

The Mission of the Son

Text: Mark 1:35-45

Introduction:

1. Mark now describes a preaching tour of Galilee that took place over “some days” (compare 1:39 & 2:1)
2. This account will give us insight into the prayer life of the Saviour, His philosophy of ministry and his power to transform lives.

Look firstly at...

I. The Praying of His Mission (Vs. 35)

A. The Period of His Praying (when?) (Vs. 35a)

1. The time – “in the morning...a great while before day” = this would have been the last watch of the night between 3 to 6 am when it was still dark (Wuest). Literally “at night very much” (Hiebert)
2. The length – ‘prayed’ is in the imperfect tense (repeated action). This means Christ prayed for some length.
3. Context: A busy ministry day the day before and a busy preaching tour about to commence. If Christ, the Son of the Living God, took time to be alone with His Heavenly Father, how much more should we! As perfect man, Christ lived in dependence on His Father’s power through the Holy Spirit to minister. Christ prayed after service to be refreshed and before service to be prepared.

B. The Place of His Praying (where?) (Vs. 35b)

1. ‘solitary’ = a quiet, secluded place. Word translated previously in chapter as ‘wilderness’. It was “a quiet and uninhabited spot somewhere in the vicinity of Capernaum” (Hiebert).
2. Elsewhere we find Christ praying in a garden (John 18:1-2; Matt. 26:36) and in a mountain (Matt. 14:23)
3. Illustration: Daniel prayed in his bedroom (Dan. 6:10)
4. Christ needed **solitude** and **silence** for prayer and so do we!

C. The Pattern of His Praying (how?) (Vs. 35c)

1. ‘prayed’ = general, most frequent term in the N.T. Carries the idea of worship and reverence. Comes from a compound word: ‘towards’ (προς) & “I wish” (εὐχομαι). Verb is imperfect (repeated action) and pictures Jesus as praying through the early morning hours.
2. Prayer involves both worship and petition.
3. “Prayer is an attitude of complete dependence upon God.” (Pentecost).
4. Christ’s whole ministry was bathed in prayer.

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Look secondly at...

II. The Priorities of His Mission (Vs. 36-39)

A. Priorities in Relation to People (Vs. 36-38)

1. Peter and “they that were with him” (presumably Andrew, James and John – Vs. 29) came looking for Christ on account of the multitudes that were seeking Him. Luke adds that “the people sought him”.
2. The reason they sought him was so “that he should not depart from them.” (Lk. 4:42). They wanted this One who could work such miracles to stay and keep ministering to them. However, Christ understood the motives of the “crowd” were often superficial. They often sought Him for temporal gains (miracles and food) rather than for spiritual reasons.
3. Example: John 6:26-27 *“Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because **ye did eat of the loaves**, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”*
4. Practical implications for ministry
 - a. We need to be wise in the use of our time as we minister to peoples needs lest we end up spending all our time on one group of people to the neglect of others with needs. There are those who will pursue the preacher or Christian worker for help with their needs and thus detain him from helping others.
 - b. Christ discouraged an emphasis on disciples that were merely there for the miracles (Matt. 12:38-39). His miracles came from His compassionate heart and also authenticated His claims as Messiah (John 14:11) but they were secondary to the greater and more important task of preaching the truth (1 Cor. 1:21). Christ’s first concern was the salvation of men’s souls before the healing and feeding of their bodies. We need to take care to maintain the same order of priority!

B. Priorities in Relation to Preaching (Vs. 38-39)

1. “I may preach there also...And he preached in their synagogues” = reveals the primacy of preaching in our Lord’s ministry
2. “for therefore came I forth” = reveals the purpose for which Christ came. He came to preach the Gospel and to call me to repentance and faith (remember Vs. 14-15).
3. Luke 4:18 *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me **to preach the Gospel to the poor...**”*
4. Luke 19:10 *“For the Son of man is come **to seek and to save that which was lost.**”*

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Look thirdly at...

III. The Power of His Mission (Vs. 40-45)

Mark now records an example of one of the many lepers that were likely healed by Christ during this preaching tour (Matt. 11:5). It serves as a powerful analogy of salvation.

A. The Condition of the Leper (Vs. 40a)

1. He was defiled – “a man full of leprosy” (Luke 5:12)
 - a. Description of leprosy by Geikie: Leprosy was “a disease at all times terrible, but aggravated, in the opinion of that day, by the belief it was a direct “stroke of God,” as a punishment for special sins. It began with little specks on the eyelids, and on the palms of the hand, and gradually spread over different parts of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swellings and sores. From the skin it slowly ate its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, and the eyes were attached in turn, till, at last, consumption or dropsy brought welcome death.”
 - b. Lev. 13 outlines the laws concerning leprosy. The word ‘unclean’ comes through repeatedly.
 - c. Lev. 13:45-46 *“And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, **Unclean, unclean.** All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be **defiled**; he is unclean: **he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.**”*
2. He was condemned – the law had no cure for the leper, it could only pronounce him unclean.
3. He was separated – the leper had to abide alone without the camp, away from the comfort and fellowship of family and friends.
4. What a picture of the lost condition of the sinner! “Leprosy is a remarkable type of sin and its fruits...The visible effect on the body illustrates the effect of sin upon the soul. Sin, like leprosy, is a most loathsome, polluting, deforming, unclean thing. Leprosy is God’s language by which he describes sin as it appears in his sight.” (F.N. Peloubet)

B. The Petition of the Leper (Vs. 40b)

1. The focus of his petition – he came to Christ
 - a. “came to him”
 - b. “beseeching him”
 - c. “kneeling down to him”
 - d. “saying unto him”
 - e. 1. Tim. 2:5 – Christ is the only Mediator. No one comes to the Father except through Christ (John 14:6)
2. The reverence of his petition – he was humble and respectful in his posture and words
 - a. His posture – “kneeling down” (Mk. 1:40); “worshipped him” (Matt. 8:2); “fell on his face” (Luke 5:12)

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- b. His words – “if thou wilt” He did not demand or command Christ. His was a respectful and reverential plea.
- 3. The faith of his petition – “thou canst make me clean”
 - a. He believed in Christ’s Person – this was a clear acknowledgement of Christ’s deity and Messiahship.
 - b. He believed in Christ’s Power – He believed Christ had the authority and ability to heal him.

C. The Transformation of the Leper (Vs. 41-42)

- 1. Transformed because of the Heart of Christ – “moved with compassion”
 - a. Christ’s compassion is mentioned frequently in the Gospels. E.g. Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mk. 6:34; 8:2; Lk. 7:13)
 - b. ‘compassion’ = a suffering with another; painful sympathy; a sensation of sorrow excited by the distress or misfortunes of another (Webster). Verb denotes not only a pained feeling at the sight of the suffering but also a yearning to relieve it (Hiebert).
 - c. There was nothing in this leper that could merit Christ’s favour. It was solely of God’s grace and mercy. Salvation is by grace alone!
- 2. Transformed by the Hand of Christ – “and touched him”
 - a. Probably the first time this man had felt the touch of another human since he contracted the disease.
 - b. Imagine the scene. He lies prostrate, face to the ground, pleading for mercy and all of a sudden, He feels the firm yet compassionate grip of Christ’s hand.
 - c. Note: Normally touching a leper would make someone unclean according to the law. But instead of Christ being defiled by touching the leper, the leper was cleansed by Christ.
- 3. Transformed by the Word of Christ – “and saith...I will; be thou clean”
 - a. Christ’s promise comes to this man with power. This is the Living Word, the Word that spoke the universe into existence!
 - b. The cleansing was instantaneous and complete – Vs. 42

D. The Instruction to the Leper (Vs. 43-45)

- 1. The Directive of the Lord (Vs. 43-44)
 - a. To be silent on his way to the priest. Luke 5:15 seems to indicate reason for the command. Many sought him to be healed of their infirmities, thus hindering Christ’s ministry of preaching.
 - b. To show himself to the priest in obedience to the O.T. law
- 2. The Disobedience to the Lord (Vs. 45)
 - a. Highlights that effective Christian witness needs to be connected with a submissive Christian walk.
 - b. This man’s failure to follow our Lord’s instructions damaged the Lord’s ministry at that time.

Conclusion:

- 1. Christian: How is your prayer life? How much time do you spend in the secret place?
- 2. Unsaved: Have you come to Christ in faith for cleansing from sin?