

MARK: Jesus Prays & Obeys

Dr. Ria Martin

Mark 1:35-39

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. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

The New International Version. (2011). (Mk 1:35–39). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Dr. Ria shared her experience growing up in the Philippine Roman Catholic church. She detailed her experience praying with Rosary and going to confessions, and her contemplations as a college student wondering if her prayers ever reached past her ceiling.

She then related her thoughts to the history of the OT, about how Adam and Eve spoke face to face with God before their rebellion and subsequent exile out of the garden.

She traced the theme to the temple priesthood, where in order to return to that garden state speaking with God face to face, they needed sacrifices and blood to be able to stand in that place of mediation between God and humans.

But the problem with the sacrificial system was the eventual corruption of the system.

Micah 3:11-12

Her leaders judge for a bribe,
her priests teach for a price,
and her prophets tell fortunes for money.

Yet they look for the Lord's support and say,
"Is not the Lord among us?
No disaster will come upon us."

Therefore because of you,
Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.

The New International Version. (2011). (Mic 3:11–12). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

| You want good prophecy? I take check or card.

But the hope Dr. Ria saw was the prophecy of a better and more faithful priest.

1 Samuel 2:35

I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his priestly house, and they will minister before my anointed one always.

The New International Version. (2011). (1 Sa 2:35). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

And Jesus came to fulfill that role of the priest.

Hebrews 9:11-15

But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, v he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, h so that we may serve the living God!

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

The New International Version. (2011). (Heb 9:11–15). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Ria shared about how deeply this revelation changed her prayer life forever. Jesus' role as a priest means he stands as his own sacrifice to mediate between God and ourselves.

Hebrews 7:27-28

Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

The New International Version. (2011). (Heb 7:27–28). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

"In Jesus name" is not a cliché, because he is the reason our prayers go directly to Yahweh. We're not praying to a distant galaxy out there, but to a mediator that directly prays for us as well.

When we observe Jesus going out to pray, we see a supernatural confidence that Jesus would rely on. His prayer life was evident every step of the way, and we see that when he was baptized. When Jesus prayed, heaven was torn open.

Because of what Jesus did for us and because of the authority he bestowed on us, we can have the same confidence as well.

Now we turn to the second half of the passage...

A Note on Jesus' Popularity

Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

Seeking is not a virtue in these contexts in Mark. Enthusiasm is not to be confused with faith, and so can oppose faith. Seeking in the context of this passage is an attempt to control and barter. And so Jesus wasn't detracted by the crowds, but faithfully avoided the deceptive crowds in order to preach the gospel in others towns and villages.

"Modern Christians have a new worldview on Christianity and making disciples. We have created a "build it and they will come" mentality, thinking that if we just build or replant a church, people will come to us. Then we tell our co-workers, neighbors, friends, and family, "if you want to know Jesus, then come to church.' When our co-workers, neighbors, friends, and family never come to church, we believe they have rejected Jesus and Christianity, yet the truth is that we have never shared the gospel with them. We merely told them to come to church. How long will it be until we Christians wake up to the realities that this world is perishing without the gospel, and we must personally engage them with the gospel?"

(Wan, Enoch; Mikeska, Shane. Engaging the Secular World through Life-on-life Disciple-making in the British Context: Relational Paradigm in Action (Relational Series Book 1) (pp. 37-38). Western Press. Kindle Edition)

When Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations," the model of doing that was given by Jesus' own example of praying and healing the sick and casting out demons.

Jesus found that direction and confidence through going directly to God, alone with him, confidently approaching his throne, knowing that he will be heard. The gospels account many instances of Jesus retreating to a solitary place to pray, a staple in his ministry.



Why was this detail included so often? Perhaps because Jesus was refreshed and encouraged as he maintained his close relationship with the author of life.

As Jesus prayed in his solitary place, he expected to be heard by the Father, and he responded through obedience to the Father's call to preach the gospel. And when we pray in our solitary place, we can expect our prayers to be heard by the Father, and are now presented with an opportunity to go and preach the gospel as well.