits? Credits reflect our moral obligation to acknowledge what came to us by the hand of another. Films don’t make themselves. They are the product of vast outlays of human labour, and credit is due to those who worked on them. The credits are a dis- charging of this duty. They give thanks to the director, the producer, the camera operators, the sound people, and the logistics people. Credits give credit where credit is due.*

*In The Endless Summer, this convention is followed. But throughout the film, they surfed waves they did not make, climbed mountains they did not build, swam rivers they did not form. They had no part in making the best parts of the film, the ocean and its waves. I think they knew it. At the end of the film, we read these words: “We thank Neptune, god of the sea, for the waves.”*

*There it is. Deep down, buried in the credits, and in the deep end of human hearts, is the suppressed knowledge of God finding its way to the surface. We know we didn’t create this. We know, somewhere deep down, that life is a gift. A sunset fills us with thankful awe. Food and drink and friendship and love are things we receive rather than create. And every so often, in moments of joy, or guilt, or sorrow, or praise, we find ourselves reaching out for some- one somewhere to whom we can give our thanks and praise. Someone to whom we can say sorry, or with whom we can plead for justice, or mercy.”*

From *The World Next Door*, Orr and Shiner, 2022