

Jesus' Encounter With The Father

Pray To Your Father In Secret – Daily Dependency in Prayer

Mark 1: 35

35. Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

36. Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37. and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" 38. Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else--to the nearby villages -- so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

Introduction

Note the disciplines of Jesus in prayer

1. Very early in the morning
2. While it was yet dark
3. He got up (without an alarm clock)
4. He left the house and disciples
5. He found a solitary place
6. He prayed

Jesus Demonstrates His Prayer Disciplines

1. Mark 1:23-13 – Baptism impelled into the wilderness to pray (and be tested)
2. Mark 1:35-38 – Secret solitary place, early, alone, to pray
3. Mark 6:45 – On a mountain alone disciples in boat
4. Mark 9:2-8 – Transfiguration on mountain to pray with 3 disciples
5. Mark 9:16-32 – Delivering a demonized boy, fasting and faith
6. Mark 14:32-42 – Gethsemane – prayed alone, apart, on face, with tears

I. The Master's Dependence on God in Prayer

There are many teachings of Jesus that have to do with prayer, and they would all be worthy passages to study and emulate, BUT Mark takes a different tact. Mark decides that a picture is worth a 1,000 words. He focuses on Jesus in prayer, doing prayer, showing his disciplines and dependency on God.

A life powerfully touched by God is a life that is in touch with God. Jesus could do no miracle of himself. His miracles were a direct result of his God-encounters prior to the people-encounters. A.W. Tozer said it well; "If you want to be a man of God you cannot spend all your time with men."

Jesus did not have a cheat-sheet. He did not bend the rules. He lived by the rules. He preformed everything in his life by the same rules as we do. His miracles, his authority, his power came directly from his intimate relationship to his Father. In the Gospel of John Jesus said so. He told his disciple so. It was true. He laid aside his deity to become a man. He took on himself the form of a servant and became obedient unto death.

- ✍️✍️ Could Jesus have preached and taught so powerfully without prayer?
- ✍️✍️ Could Jesus have been fully obedient to God without prayer?
- ✍️✍️ Could Jesus have loved the God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength without prayer?
- ✍️✍️ Could Jesus have done the miracles he did without prayer?
- ✍️✍️ Could Jesus have cast out demons by his word as he did without prayer?
- ✍️✍️ Could Jesus have lived a holy life without prayer?
- ✍️✍️ Could Jesus have gone to the cross without prayer?

If the answer is 'NO' for him, then how much more is the answer is 'NO' for us.

Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing." "I am the vine you are the branches. If you **abide in me** and **my words abide** in you, you will ask what you will and it will be done unto you."

(ie) There is an absolutely terrible country gospel song that was sung here last June by a visiting group. After the program I spoke to the adult leader and asked that that song never be sung again. It goes something like this... "If Jesus never did a miracle he still would have been God anyway." NO! If Jesus never did a miracle then he would not be God. God is the God of miracles. God is the God of the impossible.

The question repeated asked by the religious authorities was, "From where did he get such authority and power?" He got his power from his intimate relationship with the Father.

John 14:10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is **the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.**

11. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or **at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.** I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

How is it that we can do greater works than he did? It is possible because it is not we who do the miracles. It is Christ living in us that does the miracles.

II. The Danger of Our Living Without Prayer

There is a danger to living without dependence on God.

Faith = Total dependence on God

Jesus lived a life of total dependence on God.

There is a danger of living in the human, the normal, the worldly, the flesh and the earthly when God calls us to live in Him.

Jeremiah 2:13

Jeremiah 2:13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Jeremiah 2:32

Does a maiden forget her jewelry, a bride her wedding ornaments? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number.

Psalms 20:7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Isaiah 31:1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are* many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

God's Promises

2 Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature...

Mark 10:27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is impossible*, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Jeremiah 32:17 "Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

Jeremiah 32:27

"I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

Jeremiah 33:3

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and (mighty) unsearchable things you do not know.'

James 4:8

Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Living without dependent prayer is living without Jesus.

III. Our Lifeline To Jesus – Dependent Prayer!

Miracles, Healings, Deliverance, Prayers Answered, Spared Lives, Marriages Restored, Lives Changed

*Mark 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark,
Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*

Jesus was God incarnate, who emptied himself, took on the form of a servant, became a man, limited himself to earthly laws, lived a sinless life, and lived in deep harmony with the Father by the same resources available to everyone of us.

He led by his life. He set for us an example that we should follow in his steps. His source of power is the same source we have - prayer, that is, intimate fellowship with the Father. Prayer for Jesus was not primarily asking, but "leaning" on the Father. He kept himself close to the Father's heart and will through the discipline of prayer. Yes, Jesus disciplined himself. He made himself do the most important thing FIRST. In the middle of a very busy schedule, with overwhelming crowds hounding him every hour of every day, Jesus still got up while it was still dark, left the house, went off to a solitary place, and prayed to the Father in secret.

If Jesus found it necessary to practice a disciplined prayer-life how much more should we who are foolish, failing and finite? His power, authority, wisdom, holiness, leadership abilities, energy, health, stamina, persistence, and success came, not through reading a book on the "Seven Secrets of Highly Effective People," but through one secret -- cultivating daily a deep intimacy with God through prayer.

As we examine carefully the life of Jesus we will find this example in Mark 1:35 repeated over and over in his daily life and routine. Jesus was first and foremost a "God-chaser" before he was anything else. He learned the secret of "loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength" was not going to come naturally. It had to come super-naturally, through prayerful dependence on God. He lived his life that way. The disciples saw it, marveled and finally asked, "Lord, teach us to pray!" He taught them verbally to enter into their closet daily to seek the Father in secret, but he taught them by example by doing it every day.

We are embarking on a building program that will require excessive amounts of money and energy that we do not have. In March, April, and May we will be fully involved in communicating the vision in our Capital Stewardship Program titled, "Catch the Vision!" The vision is of what God wants to do, not what we want to do. The vision is His, therefore the money and supply needs to be His also. This needs to be a program and process in which we are fully dependent on God for His abundant supply of all that we need. That requires that we pray, pray, pray!

Zerrubabel was laying the foundation of the temple in Zechariah chapter four. Then the word of the Lord came to Zechariah concerning the rebuilding of the temple. God wanted everyone to know that it was not Zerrubabel who was building the temple but the LORD HIMSELF, so the Lord declared to the people:

"Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord." - Zechariah 4:6

*"6. So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. 7. "What are you, O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'" 8. Then the word of the LORD came to me: 9. "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. 10. **"Who despises the day of small things? Men will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel."***

God is the builder! God is the supplier of the funds! God is the provider of the vision. God is the author and finisher of all that we do. Then let us follow Jesus' example and make PRAYER OUR FIRST BUSINESS, not fund raising, not building designs, and not borrowing money. God is our first business. To know His is our primary call. As we know Him we will be able to make Him known to others. Until we know Him, until we hear from Him, until we become intimate with His heart, we will not be about our Father's business.

We are declaring March a month of prayer. We are calling the church to prolonged prayer and fasting to seek the Lord. We have scheduled two overnight-prayer retreats - March 17-18, and March 24-25. We want to encourage you to develop good prayer disciplines and a deep intimacy in your relationship to the Lord.

We have provided a manual on "Intimacy With God" that is available in the church office free of charge. Whether or not you are able to join us on those retreats we urge you to pick up a copy and use it to retrain, refocus and retool your prayer life **MAKING INTIMACY WITH GOD YOUR FIRST BUSINESS.**

We are sure you will find this manual helpful and stimulating in renewing your disciplines of prayer.

We are asking you to "Catch the Vision" or the heart of God for our church. You will not catch that vision by promotion and advertising. You will catch it from the Father's heart.

Application

March Prayer Month

1. Devotional Guide(s)
2. Manual “Intimacy With God”
3. Two Prayer Retreats – two tracks training and stillness (learn and lean)
4. Involve yourself in new disciplines of prayer –
 - a. 15 minutes every day soaking up God – silence, thanks, worship
 - b. Worship warriors behind the scenes
 - c. Prayer Partners once a week
 - d. 24 hour prayer chain, 7 days a week
 - e. Prayer walking – once a week, our entire property
 - f. Private retreats and fasts

Ask God for Great Things – Lean on Him

1. One million dollars, plus
2. Souls saved in your circle – top 3
3. Miracles, healings, deliverances, restorations marriages, revived hearts, salvation.
4. Children’s Pastor – dynamic, energetic, creative, passionate
5. Building a Sanctuary to set 1,200.
6. 10% of GCC, children, youth, SRU,
7. Your own financial blessings

Learning to Lean

by John Stallings

Learning to lean, learning to lean,
I'm learning to lean on Jesus;
Finding more power than I'd ever dreamed;
I'm learning to lean on Jesus.