

1) Jesus frees those captured by Satan (8:23-34)

Matthew's account of the demon-possessed man is also told by Mark in Mark 5:1-20 and Luke in Luke 8:26-40 with even more detail. You may want to refer to those passages for more insight.

1. Has your thinking about Satan and demons been more shaped by the Bible or by movies, television, and novels? List some recent pop culture references to the demonic realm. What are the differences between pop culture's idea of demons and the Bible's? Why do you think our culture is obsessed with the spirit world? Why is it so prominent in pop culture?
2. Read John 8:44 and Revelation 12:10. What lies has the devil spoken to you contrary to God's Word that you have believed? What affect has it had on your life?
3. Read 2Cor. 2:11 and Eph. 4:27. How have you given the devil an opportunity to tempt you or even control you? Have you ever or do you currently ever display similar behavior as the demon-possessed men (lack of modesty, screaming, obsession with death, rage, self-inflicted harm). Why do you think these things are becoming more prominent in our culture?
4. Why do you think people begged Jesus to leave after he had intervened in the life of this man? What had this man's cleansing cost them? Are you willing to pay a price for captives to be set free?

2) Jesus forgives those paralyzed by sin (9:1-8)

Matthew's account of the paralytic is told in even greater detail by Mark in Mark 2:1-12 and Luke in Luke 5:18-26.

5. What is the relationship of sin and sickness?
6. We can learn a lot from those who brought the paralytic to Jesus.
 - **Make a friend.** Do you have any unbelieving friends? Have you overcome your religious intolerance?
 - **Strengthen your faith.** Is your faith strong enough to survive the unbelieving cultural pressure?
 - **Share your faith.** Can you concisely, accurately, and boldly verbalize your faith story?
 - **Care for them in their crisis.** Are you looking for opportunities to give someone the answer?
 - **Remove every obstacle.** What price are you willing to pay to get someone to Jesus?
7. The greatest obstacle to evangelism may be our lack of amazement that Jesus has forgiven our sin. Have you lost the amazement that your sins have been forgiven? How does the reality that Jesus has pardoned you for the worst 15 minutes of your life affect the way you live and worship? Read Ephesians 2:1-10 and Colossians 2:13-15 to regain the wonder.

Additional Scripture

- James 4:7
- Ephesians 6:12
- 2Corinthians 2:11

SMALL GROUP PULPIT CURRICULUM

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- 1Peter 5:8
 - John 8:44
 - John 10:10
 - 2Peter 2:4
 - Genesis 2:1-7
 - Revelation 12:10
 - 15 Isaiah 14:12-15
 - Ezekiel 28:1-10
 - 2Corinthians 6:1-15
 - Colossians 2:13-15

