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Ministry by the Numbers; Matthew 4:23-5:2  
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Introduction – The passage before us today answers a few questions we might have in thinking about the life of Jesus? What would a day in the life of Jesus look like? How did Jesus minister to others? What was Jesus’ understanding of ministry? I would think we as a church can learn much today about what the word ministry should mean to us in light of what it meant to Jesus. We often think of church ministry as activities or events or programs. Maybe we think of the various classes or activities we offer to various age groups -children ministry, student ministry, college ministry, young adult ministry, senior ministry. We actually use the word ministry a lot in church life, but what is it? What is truly at the heart or should be at the heart of our ministries and our committees? It may be surprising to us to see that Jesus had a very simple model and method of ministry.

Along with that thought, we might say from studying today’s text, you can learn a lot about a person by seeing what keeps them busy. The things that fill a person’s day are the things that person holds with high regard and value. There’s no mistaking what Jesus thought to be of high importance and priority during His years of ministry on this earth. Again, it’s really simple. Clearly Jesus placed a high value on people, the gospel, and the Word of God. That’s the essence of ministry. That’s the essence of living life well. That is certainly the essence of Jesus. Let’s observe today Jesus’ understanding of ministry and the proper priorities of life as we see ministry by the numbers.

- I. The 3-fold Ministry of Christ v23
  - a. Jesus’ first approach to ministry is teaching. “He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues.
    - i. We know this refers to Jesus teaching the Scripture. Jesus was not a motivational speaker who tried to pump up self-esteem. He wasn’t a self-help guru who listed 3 ways to do this and 10 steps to do that. He wasn’t a psychologist who taught the secrets to a happy self or marriage. He wasn’t a best-selling author touring Galilee and promoting his latest book or conference. He simply taught the Scripture. He explained to people what God had revealed in His Word.

- ii. The truth is that man-centered ideas are at best temporary aids and at worst distractions from the absolute truths we need for life and salvation. What we really need to know is what God has told us about the world we live in, how to live in this world, how to navigate this life with its many issues and challenges, and most importantly how to know God and be reconciled to Him for eternity.
  - iii. Jesus' ministry was one of teaching the Word of God in the place of worship. He started in the synagogue with the Word. Sometimes His listeners were amazed and sometimes they hated Him for His teaching.
  - iv. Ill. Luke 4:22, 28-30
  - v. So if we are to pattern our ministry after the ministry of Jesus, we need to begin right here in our church teaching the Word of God. And sometimes people will marvel at the grace of God, and sometimes people will rage against God's Word.
- b. Jesus' second approach to ministry was proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.
- i. Teaching the Word and proclaiming the gospel are distinct but they are not separate or to be separated. The gospel should always be present where the Word of God is faithfully taught. For it is the gospel that brings the Word of God to life. The gospel is what plants the Word in hearts and makes application of the Word desired and doable.
  - ii. The Word without the gospel becomes a burden. It's the gospel that empowers pursuit of the Word. "Come to Me all who are weary...for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."  
Jesus
  - iii. What is the gospel of the kingdom? Well, we've already heard Jesus preach the gospel haven't we? V17, 19.
    1. Repent – turn from living life your own way, turn from self, know that there is a holy, omnipotent, righteous, creator God, recognize our failure to honor and worship Him, reject the hopelessness and destruction of sin. Repent.
    2. Follow – believe in Jesus, believe in His sufficient payment for our sin, trust Him that in knowing and

following and obeying Him we truly find life and peace and joy.

3. The gospel, the good news, is essentially this: turning from the eternally destructive path of sin and embracing the eternal joy of life in Christ.
- iv. The gospel of the kingdom should flavor everything in the life of our church. The gospel is the answer for the sinner and the saint. The gospel is the good news that your sin can be forgiven and that you can be empowered to live a life of fullness pleasing to God.
- c. Jesus' third approach to ministry was healing every disease and every affliction among the people.
  - i. Now I believe the Bible teaches us that miracles and the gift of healing was a sign gift restricted to the time of the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles and reserved for special purpose.
  - ii. I believe God still miraculously heals today, however, there are no healers today.
  - iii. So what does this mean for us? If we can't heal today like Jesus healed, what do we learn from His healings? Jesus mingled with and comforted and touched the masses. He was with the people.
  - iv. He didn't teach and preach and disappear. He met the people where they were and served them and met their needs.
  - v. Two takeaways for us:
    1. While His ministry started in the synagogue, it didn't remain there, it flowed out into the street. Ministry in our church must always go outside our walls and into the places where the people are, serving and meeting their needs. III. Winshape camp, meals on wheels, Jerusalem Project, apartment ministry, disaster relief, etc. We must touch people where they are.
      - a. Involving ourselves and our church in the lives of people is messy, tiresome, time-consuming work. But that's ministry. People are ministry. That was Jesus' model. Simple but tasking.

2. Let us always keep in mind the ministry of touching people and teaching the Word and proclaiming the gospel always go together and must go together.
  - a. If you just touch the people and don't share the Word of God, it's just a social gospel. Meeting physical needs without meeting spiritual needs only comforts people on their way to eternal separation from God.
  - b. However, only trying to meet spiritual needs with no means of meeting physical and material needs only turns people away. Knowing God loves and God cares helps people realize that God saves.
- d. The 3-fold ministry of Jesus, teaching the Word, proclaiming the gospel, and touching the people.

## II. The 2-fold Purpose of Miracles vv23-24

- a. Everything God does, He does with great purpose. Jesus did not go about healing to become popular or rich. He did not heal just to make life easier for the troubled.
- b. His miracles were for the purpose of confirmation. In fact, John in his gospel account always calls the miracles of Jesus signs. They pointed to something else. Healing was not an end in itself, but rather when Jesus healed someone it was meant to point them to something greater and beyond their healing.
  - i. The miracles of Jesus pointed to who He was because only God could do the things that Jesus did. And they pointed to what Jesus ultimately came to do. He is more than a physician for the body.
  - ii. You see if He can divinely heal the body, then He can divinely heal the soul. If He can make your body whole, He can make your life whole. If He can miraculously meet your physical need, He can miraculously meet your greatest need.
  - iii. John 20:30-31 "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."

- iv. The miracles of Jesus were for confirmation.
  - c. The miracles of Jesus were to display the compassion of God. Yes, God cares for your soul, but He also genuinely and wonderfully cares about your life and your condition. He divinely intervenes because He cares. Our God is a compassionate God.
    - i. Matthew 9:36-37
    - ii. Affliction comes in many forms in this life and doubt often accompanies it. If you ever doubt the goodness and mercy and grace and love of God, remember that Jesus spent hours and hours and hours and hours of His ministry healing people because God is compassionate. He cares for you!
    - iii. And He is able to heal you today of any kind of affliction!
  - d. The miracles of Jesus were for confirmation and compassion.
- III. The Single Greatest Focus of Christ's Ministry 5:1-2
- a. Jesus did so many great and wonderful things in His life. He cast out demons. He made the lame to walk. He made the blind to see. He healed all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. He went about doing good all the time.
  - b. But the greatest thing Jesus ever did in His ministry was to gather His disciples around Him, sit down, open His mouth, and teach.
  - c. It was His teaching that fulfilled His healings. It was His teaching that explained who He was and what He came to do. It was His teaching that opened the Word of God to us. It was His teaching that showed us the way to life and salvation.
  - d. I'm so grateful that He heals, but it's a blessing beyond measure that He taught. Imagine if all Jesus did was heal? Imagine if He only relieved our pain and we never knew He came to relieve our tormented souls? Imagine if there was only vv24-25?
  - e. You remember the testimony of the two disciples on the Emmaus road. Jesus appeared to them after the resurrection and taught them. They reported in Luke 24:32 "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?"
  - f. Peter declared in John 6:68 "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

- g. God came down from heaven as one of us and He spoke to us. How amazing is that? Now we know!
- h. Psalm 119:103 How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.

Conclusion