

Home Group study: week beginning 1st August 2021

Better Together — With the Holy Spirit

Intro:

Have you ever made a really good choice? What was it and how did it impact your life? Conversely, have you ever made a really bad choice? What was that, and how did it impact your life?

Read: Genesis 2:16-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 46:1-11

Discovery

In the Genesis passages, why didn't God stop Eve taking the fruit? What would be the consequences of her choosing to listen to the serpent rather than to what God had commanded?

In Psalm 46, can you think of ways God has been our refuge and strength: particularly over the last 18 months? What does it mean when it says God is an 'ever-present help in trouble'? Can anyone be 'ever present' for us besides God?

What are the extreme circumstances in which we will not fear in v2? Is this a command that we should not be fearful?

Looking at v4 through eyes which have seen the New Testament, what do we understand by 'the river whose streams make glad the city of God?'

Understanding

Those of us over a certain age can remember rivers like the Thames, and other urban rivers, being polluted, foul and devoid of wildlife. In earlier ages they brought cholera and other horrible diseases and were places to be avoided. On Sunday Desmond talked about the river being able to flow with good things or with bad things. What are the good things and what are the bad things that a spiritual river flowing through us could bring?

V4 refers to the river having 'streams'. What do you understand by that in the context of this verse? Desmond told us that in the original Hebrew the word 'streams' is the same as the word for 'canals'. What is the difference between a river and a canal? Given our understanding of the River being the Holy Spirit flowing, what is the implication of the channels which take the water into the city and making it glad being 'canals'? What responsibility does that place on us?

Application

Desmond told us about how God had persuaded him to stop in a particular place and spend time with him. This became his 'Holy Spirit zone'. He could have carried on and ignored God (in fact he did, but then turned back). Do we ever sense God asking us to stop and spend time with him? How do we respond? Be honest! Do we have our own 'Holy Spirit zone'? Ask members of the group if they would be happy to share (a) where it is and (b) what it means to them. Encourage the group to find their own place and/or time to 'be still and know that I am God', where they can see Psalm 46:11 being worked out in their lives: discuss where/when that place may be.

Thinking back to the good and bad things a spiritual river can bring us, what river do we open ourselves up to? (*Some of the things Desmond suggested were good, love, forgiveness, worship, riches, evil, hatred etc*). Which of those rivers do we open our lives to?

Desmond reminded us that time is precious, limited and short. One of the major choices we make in our lives is how we choose to spend our time. Would you agree with his statement that what we invest our time reveals where our hearts are? What do we choose to invest our time in? Do we need to change some of our choices?