



Preparing for Small Group: Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
- (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
- (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
- (4) What does God want me to know?
- (5) What does God want me to do?

“Jesus: Son of God”

Matthew 8:28-34

Main Point: Jesus is the Son of God.

Things to know because Jesus is the Son of God:

Jesus has total power over the power of demons (28-32).

As Jesus and His disciples got out of the boat, they were confronted by two men who were powerless over the power of the demons in their lives. Not only did the demons have control over the lives of these two men, but there were no other people who could control the demon-possessed men. Immediately, however, the demons recognized Jesus. They also recognized the power of Jesus over their power, and they acknowledged their final defeat and the final victory of Jesus over them. At this point, however, they were hoping that Jesus would let them go, so they asked permission to leave the men and to enter into a herd of pigs. Jesus gave them permission, and that's exactly what they did. In this important moment, Jesus actually used demons to reveal His identity to His disciples and to display the reality of His identity through His authority over demons. While sinful humans have no power over demons, demons have no power over Jesus, who the Son of God.

1. What is Satan's power in this world? Use Scripture to guide your discussion, and then apply what God's Word says about the power of Satan in the world to the work of demons. Do sinful humans have any power over demons?
2. What does the Bible say about the existence of demons? What about ghosts?
3. Discuss the power of Jesus over Satan and demons, looking back to the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4 and to this story in Matthew 8. If Jesus has complete power over demons, why does He allow them to still do what they do in the world?
4. For the believer who is in Christ and Christ is in him/her, what does the power of Jesus over demons mean in his/her life? How should this truth affect a believers life in living for Jesus?

Jesus deserves heart submission and not just head admission (29).

One of the most interesting aspects of the story is the fact that the demons clearly identified who Jesus was with their confession that Jesus was the son of God. In Matthew's Gospel, this wasn't the first time that Jesus was referred to as the Son of God. Earlier, Satan himself had tempted Jesus, taunting Him to do certain things "if" He was the Son of God. But this was the first time that Jesus was identified publicly as the son of God, and the identification came from demons! For the disciples of Jesus, there was a valuable lesson of faith to be

learned from this interchange between Jesus and the demons. The demons knew who Jesus was. They knew that He was the Messiah, the Lord of creation, the Son of God. However, their confession was only one of head admission and not heart submission. They were forced to obey Jesus because of His authority over them; however, they didn't want to obey Jesus. What a powerful reminder that saving faith is about heart submission and not just head admission to Jesus.

1. Examining the demon's confession in the identity of Jesus, discuss what this means about head knowledge *alone* of the Gospel and the identity of Jesus.
2. Did the demons have a choice in obeying Jesus? What does this mean about the ultimate and eternal obedience to Jesus for every single person? What's the eternal significance of willfully surrendering to Jesus or being forced to obey Jesus?
3. The demons knew who Jesus was, they simply didn't surrender their lives to Jesus as the Son of God. Have you surrendered your heart to Jesus? If so, share your testimony of when and how. If not, why not right now?
4. Do you know anyone who has head knowledge of Jesus but who hasn't surrendered their hearts to Jesus? Pray for them right now, and make a plan to talk to them about Jesus this coming week.

Jesus prioritizes people over property and profit (33-34).

The herdsman who lost the pigs ran back to town and told everybody the story of what Jesus did. Interestingly, the herdsman focused on what Jesus did for the two demon possessed men. However, when the people from the town came out to see Jesus, it was obvious from their response to Jesus that they were more focused on what happened to the pigs. They begged Jesus to leave their region! Why would they do this? It must have been because of the fear that the presence of Jesus would lead to further loss of property and profit in their area. It must have been because they valued the property and profit of the pigs over the restored lives of the two men. Jesus was teaching His disciples an important lesson related to the priorities of the Son of God. People matter most. People are eternal, while the property and profit of this world is only temporary. There are costs that come with the presence of the Son of God. Are the costs worth it? Any costs in this world are worth it are because Jesus truly is the Son of God!

1. Discuss the reaction of the people in the region to Jesus. In what ways can you relate to their reaction to Jesus? Why? What does their reaction tell you about the way that some people will receive the truth about Jesus?
2. Have you ever been concerned about losing something if you allowed Jesus into your life? If so, share your testimony. Is there anyone who has this concern right now in your life? If so, why?
3. What does it look like to prioritize people over property and profit in your life right now? What does it look like to prioritize people over property and profit in the life of our church?
4. Take time to close out your small group time in prayer, praying for hearts and a heart in our church that prioritizes people for the glory and work of God.