

Family Worship Guide – Week 10

MEMORIZE

Matthew 12:31 – “Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”

READ

Read Matthew 12:22-32.

The Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons in the name of Satan. However, Jesus made it clear that this was not the case. He was empowered by the Holy Spirit to cast out demons because he held power over Satan. Jesus had already demonstrated this power by resisting Satan’s temptation in the wilderness and would prove it ultimately in his death on the cross and resurrection three days later. Yet the Pharisees in this passage refused to repent and acknowledge the work of God’s Spirit in God’s Son. Through willful unbelief, persistent rebellion, and final denial of the Spirit’s work in Jesus, the Pharisees refused the only avenue to forgiveness before God: repentance. Jesus assured them that such permanent refutation of the Spirit (blasphemy against the Spirit) leads to permanent condemnation before God. As such, this passage beckons all people to acknowledge the power of God’s Spirit in Christ, to repent of sin, and to receive the forgiveness that God so mercifully offers.

Questions:

How was the Holy Spirit’s power demonstrated in Jesus?

What does it mean to “blaspheme”?

How do we experience God’s forgiveness?

Bottom Line: The power of God’s Spirit in Christ calls us to repentance so that we may experience God’s merciful forgiveness.

SING

This week our family worship song is ‘All I Have is Christ’. As we reflect on God’s Word and see that it is the Holy Spirit alone who can change the heart of sinful man, let us cry out for the Spirit to work in our lives and let us declare together our dependence on God. It is because of Christ alone that we can be, not only forgiven, but also made righteous before him and bear good fruit. Therefore, let the cry of our hearts resound, “Lord I would be yours alone and live so all might see the strength to follow your commands could never come from me!”

Visit our website for a link to this song: http://www.brookhills.org/gathering/this_week.html.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God’s word and worship Him together.

Preschool

- Before you begin open your Bible to Matthew 12:30-31 and read with your preschooler.
- Demonstrate taking a deep breath and blowing out air to your child. Have your child take a deep breath too. Tell your preschooler we need air to breathe. Without air we can’t breathe. Can we see the air? No, but we know its there because we can breathe.
- God gave us air to breathe. Can we see God? No, explain to your child that the Holy Spirit is God. He is there even though we can’t see him. God wants us to know him. God wants us to know his Son, Jesus, who is stronger than anything. Jesus has defeated Satan and death. He wants us to follow him. If we do **not** follow God, we sin. Sin is making a wrong choice and not following God. Because God is holy (he is different than we are; he has never sinned and never will), he has the right to punish sin.
- When we follow God, we get the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God.

- Pray with your preschooler and ask God to help us love him most of all and accept his love for us.

Children

- Re-read Matthew 12:31.
- Explain to your children that “blaspheme” is a very serious word that means to speak evil things against a holy and good God or to mock him. This sin is so significant that in the Old Testament it was punished with stoning.
- In Matthew 12 the Pharisees are warned against a specific type of blaspheming that cannot be forgiven.
- Ask – what is the only hope of forgiveness for all people? (Repenting of sin, and trusting in Jesus)
- Explain that this is the key to understanding why this sin would not be forgivable. To sin in this way means someone has hardened their heart against God so much they no longer care about their eternal destiny. Because their heart is so hard, they are no longer able to repent of their sin, which is their one hope of salvation.
- Remind your children that professing followers of Jesus who are afraid they might have committed such an unforgivable sin are giving evidence that they have concern for their own spiritual welfare and thus proves they have not committed it.
- Pray as a family that God would continue to give you hearts that not only are never calloused towards sin and the leading of the Holy Spirit but hearts that are sensitive towards him.

Students

- Before reading the passage for this week make sure you read through all of chapter 12 in Matthew to have a clear picture of all that was happening in the interaction between Jesus, the Pharisees, and the people in general. This week’s guide is going to hinge heavily on the questions you discuss with your students as you tackle the issue of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Read 12:22-32 together as a family.
- Ask your students to describe what Jesus was doing physically (Jesus healed a man who, due to demon possession, was blind and mute). Follow up by asking them how Jesus was able to do this. Discuss the truth of Jesus’ authority as God to order the demons to leave the man. Another good passage to refer to is John 10, especially verses 28-30. Ask your students if the Pharisee’s argument made sense, that someone under Satan’s direction would cast out demons. Jesus then follows his statement that “the Kingdom of God has come upon you,” in verse 28 with an important warning: “Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.” The Pharisees knew that Jesus was from God (see John 3:1-2), but they were still attributing the work of Jesus to Satan.
- Ask your students why they think the Pharisees would do this (their agenda and power were at risk). Share with them that, just like the Pharisees, it does not make sense for anyone today to deny God’s authority in and around their lives. Though we may not be guilty of a sin that cannot be forgiven, there are times when for selfish reasons we resist God’s work in our lives. In any case, this rebellion is dangerous. Ask your students to share some of the consequences people face when they resist God’s leading in their lives through His Spirit (e.g. broken relationships, regret, missed opportunities, lack of closeness with God). Remind them that following Christ is not easy, but that when we submit to his authority in our lives we can trust him to handle the consequences that come.

