

The Defeat of Evil.

Discussion Notes on Matthew 8:28-34 & Mark 5:1-20
For Home Groups week beginning 13th June 2010.

Welcome

Q1: What was the last really bad thing or really good thing that happened to you?

Word - Please read **Matthew 8:28-34 & Mark 5:1-20**

This study will need some clear leading on a subject that some people may be unsure and sceptical about.

Q2: So was there one person or were there two demonised men in this incident?

Most commentators agree that there were two men and that Mark only talks about the one who became a well-known disciple (see Mark 5v20). The other simply faded from memory.

Q3: What does the group think about:

- *The existence of “demons”, ie. personal evil spiritual beings?*
- *The concept and relevance of “evil” in day to day life?*

Q3: Why might people be uncomfortable with the concept of evil demonic spirits?

eg. the ridiculous contemporary notions of what “demons” look like; the irrational superstitious associations; an unbelief in a spiritual world?

The concept of ‘evil’ in the Bible is much more normal and common place than the extreme uses of the word in our society. Evil has the same root word as “brokenness”.

Q4: In what ways are our world and people’s lives broken?

The Bible has a very sophisticated world-view of human brokenness. It does NOT equate mental health issues to demon oppression- they are separate dimensions within a holistic view of humanity. This passage is not about mental illness, it is about being in the grip of brokenness which has spiritual, physical, psychological and social ramifications.

Q5: What are the consequences of dismissing ‘evil’ and ‘spiritual beings’ as irrelevant to our own day to day lives? (how would it affect the Lord’s Prayer “protect us from evil”, our attitude to Scripture (we don’t believe this part)?, or how we read Eph 6:11-13).

Q6: In Matthew 8, in what ways does this account make it clear that God’s word shows that there are personal spiritual forces for evil that can oppress, tempt and even dominate a person’s behaviour and experience?

Q7: When Jesus and the Disciples encounter these two men how might their immediate reactions differ? How did the people of the town treat these two men?

Q8: Temptation has both a reward and a penalty – give examples.

Q9 Where do we look for security, meaning, purpose, belonging in our lives other than God. Where is the reward and where is the trap?

Q10: How does the understanding that our wrong choices make us more vulnerable to the influence and grip of evil change the way we think about giving in to temptation? (eg 2 Tim 2:24-26)

Q11 In what ways are these two men just like us?

Q12 How does Jesus help us to defeat the impact of spiritual, relational, physical, mental brokenness in our lives? Where do we start and what should we do?