

STUDY GUIDE

DUTCHTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH

LIFE ON MISSION

BROKENNESS

MATTHEW 24:6-14; ROMANS 3:10-18

01/15/2017

MAIN POINT

The world is broken by sin, but can be redeemed through the gospel.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

If you could prevent one injustice, tragedy, or problem in the world today, what would it be? Why?

What does the existence of problems and suffering tell us about the world?

What does your desire to fix the problem you identified tell you about the way God made you?

The world is full of pain and hardship; everybody knows this. In the previous session we started by identifying moments when things felt right and good. But we can't escape the reality that things often go wrong and bad things keep happening. In today's session we'll discuss the brokenness that characterized the world.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

WATCH SESSION 3 OF LIFE ON MISSION.

Begin this session by reviewing the Three Circles diagram available on the Life On Mission App which you can download for free on the Apple AppStore or Google Play.

How did we get from God's perfect design to our current reality of brokenness?

HAVE A COUPLE OF VOLUNTEERS READ MATTHEW 24:6-14 AND ROMANS 3:10-18.

How would you explain brokenness to a fallen world?

What evidence of human brokenness do you see in the world today?

Eric mentioned two types of brokenness: that from personal sin and brokenness from living on a broken planet. How have you experienced each type of brokenness?

All people experience various levels of brokenness, both personally and in the world around us. Try as we might we do not do the right thing as often as we would like. Additionally, we look at the news or outside our window and see the effects of sin in sickness, poverty, violence and more. Both of these conditions point us towards our need for a Savior.

How did the pain of brokenness and the hard questions about brokenness awaken you to your need for God?

How is brokenness often a natural starting point for conversations about God's design and ultimately the gospel?

When has God used you to comfort others in the middle of their brokenness?

How has God used the brokenness in your life to show His love to you and to others?

Who are the broken and needy people around you? How can you be intentional about showing the love of God to them?

Eric mentioned that people with a higher socioeconomic status tend to hide their brokenness while people of a lower socioeconomic status tend to wear their brokenness. Whether it is hidden or out in the open, all people in all places experience brokenness. While we should mourn the presence of sin in the world, we can use our brokenness to start gospel conversations.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Wrap up the session with any final questions and observations. What stuck out to you the most?

How can you be honest with yourself about your own brokenness, both as a means to sympathize with broken people and to have conversations that lead to the gospel?

What is the difference between brokenness in believers and unbelievers?

Brainstorm with the people in your group about ways you can start conversations about brokenness.

PRAY

Read Psalm 51 aloud as a closing prayer, pausing for a brief moment after each verse to allow personal reflection by everyone in the group.

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 24:6-14

24:4-8. Jesus first warned, in general terms (24:4-14), of several characteristics of the period of time before he would return. There would be counterfeit messiahs, wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, martyrs, false prophets, increasing evil, and the preaching of the gospel worldwide. Jesus used the present tense with the imperative statement: "but

see to it that you are not alarmed.” This comfort was to be applied repetitively, every time a troubling rumor of war came along. Jesus’ message was, “Keep on seeing that you are not troubled, every time a rumor of war comes your way, as they often will in this troubled world.” While war is a continual reality on earth, war alone is not sufficient evidence of the Lord’s return and the end of the age.

24:9-12. Jesus’ description of the persecution of believers is a graphic picture of our present age, which can be described generally as one of opposition and persecution. Suffering, death, and ostracism were part of following Christ. It was natural that many would turn away from him, seeking to avoid the suffering of discipleship. Not only would they fall away from Jesus, but these same apostates would betray and hate believers. Jesus clearly stated that the apostate followers of Jesus would become party to the persecution of believers, along with the rest of the unbelieving world. Verse 11 sounds similar to verse 5 above, describing false prophets instead of false Christs. A prophet was a spokesman for God; therefore, a false prophet was one who falsely claimed to be God’s spokesman. This was a more subtle form of deception, since there was only one Christ. However, there can be many prophets from God, and it was easier to pass oneself off as a prophet. Jesus said there would be many such deceivers and that they would deceive many people. The person who attempts to remain faithful to Christ may find great difficulty in discerning between so many claimants to God’s true revelation.

All four of the signs Jesus had given in 24:9-12 were symptoms of a society heading toward self-destruction: (1) universal persecution of the righteous; (2) joined by those who once numbered themselves among the righteous; (3) widespread following of false teachers claiming to be God’s spokesmen; and (4) the numbing of hearts and consciences due to the abandonment of God’s righteous values. As with the signs of 24:4–8, these were not absolute guarantees that the end was imminent. But judging from Jesus’ words and the warnings of other New Testament writers (e.g., 2 Tim. 3:1–9), these symptoms would be predominant throughout the world when the end actually did approach.

24:13-14. Jesus cautioned against signs that did not indicate the imminent end (including the destruction of the temple) and then described signs that would become predominant closer to the end. He then came to the partial answer to the disciples’ question (24:3). His answer was twofold; it concerned the end result for the righteous individual and for the world.

ROMANS 3:10-18

In these verses Paul linked seven OT passages to demonstrate that all of mankind is under sin’s dominion. No one is righteous; no one understands (Jn 8:43-44; 1Co 2:14), and no one... seeks God. Since Adam and Eve’s fall, people have hidden from God, but God sent His Son “to seek and to save the lost” (Lk 19:10). All have gone astray (Isa 1:2-4; 53:6), and in God’s sight none are right. Paul cited Bible passages that show the extent of corruption. As Jesus taught, “from within, out of people’s hearts” (Mk 7:21) come all sorts of evil. Man is quick to shed blood. During the last century over 39 million people lost their lives in wars. And by conservative estimates, human governments killed an additional 125 million people—led by Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Hitler, and others. The root problem is that humans are often practical atheists even when they profess belief in God. They choose against God’s will and show no fear for it.