



ALL SAINTS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA | AUSTIN

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

HOW NOT TO BE SECULAR - WEEK 4

“ENCHANTED BY JESUS’ MAGIC”



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PRAYERS	DISCUSSION
<p><u>CONNECTION:</u></p> <p>All About All Saints Interested in learning more about All Saints and the PCA? Come to this 4-week class beginning February 15th at 9:15 AM at St. Gabriel’s. Sign up by emailing Rebekah rice@allsaintsaustin.org.</p> <p>Men’s Retreat February 20-21 at T Bar M Ranch. Guest speaker is Aaron Jeffrey - former RUF campus minister at Univ. of Iowa and Georgia Tech, and now currently on staff at Redeemer Seminary. Cost is \$75. Sign up at allsaintsaustin.org/mensretreat.</p> <p>Ash Wednesday Wednesday February 18th at 6 PM we will have one service at Park Hills Baptist. Childcare is provided for children ages 3 years and under.</p> <p><u>REQUESTS:</u></p> <p>Taking Our Friends to Jesus Name one person in your life right now who needs to be carried to Jesus. How can we pray for them? How can we pray for you in your ministry to them?</p>	<p>INTRO <i>(Question:)</i> Do you think the average person in our culture believes or longs to believe in a spiritual world? Not in the sense of the afterlife, but in the sense that there is something beyond the senses, which can’t be explained by science and natural phenomena. How do you see this?</p> <p><i>(Transition:)</i> Charles Taylor says that our culture has disenchanting the world, discarding any sense of spirits or transcendent realities beyond the natural machinations which can be explained by our rationality. But, as we can readily see, the world is still in a sense “haunted.” People are transfixed by stories of magic and the like. They want such stories to be real, though their worldview can’t allow it.</p> <p>We are concluding a series entitled “How Not To Be Secular.” Our world has transitioned from a place in which belief in God was assumed to an age in which atheism or agnosticism is almost inescapable. Doubt is the default, but even those who do not believe in God are skeptical about their unbelief, and feel pressured with the memory of God. Most still long for transcendence and a sense of the spiritual, and wonder, “What if I am wrong?” But we are all, even Christians, impacted by the pervasiveness of doubt. As we read our text be thinking about this question: “What do we need to be enchanted by our ancient and historic faith?”</p> <p>READ the text aloud.</p> <p>DISCUSS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let’s briefly summarize what is going on in the text. Where does it take place? Who are the main characters? What happens? • What strikes you as odd in the logic of v. 5? How do you explain this chain of events? What does the paralytic do to receive forgiveness and healing from Jesus? How can a man receive forgiveness from Christ without a verbal expression of faith and repentance? • What things outside of us shape our lives? What do you think of the idea of the “porous self”? (<i>James K. A. Smith summarizes Charles Taylor’s explanation of this: “the premodern self’s porosity means the self is essentially vulnerable [and hence also ‘healable’]. To be human is to be essentially open to an outside [whether benevolent or malevolent], open to blessing or cursing, possession or grace. ‘This sense of vulnerability,’ Taylor concludes, ‘is one of the principal features which have gone with disenchantment.’</i>.) How does this contrast the modern view of selfhood? Does it excite or concern you? • In what ways do the convictions and character, beliefs and behaviors, of our friends affect us? • What would you have thought and felt if you were the paralytic coming to Jesus for help and his first response is “Son, your sins are forgiven”? • What would have happened if Jesus had only healed the man? How should this perspective inform our ministry, service, and prayers for others? • How would you answer Jesus’ riddle in v. 9? Which is easier to do? Which was more difficult for Jesus to do? Why? <p>CONCLUDE Contrary to the modern mindset we are not buffered completely from external influences. Our self is not autonomous, and we are not only changed from the inside-out through our thoughts. Realities outside of us, especially the community of which we are a part, shape us. Thankfully Jesus also changes us. He meets all of our needs, whether here and now or in the future in his heavenly kingdom. He gives us tastes of his future physical and material renewal at times. But he always provides for our greatest need, which is forgiveness from God. This was the most difficult work, for he had to go to the cross and rise from the grave. It is now the greatest and most awe-inspiring gift we can offer to others. Let’s pray that others receive it, and that our community would be part of their enchantment with Jesus.</p>

MARK 2:1-12

ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (ESV)

[1] And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. [2] And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. [3] And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. [4] And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. [5] And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” [6] Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, [7] “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” [8] And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? [9] Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? [10] But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic—[11] “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” [12] And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”