

Leader Guide // for Mar. 11, 2018 Sermon

Quick Review

1. Mark kicked off a short series on apologetics this Sunday. What did you like about Mark's introductory sermon? Lastly, what is your opinion regarding a Christian's responsibility to engage both the heart and mind for Christ? What might that look like for you?

Quotes to Recall

"There isn't anti-intellectual bon in authentic Christian faith and the spiritual life that Jesus raises up suggests that there is no inherent conflict between faith and intellect, faith and learning, faith and the academy. When you explore Christianity with your mind, you won't be disappointed."

Consider pointing out the various passages that Mark referred to at the end of his message - the "evidence" that supports faith. (Acts 1:3; 17:2-4, 22-28; John 9:39-44; I Cor. 15:8; I Pet. 3:15)

My Story

1. When you were a child in school, where did you go to find answers to questions/problems? Where do you go, now?
2. Are you an intellectual arguer/debater OR an emotional arguer/debater? How does this work out when you are in conflict with family or close friends?

If you want to broaden this question you can ask, "describe your argumentative style in reference to sports." (Tennis – back and forth battle, golf –methodical, calculated, etc.)

Digging Deeper

In today's homework we will explore the correlation of concepts related to faith, reason, and action/response.

1. Read Luke 5:17-26 and answer the following questions:
 - A. Who displays and expresses faith in this story?
 - B. Looking at those who expressed their faith in Jesus, what actions did they take?
 - C. Why do the scribes and Pharisees question Jesus? In other words, what reasoning is taking place in their minds?
 - D. What is the central claim being made in this passage?

The friends of the paralytic are the ones acting in faith. They believe that Jesus has the authority to heal. In healing the paralytic, Jesus demonstrates that he also has the authority and power to forgive sins.

2. As you consider the application of Luke 5:17-26, what do you learn about the power and authority of Jesus? How does faith and reason move us to action, much like it did for the group of men who believed in the claims of Jesus?

3. Read Mark 9:14-29
 - A. Provide a summary of the entire episode.
 - B. What do we know about the father's faith? Look closely at the comments made to Jesus in 9:22.
 - C. How does Jesus respond to the father's statement? What does, "all things are possible for one who believes" mean?
 - D. Note the father's follow-up response, "I believe, help my unbelief!" What does he mean and how does it relate to healing power of Jesus?

"All things are possible" appears to mean that either the father can put his trust in God through believing that God is able to heal or it can be read as an affirmation that Jesus can act with God's authority to heal the boy (Schnabel, TNTC pp. 216-217).

Taking it Home

1. Regarding Mark 9:14-29, can you sympathize with the paradoxical statement made by the father, "I believe, help my unbelief"? How is it possible to believe and still struggle with believing what God can do in your life? Try to think of real life examples and share them with the group.

The paradox is an acknowledgement of having faith but in reality it is a weak faith or a faith that doubts. Believing that God can heal you does not mean that you don't struggle with the reality that you will be healed from a particular illness or ailment.

2. When you have conversations with skeptics about God, what are the questions that are asked or the statements that are made that are hard to answer? Can you help one another with answers?