

The Power to Change.

Discussion Notes on Matthew 12:22-29 & 43-45
For Home Groups week beginning 15th November 2010.

Welcome

Q: What was the last activity you found really difficult to do?

Word – Please read **Matthew 12:22-29 & 43-45**

Q: What habits do people struggle to break?

Q: In what ways can these struggles be physical and psychological and spiritual?

Q: If someone is struggling with a harmful habit then in what ways can it be helpful and unhelpful to think of it as having a spiritual dimension (either the impact of a spiritual principle or the influence of a malignant spiritual personal being)?

In Matthew chapter 12v22, the fundamental argument that is going on is: whose power are you using to change these people?

Q: What are all the different ways we can help people in their struggles? Is Christianity unique in the fact that it can help people?

Just because it works for you – doesn't make it right. There are plenty of oppressive cults that people would say give them a sense of belonging. Christianity is NOT true because it works (that's no basis for truth). Christianity works because its true.

Jesus is saying, if we try to get control of our life without him being at the centre we *may* end up worse now and we will end up worse forever.

Q: In what ways can we fill our life with things that distract us from pursuing the Kingdom of God in our life and that distract us from seeking to spread the Kingdom of God in other people's lives?

There are many routes to getting our life in order, but if they are not Jesus we will end up worse. Unless we are possessed by him then we will be possessed by something else. Unless we are captivated by him we will be captivated by something else. Unless our priorities are set around him, they will be set around something else.

If this world and all its material blessings is the wrapping paper; If eternal life, forgiveness of guilt, a knowledge of being loved and valued, a sense of purpose and meaning is the gift; If God is the giver...

Q: What are the implications for us if we are so focussed on the wrapping paper that we ignore the gift?

C.S.Lewis said, we are half-hearted creatures, messing around with sex and ambition and entertainment when infinite joy is offered to us, like a child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum, because they cannot imagine what is meant by a holiday by the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

Q: What are the implications for us if we are so focussed on the gift that we ignore the giver?

God wants us to be happy. He is passionate about our happiness but he knows that it is only found in Him. Not in the security that he gives – but in Him. Not in the purpose that he provides – but in Him. Not even in his blessings – but in Him.

Matthew Henry, a puritan Pastor said “Joy in the Lord will arm us against the assaults of all our spiritual enemies and put our mouths out of the taste for those pleasures with which the enemy baits his hook. I know of no other way to triumph over sin long-term that to gain a distaste for sin, by gaining a superior satisfaction in God”.