

07. The Gospel of Mark—1:21-38

“The Only Way to Start Your Day”

(10-11-26)

Mark 1:21 (NKJV)

²¹ Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught.

Capernaum was located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

In fact, Capernaum was where Jesus set up His headquarters possibly near the home of Peter and Andrew.

Mark 1:21–28, 32-34 (NKJV)

²¹ Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. ²² And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ saying, “Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!” ²⁶ And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. ²⁷ Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine *is* this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.” ²⁸ And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee....

³² At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons...

From the passage we can see that Jesus’ ministry in the city of Capernaum up in the Galilee was really picking up steam, as verse 33 tells us when it says that **“the whole city”** came to Jesus to be healed and taught by Him.

You would think that that would be reason enough to stay right there in Capernaum and continue ministering—I mean big crowds are what preachers live for—right!?

And yet the next day we read that Jesus said to His disciples—

Mark 1:38 (NKJV)

³⁸ ...“Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.”

Why did Jesus want to move on to the ‘**next towns**’—I mean common sense would have said, “*Let’s stay here in Capernaum where things are happening and the crowds are coming!*”

The answer to that question lies in Jesus’ statement, “**Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.**”

Now we would be prone to think what Jesus meant was, “*I have come forth from heaven to the earth to preach in all cities and towns so that every person may hear the gospel.*”

And while I believe that is true overall—I don’t think it accurately describes what’s going on here in *this* passage.

To fully understand why Jesus wanted to move on and preach in these other towns we need to see His statement in the light of verse 35:

Mark 1:35, 38 (NKJV)

³⁵ Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed...[then He said to His disciples] ³⁸“Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.”

“**Come forth**” from where—from heaven?—No, from prayer!

I'd like to use this idea as a launching off point to get into a message I'm calling, *"The Only Way to Start Your Day!"*

One pastor asked an important question:

*"Do you ever find yourself feeling, fried, frazzled, fatigued, and burned out?
Now I know that sometimes life can feel that way—"Man, it's all on my shoulders."
Maybe you're feeling that way. The responsibilities and obligations in life can make you feel spent, stressed, beat up and worn out as the pressure begins to take a toll on you.
As I look at this and then look at the life of Jesus, His enemies accused Him of a lot of things. They accused Him of being a glutton, and a winebibber. They accused Him of being born illegitimately, and of being an insurrectionist—but no one ever accused Him of being a stressed-out workaholic.
With everything that Jesus had going on He was never stressed or frazzled. You never see Him blowing up out of frustration because of all the pressure or reaching for a bottle of valium to calm His nerves—in fact, He had this amazing aura of tranquility and serenity surrounding Him. He often grew tired physically because of the rigors of ministry, yet He was never tired emotionally or short with people. He always moved with calmness and purpose."*

Now this has always intrigued me about Jesus especially as I look at my own life.

You see, our culture values busyness. We associate importance with busyness—and the busier we are the more important many of us feel, because everyone wants a piece of our time which means that—we must be important!

And yet even though this is how our society has come to view busyness—deep within our hearts we know that's not how God intended life to be lived—as Jesus exemplified.

That's why we're willing to work all year to earn a couple of weeks' vacation where we can escape all the busyness and go camping or fishing or lay on a beach somewhere.

It could be that some of you here this morning know exactly what I'm talking about—you've dragged yourself in here feeling worn out, weary and heavy laden.

Matthew 11:28–30 (NKJV)

²⁸ Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”

Jesus’ life was so different from ours. He lived in an atmosphere of tranquility and serenity—the opposite of so many today.

“Well if He’d had my schedule, He wouldn’t have been so calm.”

Don’t fool yourself; no one had more to do and more on His shoulders than Jesus did—and yet He was a picture of peace and calmness—*what was His secret!*

As we study the life of Jesus in the gospels, I see Him focused on just 3 things.

His whole life was built around these 3 things which together form a powerful stress reliever.

I. Stress Reliever

A. The Father’s Will

This in a nutshell was the passion of Jesus’ life—to always do the Father’s will.

In John 6:38 Jesus said (I’ll paraphrase)—*“I’m not doing my own thing. I’m not living for my own pleasure. The one thing my life is all about is that—I always do the will of my Father in heaven!”*

He said in the garden of Gethsemane, *“...Father, not my will but Your will be done.”*

One pastor has a plaque in his office that reads, *“God’s Will—nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.”*

B. The Father's Heart

This was the second thing Jesus was focused on—which of course is connected to the Father's will but goes deeper.

We can do the will of God without the heart of God. (Explain)

1 Chronicles 28:9 (NKJV)

⁹ “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts...

A. The Father's Will

B. The Father's Heart

C. The Father's Time

Do you realize how many people were demanding Jesus' time?

How many were trying to get Him to meet their “*urgent needs*” (the tyranny of the urgent is a real stress inducer in ministry!).

It's obvious that Jesus moved and acted according to a very definite timetable—the Father's timetable!

John 7:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Then Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come...

Mary and Martha—“*Come quick Lord, Lazarus is very sick.*”

And yet He purposely waited 2 days before leaving.

Jesus didn't let people or circumstances control Him, He did only those things His Father told Him to do—and only then in the Father's time.

Now what did this do? → It totally freed Him up and allowed him to remain focused.

Even at the age of 12 He made this clear to His mother and Joseph when He said, *"I must be about My Father's business."*

That was His whole life and that's where His serenity came from which was how He was able to remain free from all the stress and weariness of ministry life (but these principles apply to anyone's life).

All of our stress and anxiety comes from feeling, *"Should I do this or that, should I go here or there, should I meet with this one or that one?"*

We have all these responsibilities and decisions and opportunities screaming at us pulling us in a hundred different directions all at once—why?

Because we have allowed the culture to impact our thinking on this, making us feel that this is a good thing—*"I'm busy that's good. Activity is the opposite of laziness, and the Bible has a lot to say against laziness in Proverbs so God should be pleased with me."*

But activity is not necessarily a good thing → (Story about chicken with its head cut off).

Once we lose the connection with our 'Head', Jesus Christ, we will begin a flurry of activity—running here and there feeling tired and stressed out until we drop.

Remember, if the devil can't make you bad, he'll make you busy!

Jesus was focused and as a result He was tranquil and serene—because He only did what His Father told Him to do.

But you'll never come to live this kind of life until you value it and long for it—which starts with setting your mind on things above and not on things on earth. (Comment)

Psalm 73:25 (NLT)

²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth.

Psalm 42:1–2 (NKJV)

¹ As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God...

And so, the question then arises—how can we find God's will, God's heart and God's timing?

This brings us back to our text in Mark's gospel.

Jesus had been ministering in Capernaum, a very nice beach city on the coast of the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 1:32–34 (NKJV)

³² At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons...

The next day the disciples came to Jesus (v.37) and were all excited—***“Everyone is looking for You, Lord isn't this great! You're really popular, You're in demand!”***

But when Jesus hears the news, He reacts in an unusual way—***“Let's leave and go to the next towns.” (v.38)***

That's odd because—the reporters are there, the paparazzi are waiting with their cameras, the crowd is chanting His name and Jesus says, ***“Let's get out of here and go to the next towns.”***

The word **‘towns’** is an interesting Greek word used only here in the N.T.—it means *‘unwalled towns’*—what we would call *‘Podunk towns’*—small, backwoods, remote, rural, unimportant hick towns!

Here Jesus could have let the people and the situation control His schedule—I mean there was a legitimate need for ministry there in Capernaum, and Jesus did come to minister.

But you see that would have caused Him to get overextended which would have created stress—and therefore, He rather says to His disciples, ***“Let’s leave the beach city and go to the cow towns.”***

His disciples must have been scratching their heads wondering why He would want to blow such a great opportunity like this—I mean after all isn’t the point of ministry to gather a big crowd?

No, it’s to do the will of the Father!

And yet most of us, had we been in Jesus’ place that day would have fallen into the trap and played to the crowd.

Why? Because it’s gratifying to our flesh to be wanted and needed and popular.

But serving God isn’t about self-gratification it’s about God’s glorification.

This would seem to be a great opportunity for Jesus and His ministry, and yet He says, ***“Let’s get going to the next towns so that I can preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.”***

‘Come forth’ from where?—the answer is verse 35: **“He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”**

II. Strength Restorer

Now if there was ever an excuse for a person to sleep in it would have been here.

Jesus had been teaching the word all day, healing the sick, and casting out demons.

He could have said, *“Father, I know You’ll understand, I’m going to sleep in tomorrow, I’m beat. I’ll catch up with You tomorrow afternoon.”*

But that’s not what Jesus did—He got up long before sunrise and got away alone with His Heavenly Father.

This is where He received strength for the new day, not in sleeping in but in getting up early and getting alone with His Heavenly Father. (Likened to physical exercise and energy)

And as such, He came forth with direction—the Father told Him to leave a beautiful beach city where things were happening and big crowds were gathering and go to the boon dock, cow towns and preach there.

That’s not something anyone of us would have done if we had based our decision on what we saw instead of what God said.

So that when the crowds gathered seeking Him, He had already made His decision—a decision that came through prayer which He always started His day with!

That gave Him focus and it didn’t matter how many people were seeking Him or how many reporters were there waiting to interview Him—He knew exactly what He was to do and where He was to go.

But that only came by starting His day in prayer!

One pastor said it well—

“We get detoured and distracted by—‘Everyone is looking for you’ or ‘Here is a great opportunity.’ And so, we find ourselves being over extended and stressed out, tired, frazzled and burned out.

God only gives strength and energy for the things He is leading you into not all the detours and distractions we give into. And if we let it the pressures of ‘everyone is looking for you’ will tear your health down, your family down, and your walk down.”

When they said to Jesus, **“Everyone is looking for You”** Jesus said, **“Who cares—it’s what my Father wants that is important.”**

“Yes, but are you sure this wasn’t an isolated incident? Did Jesus really do this every morning?”

Isaiah 50:4–5 (NLT)

⁴ The Sovereign Lord has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning he awakens me and opens my understanding to his will. ⁵ The Sovereign Lord has spoken to me, and I have listened. I have not rebelled or turned away.

Jesus was disciplined in His morning devotions—to Him they were not a *luxury* they were a necessity!

It was His lifeline with the Father that kept Him focused, moving in His Father’s will and flowing in the Spirit’s power.

Because of it the disciples came to Him one day and said, *“Lord, teach us to pray.”*

They didn’t ask Him to teach them *‘how to preach’*, or *‘how to cast out demons’*, or *‘how to do miracles’*—they wanted Him to teach them to pray!

Because they realized that was the secret of His power and His peace, of His purpose and calmness.

What does this mean to you and to me this week?

That if we make morning devotions a non-negotiable thing.

If we make it our practice to start our day as Jesus did with our Heavenly Father, then when everyone is wanting a piece of our time, we will only do what God wants us to do—nothing more, nothing less, nothing else!

“Yes, but how will I know the Father’s will?”

Listen for His still small voice in the morning; cultivate ears to hear what the Spirit is saying.

Get up early while everything is still quiet and seek Him in prayer and through the Word and with paper and pencil.

Then you will know the calmness that Jesus walked in, and you will only do the things the Father through His Spirit is leading you to do.

- ❖ *If in the first waking moment of the day you learn to fling the door back and let God in, every public thing will be stamped with the presence of God. - Oswald Chambers*
- ❖ *“The moment you wake up each morning, all your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists in shoving it all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in.” - C. S. Lewis*
- ❖ *“For more than half a century, I have never known one day when I had not more business than I could get through. For 40 years, I have had annually about 30,000 letters, and most of these have passed through my own hands. I have nine assistants always at work corresponding in German, French, English, Danish, Italian, Russian, and other languages. Then, as pastor of a church with 1200 believers, great has been my care. I have had charge of five orphanages; also at my publishing depot, the printing and circulation of millions of tracts, books, and Bibles. But I have always made it a rule never to begin work till I have had a good season with God.” - George Mueller*
- ❖ *Martin Luther, when most pressed with his gigantic toils, said, “I have so much to do, that I cannot get on without three hours a day of praying.”*

❖ *Sir Matthew Hale says, “If I omit praying, and reading God’s word, in the morning, nothing goes well all day.”*

Psalm 5:1–3 (NKJV)

¹ Give ear to my words, O Lord...For to You I will pray. ³ My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct *it* to You, And I will look up.

Psalm 63:1 (NKJV)

¹ O God, You *are* my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.

God said through the prophet Isaiah—“*I will pour My Spirit upon him (her) who is thirsty like water upon the dry ground.*” (Isa. 44:3)