

VILLAGE

CHURCH

Bible Study Notes

Intro Question:

1. Have you ever given yourself fully to something for a time? What did that look like?

Pray: for God's help to give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord

Read: Matthew 17:14-18:14

Questions about the passage:

1. Why couldn't the disciples drive out the demon? Why do you think they were they filled with grief at Jesus' prediction (v22-23)? Are we supposed to take Jesus literally in v20)?
2. What was the temple tax (see Exodus 30:11-16)? Who are the children? What do you think Jesus means in 17:25-26?
3. What does 18:1-14 show about Jesus/God's heart? What about human posture toward God? What does it mean to 'stumble'?

Questions for us:

- How do we get faith? Can you grow faith? How? What feels like a mountain to move right now in your life?
- Do we have an obligation to pay taxes & tithes?
- How does can sin lead to 'stumbling'? Can you think of examples of how this might happen? Is there are sin that you feel particularly aware of in your own life that you need to cut out?
- How can we be reminded of God's love for us?

Pray: that we would give ourselves fully to God's work.

Homework: reflect on sins that might cause you to stumble.

Remind: register for Church Camp www.myvillagechurch.net/camp

Praying to see 10% of the northern suburbs in gospel-centred churches & 250 by 2030 at Village Church who grow, gather, give & go, in love & joy to the glory of God

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For the next bunch of weeks, until Easter, we will be working through the end of Matthew's gospel (starting at chapter 17) as Jesus continues his ministry up to it's final endpoint - his death & resurrection.

Questions about the passage:

- *Why couldn't the disciples drive out the demon? Why do you think they were they filled with grief at Jesus' prediction (v22-23)? Are we supposed to take Jesus literally in v20)?*

Jesus had given them power to cast out demons (Matthew 10). There is obviously an issue with their faith. The Greek word translated 'little' can mean small amount or it can mean 'poor' faith'. There is something wrong with their faith. Perhaps it wasn't in God, but in their own ability. Perhaps they just didn't really believe God could do anything through them. Their grief in response to Jesus in verse 22-23 shows that there is something wrong with their faith at this point. I think we need to be careful of verse 20, moving a mountain isn't mean to be taken literally - it's proverbial (like a proverb) for doing something very difficult. If we have faith, we can do difficult, even things that seem impossible.

- *What was the temple tax (see Exodus 30:11-16)? What do you think Jesus means in 17:25-26?*

The temple tax was similar to the tithe. It paid for the upkeep of the temple. With the arrival of Jesus, the temple becomes obsolete. Therefore, the children of the King don't need to pay the temple tax. However, they do need to do be mindful of their reputation before unbelievers. Jesus' followers can trust that God will provide so that they can pay their obligations. He may not do it through a fish but God does provide.

- *What does 18:1-14 show about Jesus/God's heart? What about human posture toward God? What does it mean to 'stumble'?*

God sees us like a Father seeing their beloved child. He cares deeply for us and doesn't want us to stumble. He cares for us so deeply that he sent his Son to come for us. But we must humble ourselves like a child, responding to his love and listening to his warnings. To stumble is to fall away from God's grace because we chose the pleasures of sin.

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Questions for us:

- *How do we get faith? Can you grow faith? How? What feels like a mountain to move right now in your life?*

Faith initially comes from God. Faith is a gift of grace (Ephesians 2:8). However, once given, faith can be grown (2 Thessalonians 1:3). Encourage people to consider different ways that faith can be grown (you can look up the ordinary means of grace as the best starting point). Some things in the Christian life feel really difficult - how can I tell this person about Jesus, or how can I forgive this person... is there something you need faith to do?

- *What might be the equivalent of the temple tax today? Do we have an obligation to pay taxes & tithes?*

On one level, Christians are exempt from paying taxes. However, for the sake of our reputation in the community and following the law of the land, we should pay our taxes. Christians also don't need to pay tithes. Tithes were specifically for the temple and Levitical upkeep. Instead, we are encouraged to give generously from what God has given us.

- *How does can sin lead to 'stumbling'? Can you think of examples of how this might happen? Is there are sin that you feel particularly aware of in your own life that you need to cut out?*

Encourage people to be thoughtful and reflective of their own life and situation as well as telling stories of other peoples experiences.

- *How can we be reminded of God's love for us?*

This question enables you to get back to the heart of the gospel - what God has done in Jesus.