

Small Group Guide THE KING'S AUTHORITY (PART 1)

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

February 5, 2012

Matthew 8

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

Message Outline

The Basic Outline of Matthew 8-9...

- Three Miracle Stories (Matthew 8:1-17)
- Two Descriptions of Discipleship (Matthew 8:18-22)
- Three Miracle Stories (Matthew 8:23-9:8)
- Two Descriptions of Discipleship (Matthew 9:9-17)
- Three Miracle Stories (Matthew 9:18-34)

The Bottom Line of Matthew 8-9...

- Jesus possesses absolute authority in the world and warrants absolute allegiance from the world.

The Portrait of Jesus in Matthew 8...

- Jesus has authority over disease.
 - He cleanses the physically unclean. (Num. 12:10; Lev. 13:52)
 - What the leper does know: Jesus is able to heal.
 - What the leper doesn't know: Is Jesus willing to heal? (2 Cor. 12)
 - Jesus identifies with the uncleanness of the leper in order to make the leper clean.
 - He heals the ethnically outcast.

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- Faith is humble trust in the authority of Jesus.
- Such faith is the essential determinant of a person's eternal destiny.
- He restores the culturally marginalized.
 - He has the power to overcome all our suffering...
 - Because He paid the price to overcome all our sin. (Is. 53; Rom. 5, 8; 2 Cor. 4:17)
- Jesus has authority over disciples.
 - Jesus is worthy of unconditional trust.
 - Jesus is worthy of undivided affection.
- Jesus has authority over disaster.
 - The point of the story...
 - Jesus is God.
 - The promise in the story...
 - Not that all the storms in your life will end soon.
 - But that amidst the storms in your life, you will never be alone.
- Jesus has authority over demons.
 - The demons have fear because of their belief.
 - We often have fear because of our unbelief.

A Pause After Reading Matthew 8...

- Let's trust wholeheartedly in Jesus' authority.
- Let's rest peacefully in Jesus' authority.
- Let's submit completely to Jesus' authority.
- Let's rejoice gladly in Jesus' authority.

Message Summary

Matthew began a description of the sovereign authority of Jesus in chapter 8. In this chapter, Matthew recounted stories that serve as evidence of Jesus' authority over disease, disciples, disasters, and demons. It is in the authority of Christ that believers are able to have confident trust in His sovereign power over all things. Although faith in Christ's sovereign power alone may not assuage fear, we can be certain that His sovereign will is good, despite what circumstances we may find ourselves in. He is the King and Lord, but we still battle sin in this world. Therefore, we will have to deal with suffering even though Jesus has the ability to end it all. We can be sure, though, that He is sovereign, He is good, and He will ultimately usher in the complete reality of His kingdom and destroy suffering in our lives forever.

Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- In Matthew's account of the leper and the centurion, what did these two men not question about Jesus?
- How did they demonstrate tremendous confidence in Jesus' power over disease?
- How could we describe these men's approach to Jesus? How was their boldness and confidence in Jesus' ability matched by their humility and faith?
- How can our belief in Christ's sovereignty make us hardened toward Him if we do not also have faith in the goodness of His will?
- If we neglect our faith because our prayers have not been answered as we wished, what does that indicate about the misplaced focus of our faith?
- How can we intentionally and purposefully cling to the truth of God's goodness and sovereignty in the midst of pain?
- How can we graciously and gently remind one another of the fullness of God's sovereignty when ministering to others who are in the midst of suffering?
- Why would God choose to reveal Himself to us through suffering? How can our response to suffering be one of the greatest witnesses of His grace and salvation to unbelievers?

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- How do we (and our culture) often present Jesus as a means to a happy ending? Why is the assumption that life with Christ should be easy dangerous to the kingdom of God and our faith in God?
- Why is relegating the sovereignty of God to a token way to be prosperous in this world a false gospel?
- Why does Jesus' authority and goodness demand our trust and affection, despite what circumstances we find ourselves in?
- What do we want out of Jesus? What does our answer to that question reveal about our hearts and our purpose in following Him?
- What things in life are we most anxious about? What do we fear the most?
- Knowing that Jesus has conquered sin, the root of all suffering, and is sovereign and good, why do we not have to be anxious or fear suffering? Why is that so difficult to do?
- What attitudes or actions need to be adjusted in order for us to submit to and rest in Jesus' authority?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

Weekly Prayer Focus ... (from our worship guide)

- *Lives: This week our study in the Word causes us to be confronted with the authority of Jesus over all things. Pray that we would be submissive to Jesus' authority in our lives. Pray that our elders would lead from a position of humble compliance to the will of God. Ask for continued conviction and guidance that we might live in righteous obedience to God's Word. Pray for opportunities to see his authority demonstrated in our lives and world.*
- *City: This week we are praying for Divine Faith Missionary Baptist Church, Chris Stewart, Pastor. We are also praying for the outreach efforts to teenagers living in Marks Village (Gate City area) who are led by some of our members and Mission Birmingham staff.*
- *World: This week we are praying for our Short-Term teams serving in North Africa and East Asia. WE are also praying for Brook Hills Church Planters, John and Amy Crawford, serving in Kansas City, KS. Kansas City is a city with just over 2.1 million people, where more than 50% claim no religious affiliation whatsoever. This year the Kansas City church has been gathering as a team each Sunday and intentionally making disciples in their surrounding neighborhoods.*